

High Country News

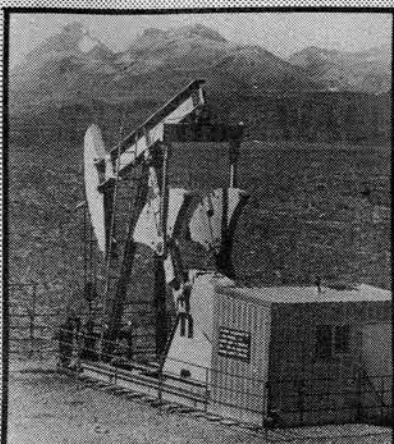
April 19, 1993

Vol. 25 No. 7

A Paper for People who Care about the West

One dollar and fifty cents

INSIDE:



Ron Selden

Punching holes for oil and gas/stories 8-11



Reporter's Notebooks: The way it was at the summit in Portland, Oregon/14, 15

Environmentalists' euphoria over President Bill Clinton's Western policies came to an abrupt end in late March, when the White House pulled public land reforms from its new budget. The retreat was so quiet the White House wasn't the first to announce that grazing fee increases, mining royalties and prohibitions on below-cost timber sales were no longer part of the Clinton budget.

The honor of making that announcement fell to Western Democratic senators, who had, depending on your perspective, either successfully reasoned with Clinton or threatened to vote as a bloc against his budget unless he gave them what they wanted.

The deal was apparently cut without consulting Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, Clinton's congressional allies or environmentalists. The surprise and humiliation led to angry statements, with Jay Hair, head of the National Wildlife Federation, for example, calling the deal "date rape."

But the White House and the Western Democratic senators, led by Montana's Max Baucus and Colorado's Ben Nighthorse Campbell, deplored what Campbell called "extreme, shrill rhetoric." Other senators in the bloc are Jeff Bingaman, N.M., Richard Bryan, Nev., Dennis DeConcini, Ariz., Byron Dorgan, N.D. and Harry Reid, Nev.

The White House and the senators said they hadn't abandoned reforms, but that the

budget was not the place to rework the West's approach to public land mining, grazing and logging. Instead, they promised to deliver reform in a package of individual bills.

Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., head of the House Committee on Natural Resources, said he has been "waiting for that independent legislation for 12 years." He also said

times the subsidy it gives the West's ranchers. "Does he have the ability to say no?"

Western Republicans were allowed by their constituency to preach free enterprise while protecting subsidies to public land users. But Western Democrats, whose coalition includes city dwellers and environmentalists, may have more trouble keeping their base. That is especially true because the action was portrayed by the media as having seriously weakened Clinton's ability to institute national reforms.

Not only Westerners are paying attention. The management of the West's public lands has become a national issue, with the Clinton retreat criticized editorially in the *New York Times* and *USA Today*.

Not all Westerners will escape increased fees. Interior Department officials announced that they may replace lost revenues from higher mining and grazing fees with surcharges on federal irrigation water and higher fees on recreational use of public lands.

And despite campaign promises to buy more parks and recreation land, the Clinton budget calls for only \$209 million for new land acquisition. Bush requested \$366 million last year.

— Michael Milstein, Ed Marston

Michael Milstein reports for the *Billings Gazette*; Ed Marston publishes *High Country News*.

Clinton flinches under Western pressure

he had not been warned of the deal-making and called it "a fundamental mistake by the administration." Miller predicted gridlock would continue on Western lands.

During the Reagan-Bush years, ranchers, miners and loggers were protected against legislative change by Western Republican senators, led most recently by Wyoming Senator Al Simpson. Now the torch has apparently passed to the Western Democrats. Simpson said he was pleased for the West, but worried for the nation:

"It's a portent of a very troublesome trait," said the Senate minority whip, who recalled that the government hands corn producers 15



HIGH COUNTRY NEWS

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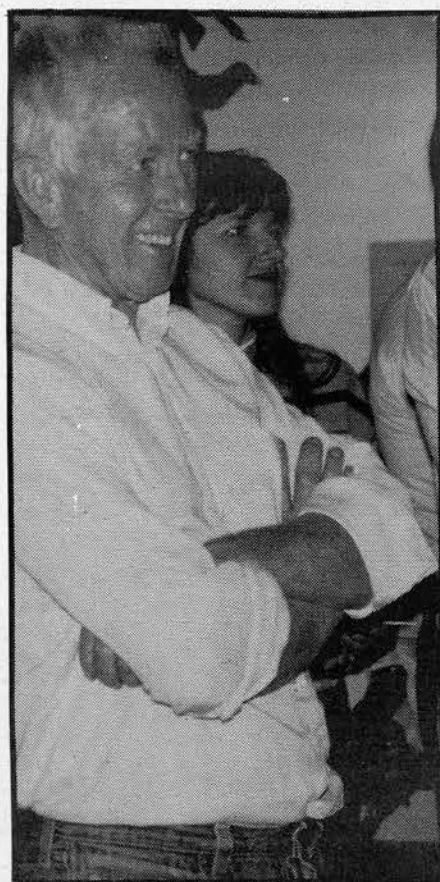
Spring visitors

Two-time Pulitzer Prize winner Tom Knudson dropped in during the spring break with his wife Eileen and almost 5-year-old daughter Kristen. Tom is spending this year as a professional-in-residence at the University of Colorado's Center for Environmental Journalism in Boulder, Colo. Usually, Tom writes about environmental issues for the *Sacramento Bee*.

On a Saturday night he joined some 50 residents of the North Fork Valley at Paonia Town Hall to see wondrous slides of bats and hear a compelling speaker, Dr. David Armstrong, who is known as the "bat man."

A professor of biology who also directs the University Museum at the University of Colorado, Armstrong enthralled his audience with bat lore. Anyone who cared to could also touch one of the dozens of preserved yet still furry bats he brought along. Armstrong proposed a "Bat Count" day in Delta County and encouraged residents to construct and install bat houses to attract the insect-eating mammals. Armstrong's talk in Paonia was sponsored by the Black Canyon Audubon Society.

Mark Kramer and Lisa Moreno came by to pick up a T-shirt while visiting friends and family in the area. They live in Washington, D.C., where Mark works for the Office of Management and Budget and Lisa is a legislative assistant for Colorado Rep. Pat Schroeder.



Brant Calkin of SUWA

Amy J. O'Connor

A Calkin celebration

More than 100 admirers of Brant Calkin gathered in Salt Lake City recently to wish the executive director of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance well as he concludes 30 years of work in environmental activism. Brant, with the help of associate director Susan Tixier, took SUWA from 1,000 members to 10,000 in just five years. A former national president for the Sierra Club, Brant had received its highest honor, the John Muir Award.

At the retirement bash, the award ceremony quickly lurched toward parodies and skits. One, we hear, featured a Green Goddess, sent to Utah just to roast the flat-topped Calkin.

His next challenge — once a replacement is selected — is sailing with Susan to the Sea of Cortez and Baja California.

All proceeds from the event went toward a scholarship for SUWA interns, called the Flat Earth Intern Scholarship Fund. For \$20, contributors to the fund will receive a green T-shirt with a Brant Calkin likeness drawn by Jim Stiles, intrepid newspaper publisher of *Canyon Country Zephyr* in Moab, Utah.

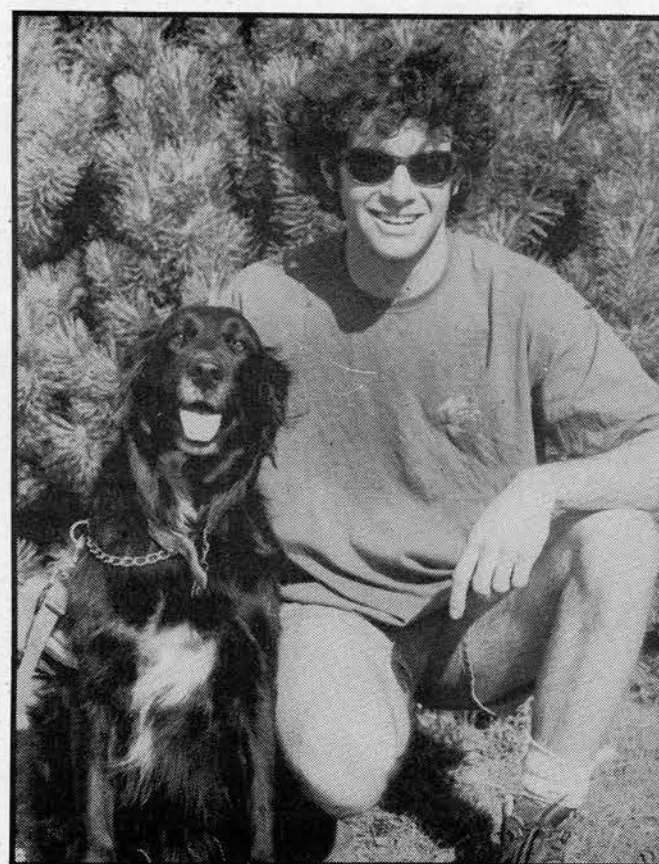
SUWA is at 1471 South 1100 East, Salt Lake City, UT 84105.

Odds and ends

Ray Rasker, who was mentioned in two stories in the last issue, wants us to clarify his title: He works full time for the Wilderness Society and is an adjunct researcher in the political science department of Montana State University.

While illustrator-proofreader Diane Sylvain takes a two-month break to tour Ireland and Scotland, Marion Stewart, a former columnist and reporter for the *Sheboygan Press*, in Sheboygan, Wisc., has joined *High Country News* as fact-checker and proofreader. Lisa Cook, the wife of assistant editor Paul Larmer, has taken a different part of Diane's job, drawing some five maps for this issue.

Great Basin watcher Jon Christensen tells us we completely ignored Nevada in our introduction to our special issue April 5 on small towns squirming under development pressure. He points out that Las Vegas is one of the West's larger cities,



Greg Peterson with Look

Cindy Wehling

with some 250,000 people, and that Reno has boomed recently to 134,000 people.

"It is no surprise that Nevada remains the fastest growing state in the nation with a 50 percent growth rate and a population around 1.2 million," Jon points out, "what with the behemoth California spilling eastward into the 'West.'"

New intern

New intern Greg Peterson comes to us most recently from Aspen just over McClure Pass. For the last three years he has worked winters as a ski and snowboard technician and summers as a busser at the Woody Creek Tavern, known as the haunt of writer Hunter S. Thompson. He also volunteered some time at Hunter and Amory Lovins' Rocky Mountain Institute in Old Snowmass.

Lured to Colorado by its abundant snow, Greg says in college he was a frustrated surfer. "Then, when I moved to Colorado, I discovered snowboarding and it took over my life."

Now the "recovering ski bum" hopes to pursue a career in journalism, which he discovered during a college internship with Rep. George Miller, D-Calif. There Greg also discovered an interest in environmental law. But that was just before he graduated from the University of California at Santa Barbara and went off to Aspen to investigate snow. Greg hopes his Paonia stint will point him finally toward newspaper work.

— Betsy Marston for the staff

HOTLINE

Predator control halted

In a dramatic response to legal pressure from the Humane Society, the Bureau of Land Management will stop killing coyotes, mountain lions and other predators on virtually all land the agency administers in the West. No trappers from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal Damage Control branch will be permitted to kill predators on any BLM lands in Montana, Wyoming or Arizona, reports the *Billings Gazette*. Most BLM lands in Utah, Nevada, Oregon and New Mexico are also off limits,

officials said. The decision affects a large area, including 8 million acres in Montana and 18 million in Wyoming. But the agency said "emergency control" of coyotes, foxes and other predators can continue where ranchers have sustained continued livestock losses. Larry Handergard, Animal Damage Control director in Montana, said the decision came at the agency's busiest time of year when trappers protect vulnerable lambs and calves. "Our ability to help the livestock producers will be impacted severely," he warned. The Humane Society had appealed ADC operation in eight BLM districts in Wyoming, Nevada and Utah,

charging the agency with killing wildlife without current plans or environmental review. The Department of Interior's Board of Land Appeals agreed, and in a March 26 order gave the BLM districts 10 days to "show cause" why it allowed predator control without proper plans. The BLM responded by directing all field offices that might be out of compliance to stop predator control activities. Susan Hagood, a wildlife specialist for the Humane Society, said "I sure didn't expect this kind of domino effect. They're reacting so eagerly, there may be more skeletons in their closet than we've found so far."

WESTERN ROUNDUP

Owls may protect Southwest forests

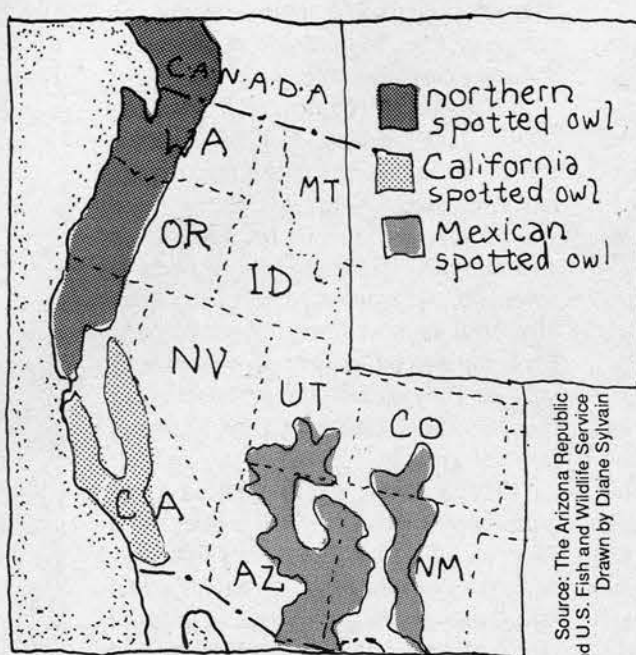
In a move that promises to stir the debate between environmentalists and the timber industry, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will list the Mexican spotted owl as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act.

The April 15 listing, the agency said, was necessary because timber cutting has removed much of the bird's preferred habitat of old-growth forests throughout the Southwest.

To save the estimated 2,160 surviving Mexican spotted owls, federal agencies will tighten logging restrictions on national forests in Arizona, New Mexico and parts of Utah and Colorado.

"This should functionally end public-lands logging of large trees in the Southwest since there're so few trees left," said Phoenix physician Robin Silver. The Audubon Society activist first petitioned to list the owl in 1989.

Timber industry representatives predict that protecting the owls will reduce timber cutting by more than two-thirds and cost thousands of jobs, reports *The Arizona Republic*. "I don't think the listing has anything to do with the biology of the owl," said Elmer Richardson, regional manager for Stone Forest Industries in Flagstaff, Ariz. "It's just somebody's guess that populations have been dropping." The listing was the final straw in a litany of federal habitat protection moves that led to the company closing its



Flagstaff mill, he added.

But Jim Norton, southwest regional director of The Wilderness Society, said automation and overcutting were the real culprits. "They were already packing their bags, and the owl and environmentalists are convenient scapegoats," Norton added.

Observers on all sides are waiting to see how tougher protection plans affect pending timber sales. On the Gila National Forest, for example, planned timber cuts over the next seven years would cover virtually all of Bearwallow Mountain — an ecologically unique island of forest that is prime habitat for the Mexican spotted owl and several other imper-

iled species. The new listing could reduce or even eliminate these sales, said Bob Yost, timber specialist for the forest.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said it will propose "critical habitat," lands protected as essential to the owl's survival, by November 1993. Potential timber sales now include about 50 percent of the owl's remaining habitat.

The Fish and Wildlife Service will try to prevent a polarized battle by including all parties in drawing up protection and recovery plans. A "recovery team" will draw on expertise from other federal and state agencies, scientists from the United States and Mexico, Native American groups and special interest groups, and will draft a recovery plan within two-and-a-half years, said Tom Smylie of Fish and Wildlife. The agency also emphasizes that any actions to save the owl will consider impacts on local economies.

Final logging restrictions will come out of negotiations between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Forest Service — agencies with often conflicting agendas. But Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt has said he believes the timber industry can continue in the Southwest with a minimum of job loss if the agencies and other parties work together.

— Ernie Atencio

The writer is a former HCN intern.

Why Arizonans voted for leg-hold traps

The effort to ban leg-hold traps and similar devices in Arizona started as a triumph of grass-roots involvement. It ended for activists as a lesson in power.

Along the way, the debate also demonstrated the effectiveness of a saturation television campaign, the clout ranchers wield and the broadened agenda of the National Rifle Association.

Trap opponents spent several years trying to convince the state legislature to ban steel-jawed traps, snares and similar devices on public lands. The 200 licensed trappers in Arizona report about 2,000 kills annually, down from a peak of 29,000 in 1980. But trap bans invariably died in rancher-friendly legislative committees, in deference to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, whose figures put losses to predators statewide at about 4,900 calves and 11,500 sheep.

The struggle entered a new phase two years ago when Phoenix attorney and one-time mayoral candidate Gil Shaw decided to organize an initiative against trapping. But Shaw made one mistake in drafting what became Proposition 200. The initiative's preamble read: "We desire to manage our wildlife and protect our property by humane and non-lethal methods."

That sentence became the crux of the multimillion-dollar struggle. Shaw says he inserted that phrase to make sure that trappers didn't come up with a new type of trap not specifically banned in the body of the initiative.

Opponents seized on that language, insisting it would open the door to a ban on hunting and fishing.

Initially, Shaw and his supporters in Arizona for Safety and Humanity on Pub-

lic Lands (ASHPL) remained optimistic. A poll showed that two-thirds of the voters supported a ban on steel-jawed traps and the Arizona Attorney General's Office and recently retired state Supreme Court Chief Justice Frank Gordon both held that the initiative would have no impact on hunting and fishing.

Then the Wildlife Legislative Fund sprang its big-money trap. The group formed several years ago to fight a trap ban in Ohio. It won that fight and transformed itself into a national lobbying organization, gradually building up a national mailing list of some 2 million people. The Fund also forged close ties with the National Rifle Association and other outposts of the "wise use" movement. The Fund made defeating Proposition 200 a national cause.

Ultimately, opponents of Proposition 200 raised nearly \$2 million, most of it from the NRA, ranchers, trappers and hunters nationwide. The money financed a TV ad blitz depicting Proposition 200 as a back-door effort by animal rights extremists to ban hunting and fishing.

The ad blitz overwhelmed ASHPL, which ultimately raised \$150,000 — about one third in the form of in-kind contributions. Television stations which did air ASHPL's ads refused to show graphic scenes of animals in traps, which ASHPL hoped would galvanize public opposition.

The newspapers also shied away from showing still pictures of animals in traps, although most news stories remained favorable, and editorial cartoonists savaged the opposition. On the other hand, most editorial boards, including the state's largest newspaper, *The Arizona*

Republic, opposed the initiative.

Finally, both Gov. Fife Symington and Attorney General Grant Woods came out against the measure, saying they supported a trap ban but worried about the effect on hunters.

In the end, Proposition 200 garnered barely 40 percent of the vote.

Lawmakers did introduce a ban on traps on public lands in the current legislative session. Symington backed the ban, after some complicated back-scenes maneuvering aimed at getting trap ban supporters to accept the use of padded traps.

However, House Natural Resources, Agriculture and Rural Development Committee chairman Greg Patterson refused to hold hearings on the bill. The state Game and Fish Commission set up a series of hearings to rewrite trapping regulations to require "padded" traps. But trap opponents say the commission acted to undercut any legislative trap ban.

The effort to ban traps on public lands in Arizona now appears crushed. It's unlikely the measure will be assigned to another committee by House Speaker Mark Killian, the Mesa, Ariz., Republican who last year introduced a "takings" bill that made him a hero of the wise use groups. It also appears unlikely that Symington will expend much political capital on a trap ban in a year fraught with agonizing budget deficit problems and huge spending cuts.

— Peter Aleshire

Peter Aleshire reports from Phoenix, Arizona.

HOTLINE

An unconventional appointment

Daniel P. Beard, a frequent critic of traditional water reclamation projects, is President Clinton's nominee for commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation. Currently staff director of the Natural Resources Committee in the House of Representatives, Beard was an architect of a landmark bill passed last year that loosened agriculture's hold on cheap federal water in the state of California (*HCN*, 10/2/92). Both environmentalists and urban water interests embraced the nomination. "He is the first commissioner truly in touch with the future of water in the West," said Guy Martin, a Washington attorney who represents an association of Western urban water agencies, in the *Los Angeles Times*. Under President Jimmy Carter, Beard served as a deputy secretary in the Department of Interior. Carter angered many traditional water interests in the West by developing a "hit list" of expendable federal water projects. If confirmed, Beard must grapple with the future of the proposed Animas-La Plata project in southern Colorado. The 91-year-old Bureau of Reclamation employs 7,500 people and has a \$894 million budget, \$564 million of which is allocated to construction.

What rough beast ...

Once consigned to the fossil-fuel scrap heap, oil shale might rise again thanks to a new process that produces crude oil for about \$30 a barrel. The Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, which developed the technology, says it wants to field test a 100-ton-per-day pilot project, probably in Colorado's Piceance Basin. Unocal Corp., which built and operated a 10,000-barrel-per-day shale plant north of Parachute, Colo., in the 1980s, is participating in the research. Shale beds in the area hold an estimated 600 billion barrels of recoverable oil, rivaling the Persian Gulf's reserves. Livermore researcher Robert Cena says the new technology is economical because it cooks rock more efficiently than the natural gas Unocal used in its failed process. The retort also minimizes sulfur wastes, generates electricity and bypasses several expensive upgrade processes, he adds. Although its price of \$30 a barrel is still about \$10 higher than current oil prices, Cena says a number of shale by-products, ranging from adhesives to asphalt-base, can be produced at that price.

BARBS

Straight talk from the other Washington.

By the year 2052, "everybody in the state will either be in prison or be a prison guard," unless the state changes its mandatory sentencing laws, warns Washington Gov. Mike Lowry in the *Tacoma News Tribune*.

HOTLINE

Too exotic for Wyoming

For the third time since 1989, Wyoming Game and Fish officials rejected requests for the introduction of 14 species of exotic or non-native animals on a northeastern Wyoming ranch (HCN, 4/9/90). John Dorrance III wants to create a game farm containing such species as the European boar, Arctic wolf, chamois, markhor, ibex, and various species of deer and sheep. But state officials have long said that exotic species pose a threat to native wildlife. If they escape, they could hybridize with native animals, compete for food and space, and introduce exotic diseases to the range. "Everybody has their own opinion, but I don't think the state of Wyoming is ready for game ranching," said Game and Fish Commission Chairman D.C. Rusty Holler.

Trawler catches a leviathan

It was dark and quiet as an Oregon fishing boat cruised off the coast of Washington. Suddenly, the boat was jerked off course and dragged through the Pacific at twice its original speed. Its nets had made the grandest catch of all: a U.S. Navy submarine. "It was the closest I've ever come to losing a boat," Frank Oxford, skipper of the 88-foot steel-hulled trawler, told *The Oregonian*. As churning water began to engulf the stern, Oxford yelled at the crew to get out the life raft. A tool to cut the cable lay below deck, but the captain was afraid the boat would sink and take anyone trying to fetch it to his death. "The boat was laid over so hard that I almost didn't want to come back in (to the cabin) and call a mayday," the skipper said. Oxford then started to tinker with the winch in hope of breaking the net free. Finally, the cable snapped off its spool and the trawler halted its rush through the water. The captain said if the cable had been any newer, "we probably wouldn't be here today."

Defenders magazine fires fiery writer

Michael Frome, one of the West's most respected and outspoken environmental writers, has landed in hot water again.

Frome, who was axed by *American Forests* magazine in 1971 and *Field and Stream* magazine in 1974 for being too strident and controversial, has now been dismissed by *Defenders* magazine as a regular columnist.

Defenders officials say Frome's column — a regular feature for 16 years — was not canceled because of its contentious content, but because the magazine has undergone a top-down reorganization. Published by *Defenders* of Wildlife, the magazine has been trimmed from six to four issues per year, and when the editors put together an issue on a single theme, they don't want Frome writing about a completely unrelated topic, said *Defenders* president Rodger Schlickeisen.

"It's my understanding that Michael wants to write on his own subjects and that he doesn't take direction well," Schlickeisen said. "It really hit home when we put out a special issue on biodiversity, except for two pages devoted to Mike's column, which was totally unrelated to biodiversity. Here the issue hung together really well, and then we had one aberration."

Frome slammed *Defenders* for switching priorities from hard-hitting environmental writing to "safe" topics.

"I endeavor to focus on specifics, accountability and action," he said, "where an organization like *Defenders* evidently prefers the benign, environmentally politically correct approaches associated with biodiversity, Amazon rain forest, whales and wolves and, as in the current issue of *Defenders*, 'The Leopold Legacy.'"

Frome said these were "catchy issues that appeal to public sentiment without offending, certainly without offending potential contributors."

In short, Frome's singular ability to boldly challenge threats to wildlife and the environment — with nary a concern about offending anyone — has gotten him in trouble again. But Frome, now in his early 70s, isn't concerned about his welfare.

"Anyone claiming to be an environ-

mental journalist who fails to expose an issue of controversy and to stir debate is not doing his or her job," he said. "There's plenty of people to write the company line. My attitude is to let the company line follow me."

"I'm not through ... I'm writing books, I'm teaching, and there's new magazines sprouting all the time that are looking for fresh viewpoints."

Even so, Frome says his dismissal is disturbing in that it comes on the heels of several environmental writers who were dismissed or moved from long-held posts for being too pro-environment or controversial. They include Philip Shabecoff at *The New York Times* and Dick Manning at the *Missoulian*.

Given Frome's following as a no-holds-barred writer, *Defenders* could lose some members and subscribers. "No writer in America has more persistently and effectively argued for the need of national ethics of environmental stewardship than Michael Frome," said former Sen. Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin.

In 1974, Frome's ouster from *Field and Stream* made big news, sparking features in *Time* magazine, daily newspapers, *High Country News*, and *Outdoor America*.

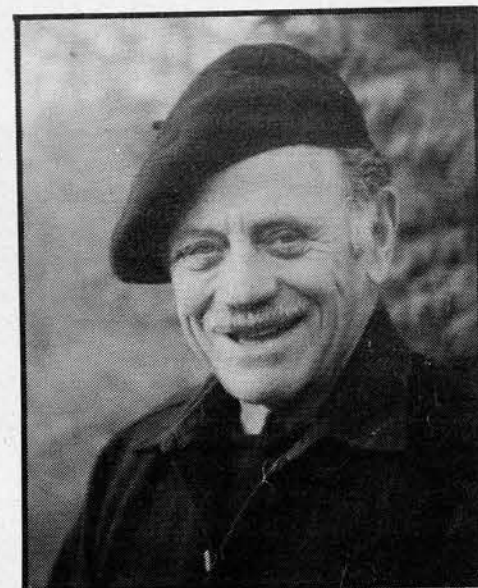
"Frome has raised the consciousness of millions of readers from bag limits and such to the real questions of what's happening to our resources and what can be done to protect them," said Joseph Browder, director of the Environmental Policy Center in Washington, D.C., in the Nov. 4, 1974, *Time* magazine.

Long-time friend Paul Fritz, a Boise environmentalist and retired National Park Service superintendent, said Frome is in a class of his own. "I consider Michael Frome the most controversial environmental writer in the country," Fritz says. "You either love him or you hate him — there's no in-between."

Frome lives in Bellingham on the Washington coast, where he teaches environmental journalism at Western Washington University and works on several books. His books include *Conscience of a Conservationist*, *Promised Land — Adventures and Encounters with Wild America*, *Regreening the National Parks*, and a popular guide to America's national

parks, which has sold over 500,000 copies.

A New York City native, Frome launched his writing career as a newspaper reporter and travel writer for the *L.A. Times*. In the 1960s, he wrote a column



Michael Frome

for the *Times* called "environmental trails," but as environmental concerns surfaced, he wrote more and more about threats to parks and wild areas.

Considered a pioneer in the contemporary field of environmental journalism, Frome says his dismissal doesn't bode well for national environmental groups.

"Many of these groups have gone from a sense of mission and passion to a point where professionalism, fund-raising and institutionalism are more important than the purpose for which they were created," Frome said. "That's what's frightening about this."

Ted Williams, a regular columnist for *Fly Rod and Reel* magazine, wrote these words recently to former Forest Service regional forester John Mumma and Frome: "You can fire a Frome or Mumma; but you keep hearing them. They get louder and louder until someone gets rattled and justice is served."

—Stephen Stuebner

Steve Stuebner is a free-lance reporter in Boise, Idaho.

In NM: Mining reform wins; takings bill loses

New Mexico is no longer one of only two states that do not regulate the mining of hard-rock minerals such as gold, silver and copper. The state shed that dubious distinction — leaving Arizona as the lone state — when its legislature approved in March a bill designed to prevent pollution and restore the land for post-mining use.

Hammered out over seven weeks of intensive negotiations between environmentalists and the New Mexico mining industry, the bill was a top priority of Gov. Bruce King. But it is a classic piece of compromise legislation and not without its flaws, supporters say. It does not, for example, impose reclamation requirements on the state's huge, old, open-pit operations that have been around for decades.

It also does not declare some environmentally sensitive areas off limits to mining, as environmentalists originally wanted. But, in a major concession by the mining industry, the bill allows citizens to sue mining companies that violate environmental law or terms set out in mining permits. A new regulatory program under the law may take two years to set up.

Passage of the hard-rock bill alone caused New Mexico environmentalists to rate the 1993 legislative session, which ended March 20, a success. On other issues, most gave the legislative session mixed reviews.

One of their disappointments was Gov. King's failure to introduce legislation he promised during the 1990 campaign, including protection of whistleblowers in state government and the creation of a state environmental review process for projects that would affect the environment.

King was also criticized for telling a farming magazine that he supported a "takings" bill asserting the supremacy of private property rights over some environmental and safety regulations. Labor unions allied with conservation groups squashed that bill, called the Property Protection Act, calling it a blatant attempt to circumvent regulations that protect workers and the environment.

In other action:

• The House Energy and Natural Resources Committee shot down a bill that would have given the state the

authority to not protect species classified as threatened or endangered by the federal government — but not before the Senate passed it on a 21-11 vote. The bill died after an official with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said it would put the state at odds with the Endangered Species Act and lead to the cancellation of a "cooperative agreement" which channels \$68,000 in federal funds to the state to enforce the act.

• Environmentalists staved off several assaults on the state Solid Waste Act. One would have allowed municipalities to adopt weaker regulations governing landfills than are currently allowed by state laws.

• Legislators amended the state Hazardous Waste Act to give the state authority to impose tougher standards than the federal government's on activities such as the disposal and incineration of hazardous wastes.

• Lawmakers strengthened the state's ability to regulate sludge and septic wastes, which are a major contributor to groundwater pollution, and they passed a law requiring the use of rubber from recy-

cled tires in paving materials.

• The Senate conservation committee rejected a bottle bill that has been killed by the bottling industry several years running. Lawmakers did establish a task force made up of industry and environmentalists to see if a compromise bill can be worked out for the next legislative session.

• Environmentalists failed to pass legislation that would have cancelled state funding of the federal Animal Damage Control program, which kills predators to protect livestock.

Environmentalists said that overall the Legislature was more receptive than in the past to their concerns. But they spent the bulk of their time fighting off anti-environmental bills.

Said Sally Rogers of the Conservation Voters Alliance, "I look forward to the day when we don't measure success by our ability to kill off bad bills in order to maintain the status quo."

—Keith Easthouse

The writer free-lances in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

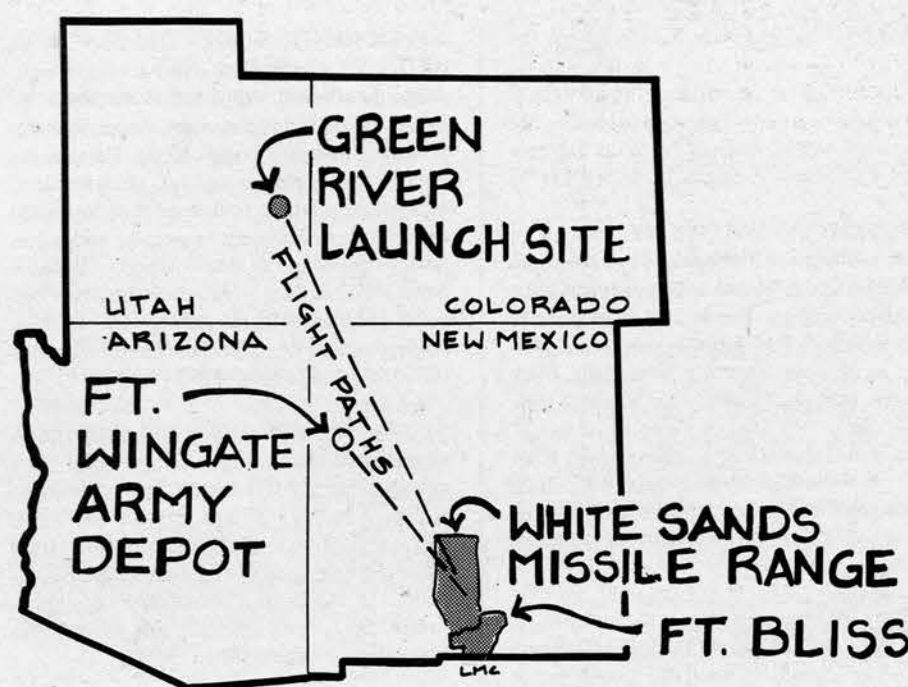
Missile plan shoots for the West

Missiles may fly across Utah and New Mexico under a new proposal from the U.S. Army. The Army hopes to launch missiles from a site near Green River, Utah, and then shoot them down 750 miles away over New Mexico's White Sands Missile Range.

Army officials told the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance that each missile would drop a 10-foot booster weighing nearly a ton near Hatch Point, 15 miles east of Canyonlands National Park. The Army also said helicopters would evacuate backcountry visitors before firing its missiles.

The Army is also considering sites in the Gulf of Mexico, off the coast of southern California, and in the South Pacific.

Ed Vaughn, spokesman for the Army's Space and Strategic Defense Command in Huntsville, Ala., says Congress authorized the "Theatre Missile Defense Extended Test Range" plan in the Missile Defense Act of 1991. It authorizes the Army to test a defensive missile system better than the Patriot missile system which shot down Iraqi Scud missiles during the Persian Gulf conflict. Vaughn says the Army hopes to complete a draft environmental impact statement by September and obtain final approval for



the plan in 1994.

Scott Groene of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance says the timetable "seems real quick: They've made it so no one can organize." The Army has already held scoping meetings in Green River and Salt Lake City. Additional scoping meetings are scheduled for 2:30 p.m. April 27 in Albuquerque, N.M., at the Holiday Inn-

Pyramid, 5151 San Francisco Rd., NE, and 1 p.m., April 29 in Gallup, N.M., at the Holiday Inn, 2915 Highway 66 West. For more information, contact Ed Vaughn at 205/955-3887.

Lisa Cook

— Paul Larmer

The writer is HCN assistant editor.

HOTLINE

They're thinking West

At the Wyoming Division of Tourism in Cheyenne, phones have been so busy with callers wanting travel information the state has had to hire two extra people to field requests. Travel Montana, Montana's tourism promotion arm, has added four new phone lines into the state penitentiary in Deer Lodge, where inmates answer the state's toll-free tourist hotline. Across the region, dramatic early season travel interest in the Northern Rockies portends another booming tourism season, experts say. "The phone lines have been jammed," said Wyoming Tourism Director Gene Bryan. "There's still an incredible amount of interest in the West." Rangers at Yellowstone National Park, which last year logged a record 3.1 million visitors, have mailed out more information packets than they had last year at the same time. In 1992, the park handled about 50,000 more phone inquiries than it had the year before, reports the *Billings Gazette*.

Legislature's anti-green crusade is sidetracked

BOISE, Idaho — In mid-February, it appeared that the Idaho Legislature was embarking on an anti-environmental crusade.

The Idaho House of Representatives had repealed several of the state's environmental laws, created new county controls of land-use and water policy decisions, passed a far-reaching "takings" act, and formed new wolf and grizzly bear "oversight committees" that were stacked in favor of ranchers and miners.

But by the time the Legislature adjourned in late March, the more moderate state Senate had killed most of those bills or softened them considerably. Gov. Cecil Andrus vetoed a takings bill for the third year in a row. And in the end, the Legislature's environmental accomplishments took on a slightly different light. Lawmakers:

- Protected nearly 200 miles of the world-renowned Henry's Fork basin from new dams and diversions, and 170 miles of the Boise River basin.
- Doled out \$500,000 to implement a water-quality protection program for the Middle Snake River, a highly polluted stream near Twin Falls that authorities have called "an open sewer."
- Objected to: endangered species listings without first considering economic impacts; a national park study of Hells Canyon; the listing of the Bruneau Hot Springs snail as an endangered species.
- Revised the state's air quality laws so they are not any more stringent than the newly revised federal Clean Air Act.
- Reduced bonding requirements for small surface and placer mines to \$1,800 per acre instead of the amount judged necessary by state environmental officials.

Andrus and Republican lawmakers singled out the passage of the Henry's Fork protection plan as the "high water mark" of the legislative session from an environmental point of view. Although the Henry's Fork bill was narrowly defeated by four votes in the Idaho House last year, the measure passed both chambers unanimously this year.

"They don't make places like the Henry's Fork anymore, and it is our responsibility to be wise enough stewards to protect its waters for future generations," Andrus said in a bill-signing ceremony. "This international treasure now has as its protectors environmentalists, farmers, sportsmen, irrigators and the rest of the people of Idaho."

Melinda Harm, lobbyist for the Idaho Conservation League, summed up the session by saying, "It could have been a lot

and dedicate them for in-stream flows. Harm pointed out that ICL couldn't get a bill introduced on groundwater contamination that defines who pays for cleaning up fouled aquifers.

Environmental lobbies did succeed in killing or amending several bills that could have been devastating to the state's environmental future. The House had passed a number of potentially harmful measures at the urging of the Idaho Farm Bureau, a powerful lobby in that chamber.

'They don't make places like the Henry's Fork anymore.'

— Idaho Gov. Cecil Andrus

worse. We killed or amended some really bad bills in the senate, and we're lucky to have the governor's veto of the takings legislation."

Due to a Republican landslide in last fall's election, Andrus had just a one-vote margin in the senate to sustain a veto. But since lawmakers passed the takings bill so late in the session, they had already adjourned by the time the governor vetoed it. The bill would have required state agencies to conduct a "takings impact assessment" for any environmental regulations that were deemed to place an undue financial burden on polluting landowners.

Wendy Wilson, executive director of Idaho Rivers United, said she was pleased that her group had won passage of the Henry's Fork and Boise River protection plans, but expressed dismay about the lack of progress on other fronts.

Wilson was disappointed, for example, that her group couldn't get a Senate committee to introduce a bill that would allow farmers to retire their water rights

Out of 70 House members, 50 are Republican, 30 percent of whom are farmers or ranchers.

Bills creating a state-run management program for wolves and grizzly bears could have stripped about \$290,000 in federal funding for protection of all endangered species in the state, including peregrine falcons and bald eagles. That's because states cannot enact laws that are hostile to endangered species, or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has to yank federal funding, officials said.

The wolf bill, crafted by the Independent Miners Association, would have downlisted wolves from "endangered" to "threatened" and allowed ranchers to shoot wolves seen threatening their livestock. The grizzly bear bill would have created a citizens' oversight committee with seniority over a biological committee, and it would have eliminated the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness as a new recovery area for grizzlies, a threatened species.

Another bill would have gutted the

state's minimum stream flow law, allowing lawmakers to kill a minimum-flow proposal in committee or at any stage of the legislation process. As it is now, lawmakers have to draft legislation opposing a minimum-flow proposal and pass it through both chambers. Only 1 percent of the state's streams have been designated with a minimum flow; all are junior to senior water rights.

The Farm Bureau also went after the state Fish and Game Department, drafting a bill that would have given county commissioners veto power over any lands purchased by the department. That measure drew the ire of the Idaho Realtors Association, which objected to county government telling private landowners to whom they can sell their land.

"If I wanted to sell my property, and Fish and Game was a ready, able and willing buyer, I'd find it appalling that there's a level of government that could get in the way of the land sale," said Mark Dunham, lobbyist for the Realtors.

Farm Bureau lobbyists, who seek to stop Fish and Game from buying land for wildlife habitat because it often takes the land out of agricultural production, killed a seemingly innocuous bill on controlled hunt fees. State Treasurer Lydia Justice Edwards sought to change the way Idaho manages controlled-hunt permit applications to save money and paperwork. The Farm Bureau saw the legislation as raising about \$250,000 for Fish and Game.

Edwards lashed out at the Farm Bureau for allegedly lying in its testimony to kill the legislation. "This is the most dishonest way to act for a lobbying group," she said.

Farm Bureau lobbyist Jim Yost shot back, "She must have woke up too early this morning, put on her pantyhose too tight and cut off the blood to her brain." Yost was reportedly reprimanded for his remark by Farm Bureau colleagues.

— Steve Stuebner

The writer free-lances in Boise, Idaho.

Unclassifieds

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

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THE ENDANGERED SPECIES COALITION seeks Campaign Director to work with Coalition staff, steering committee and task forces to strengthen federal endangered species program. Experience required with successful political/legislative efforts, coalitions, media/grass-roots campaigns. Salary: \$40,000-\$60,000. Send résumé to: Endangered Species Coalition, 666 Pennsylvania Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20003. (2x7b)

THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY, a national conservation organization, seeks a director for its Salt Lake City, Utah, office. Director will have major responsibility for Society's campaign to protect nearly 6 million acres of Colorado Plateau wildlands. Position requires work with Congress, federal land management agencies, media and grass-roots activists. Director will also work with TWS national staff on fund-raising, media and analytical projects. B.A. required; post-graduate education in natural resources or related fields highly desirable. Experience in public-lands management, public speaking, fund-raising and environmental policy/advocacy also desirable. Send résumé to Darrell Knuffke, TWS, 7475 Dakin St., Suite 410, Denver, CO 80221. (2x7b)

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Mineral Policy Center, a small national environmental organization, seeks a Communications Director to build public awareness for mining reform issues. Major responsibilities include aggressive press outreach efforts and production of organizational publications.

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The Wyoming Lynching of Cattle Kate, 1889

A new book on the first public land grazing dispute. Did Ellen Watson (Cattle Kate) barter sex for calves or was this about land and water rights? Was Jim Averell a rustler or a homesteader who dared challenge the entrenched cattlemen? Never-before-published photos and research. 368 pp, 47 photos. Softcover \$15; hardcover \$25; leather \$67; all postpaid. Free catalog.

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FREE INFORMATION PACKET on the endangered salmon crisis in the Pacific Northwest. Get on the mailing list for salmon updates and learn how you can help. The fish need your voice. Friends of Wild Salmon-HCN, P.O. Box 427, Eagle, ID 83616. (3x7b)

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SIERRA CLUB, ASSOCIATE REPRESENTATIVE, WISE USE MOVEMENT: Sierra Club has immediate need for conservation professional to advocate reform of 1872 Mining Law and block "wise use" groups. Work to protect wilderness lands, wildlife, reform outdated policies. Position located in Reno, is full-time temporary for one year. Salary: \$2,333/mo. + benefits. Excellent communication, organizational and motivational skills; knowledge of public-lands issues, especially mining; extensive experience as environmental advocate, media background, ability to work independently and good computer skills are required. Send letter, résumé and references by April 27 to: Barbara Boyle, Sierra Club-WUM, 4171 Piedmont Ave., #204, Oakland, CA 94611. We are an EOE committed to workforce diversity. (1x7b)

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE during 1993 for science teachers for courses in biology, geology, archaeology and ornithology at Four Corners School in Monticello, Utah. Recertification credits available — graduate or undergraduate. For an application and information, contact FCS, P.O. Box 1029, Monticello, UT 84535, or call 801/587-2156. Application deadline is June 1, 1993. (3x6b)

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ASPEN CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES needs Education Coordinator. Administer/teach environmental education for area schools and other duties associated with wildlife sanctuary. Qualifications: Educational background in natural sciences, environmental education, or related field; minimum four years experience teaching environmental education. Salary commensurate with experience. Benefits. Send résumé, three work references, two personal references (name/phone), and creative writing sample to: ACES Ed. Coordinator, Box 8777, Aspen, CO 81612-8777. (2x6b)

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE for traditional and non-traditional teachers for a course entitled "Teaching Environmental Ethics," June 19-26 and July 17-24, 1993. For an application and information, write Four Corners School, P.O. Box 1029, Monticello, UT 84535, or call 801/587-2156. Deadline: May 1, 1993. Graduate and undergraduate college credit available. (3x6b)

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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. (3x3p)

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"**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. (7x5-eoi)

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We may never see a better time than the present to put an end to the Animal Damage Control (ADC) Program. With President Clinton's new economic strategy to cut all unnecessary federal spending, now is our chance to see that the new administration as well as our Congress people know exactly how we feel about the ADC. Wildlife Damage Review staff feels strongly that your response at this particular time will make a huge impact on Clinton's economic advisors. **WE URGE YOU TO TAKE THE TIME AND WRITE TO THE NEW ADMINISTRATION.**

Our suggestions for what to include in a letter are as follows:

- The ADC exists as a blatant subsidy to the livestock industry. Taxpayers should not be expected to provide a zero-risk business environment for anyone. We demand a leaner and more efficient government in which public interests, not private interest, are served first.
- The ADC predator control program is neither cost effective nor biologically sound. In 1992 the ADC spent over 45 million taxpayer dollars to kill wildlife on public lands and to develop poisons and control techniques for wild animals. Most of these techniques are indiscriminate and place threatened and endangered species in jeopardy. At the same time the government spends millions to kill predators, it also funds multi-million-dollar programs to protect and reintroduce endangered species.
- In fiscal year 1992 over 109,000 predatory mammals and more than 1.5 million birds were "reported" killed by the ADC. Its killing methods — poison baits, traps, snares, denning and aerial gunning — are indiscriminate and inhumane.
- Ranchers need to be responsible for protecting their own livestock and doing so with non-lethal techniques.
- We demand that this outdated tax-supported federal war on wildlife come to an end, and that the government begin to protect our natural heritage.

Make copies of your letter and send to as many of these people as possible:

1. Your U.S. Senators, Washington, DC 20510
2. Your U.S. Representative, Washington, DC 20515
3. Dept. of Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy, USDA, 14th and Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250
4. White House Office on Environmental Policy, Kathleen McGinty, Old Executive Office Bldg., Room 358, Washington, DC 20501
5. Leon Panetta, Director, Office of Management and Budget, 725 17th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20503
6. Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of the Interior, Mail Stop 6218, 1849 C Street N.W., Washington, DC 20240
7. Jim Baca, Assistant to the Secretary of the Interior (Director Bureau of Land Management, designée), Mail Stop 6218, 1849 C Street N.W., Washington, DC 20240
8. George Frampton, Assistant to the Secretary of the Interior (Under-Secretary of the Interior designée), Mail Stop 6218, Rm. 4312, 1849 C Street N.W., Washington, DC 20240
9. Senate: Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies, Chairman Dale Bumpers, SD-140, US Senate, Washington, DC 20510
10. House: Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies, Chairman Richard Durbin, 10 Room 2362, RHOB, US House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20026
11. USDA/Office of the Inspector General, POB 33399, Washington, DC 20026

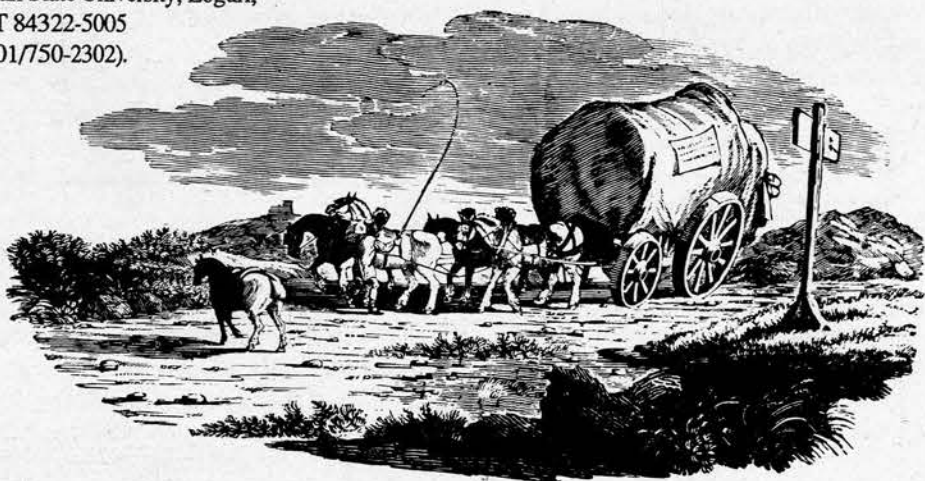


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BULLETIN BOARD

HOW TO MANAGE THE RESOURCE

Utah State University hosts an ambitious symposium April 21-23 called *Conflicts in Natural Resources Management: Integrating Social and Ecological Concerns*. Speakers include Charles Wilkinson, Moses Lasky Professor of Law at the University of Colorado, who will share "Lessons from the Colorado River Plateau," and Montana forest supervisor Orville Daniels who will present a case study on "Integrating Resource Management: Lolo National Forest." Other speakers include Joseph Chapman, dean of the College of Natural Resources at Utah State University, James B. Ruch, executive vice president of Grand Canyon Trust, and Ed Marston, publisher of *High Country News*. For more information, contact Joanna Endter-Wada, College of Natural Resources, Utah State University, Logan, UT 84322-5215 (801/750-2487) or Lisa Anderson, Conferences and Institutes Division, Utah State University, Logan, UT 84322-5005 (801/750-2302).



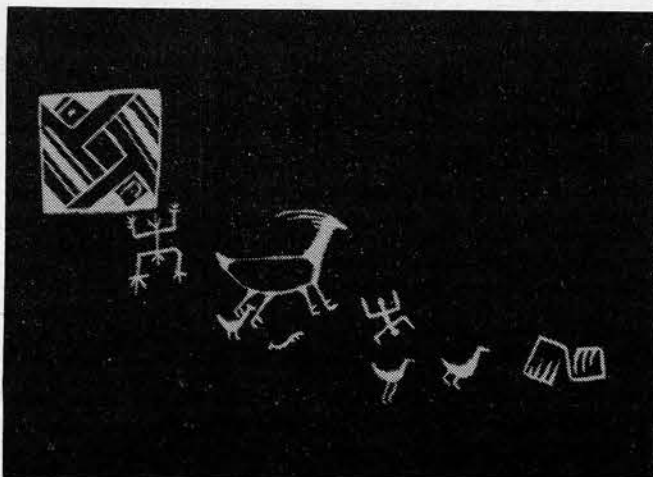
GREEN AT WORK

Working to protect the environment once meant picking up trash along a river or writing a letter to an insensitive member of Congress. Today, environmental work has taken on an expanded meaning, says Susan Cohen, author of *Green at Work: Finding a Business Career that Works for the Environment*. Sensitivity to environmental issues and policies is as essential to the corporate executive as it is to the activist, she points out. Cohen describes the current green job market, then lets managers, consultants, financial experts and non-profit workers tell their stories. Their 28 profiles accentuate the diversity of green jobs including a vice president of environmental affairs for Colgate-Palmolive and the business manager of the non-profit Environmental Defense Fund. About half of the 223-page book is dedicated to a corporate directory of companies that employ people with an environmental bent. The directory gives the name of a contact as well as phone and fax numbers to assist the job-seeker.

Island Press, Covelo, CA. 223 pages. Paper: \$16.

WAGONS WEST

The West's "great migration" of 1843 along the 2,000-mile Oregon Trail may pale compared to events planned for a historic re-enactment this summer. Although 1,000 pioneers endured the original trek, as many as 3 million people may participate in the 1993 drive, say sesquicentennial celebration organizers. Wyoming alone anticipates 2 million visitors and plans to spend more than \$250,000 on advertising and trail events such as museum displays and frontier outposts. The wagon train will set off from Independence, Mo., in June, hoping to reach the \$10 million National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center in Oregon City, Ore., by September. The center boasts a life-sized replica of a wagon train complete with ox and featuring mountain man Festus Coopman. "I've seen lots of folks come out of here with tears in their eyes," says Bud Butts, who plays the legendary Coopman. "They've heard all their lives about what Grandma did and how she never complained. Then they saw what it was really like." Pendleton, Ore., resident Jerry Schubert, who has traveled parts of the trail in vintage wagons for the past 10 years, is wagon master for the four-month drive. "I can't wait. I wish we were ready to go tomorrow," Schubert told the *Casper, Wyo., Star-Tribune*. Those wishing to walk alongside the wagon train can do so for \$39 a day. Riding a horse or wagon costs \$59. For more information, contact the Wyoming Division of Tourism at 307/777-7777.



LOOKING OUT FOR PETROGLYPHS

How many visitors can 1,000-year-old rock art endure? Should bike riding, horseback riding and dogs be allowed nearby? What about pooper scoopers? You can help the National Park Service decide questions like this at Petroglyph National Monument near Albuquerque, N.M. The agency wants the public to help decide on a long-term management plan for the monument. A planning team has proposed three alternative plans, which range from almost no development with pedestrian traffic only, to new visitor centers, a new paved road, and horses, dogs and bikes allowed on trails. Native American access to sacred sites in the monument would continue under all three alternatives. The National Park Service offers public workshops and special presentations about the proposed plans through April. Public meetings and review of the draft environmental impact statement will continue from May 1993 through January 1995. For more information, contact the Petroglyph National Monument, National Park Service, 123 Fourth St., S.W., Rm. 101, Albuquerque, NM 87102 (505/766-8375).

DOLLARS TRAIL TO COLORADO

A symposium set for Grand Junction, Colo., May 7, will examine how trails in western Colorado might link into one major system. Club 20, an organization of counties dedicated to economic development of the state's Western Slope, says the goal is to boost tourism. The symposium will be held at the Two Rivers Convention Center in Grand Junction, and the keynote speaker is Stuart McDonald, trails coordinator for the state. Sponsors are Club 20 and the Mesa County River Front Commission. For more information contact Wade Haerle of Club 20 at 303/242-3264.

EXPLORING THE GREAT BASIN

Nevada has more mountain ranges than any other state. Islands in a sea of sagebrush basins, most of the 300-plus ranges are so wild a visitor can wander for days in isolation. Until recently, that meant it helped to go with someone who had gone before. But now the uninitiated can pick through three excellent books to plan a Great Basin backcountry adventure.

The best on-the-ground guide is John Hart's *Hiking the Great Basin*, a Sierra Club Totebook revised, updated and back in print after a long hiatus. Hart covers the high desert Great Basin ecosystem proper, those parts of northern Nevada, western Utah, southeastern Oregon, and eastern California that drain inland. A few important areas are left out (such as the Jarbidge Wilderness, which has streams that flow to the Snake River) and others are mentioned only in passing (Mt. Jefferson and Table Mountain). But the magic and wonder of untrammelled wilderness come through in this book, as exemplified by Morey Peak in the Hot Creek Range in central Nevada and Mt. Moriah in the Snake Range just north of Great Basin National Park. Hart also opens the ecosystem to the visitor, cracking the mystery of how plants such as the ancient bristlecone have adapted to a

changing environment.

Sierra Club Books, 730 Polk St., San Francisco, CA 94109. 406 pages. Maps. Paper: \$15.

The Hiker's Guide to Nevada by Bruce Grubbs is a quick, condensed guide to 50 backcountry hikes, with clear, simple maps, trail descriptions and permit requirements. Little-known peaks and side trips stand out, such as a hike through relict white bark and limber pines on the 9,400-foot Duffer Peak in the Pine Forest Range in far northwestern Nevada.

Falcon Press, P.O. Box 1718, Helena, MT 59624. 109 pages. Maps, photos. Paper: \$9.95.

Although it does not have the detailed directions of a true guidebook, George Wuerthner's *Nevada Mountain Ranges* offers photographic enticements to get out and explore the unique beauty of each of the state's diverse ranges. The text provides geological, ecological and historical analysis, as well as a predictable but compelling polemic against the ravages of cattle — the only other intruders a visitor is likely to find on these remote lands.

American & World Geographic Publishing, P.O. Box 5630, Helena, MT 59604. 96 pages. Photos, maps. Paper: \$15.95.

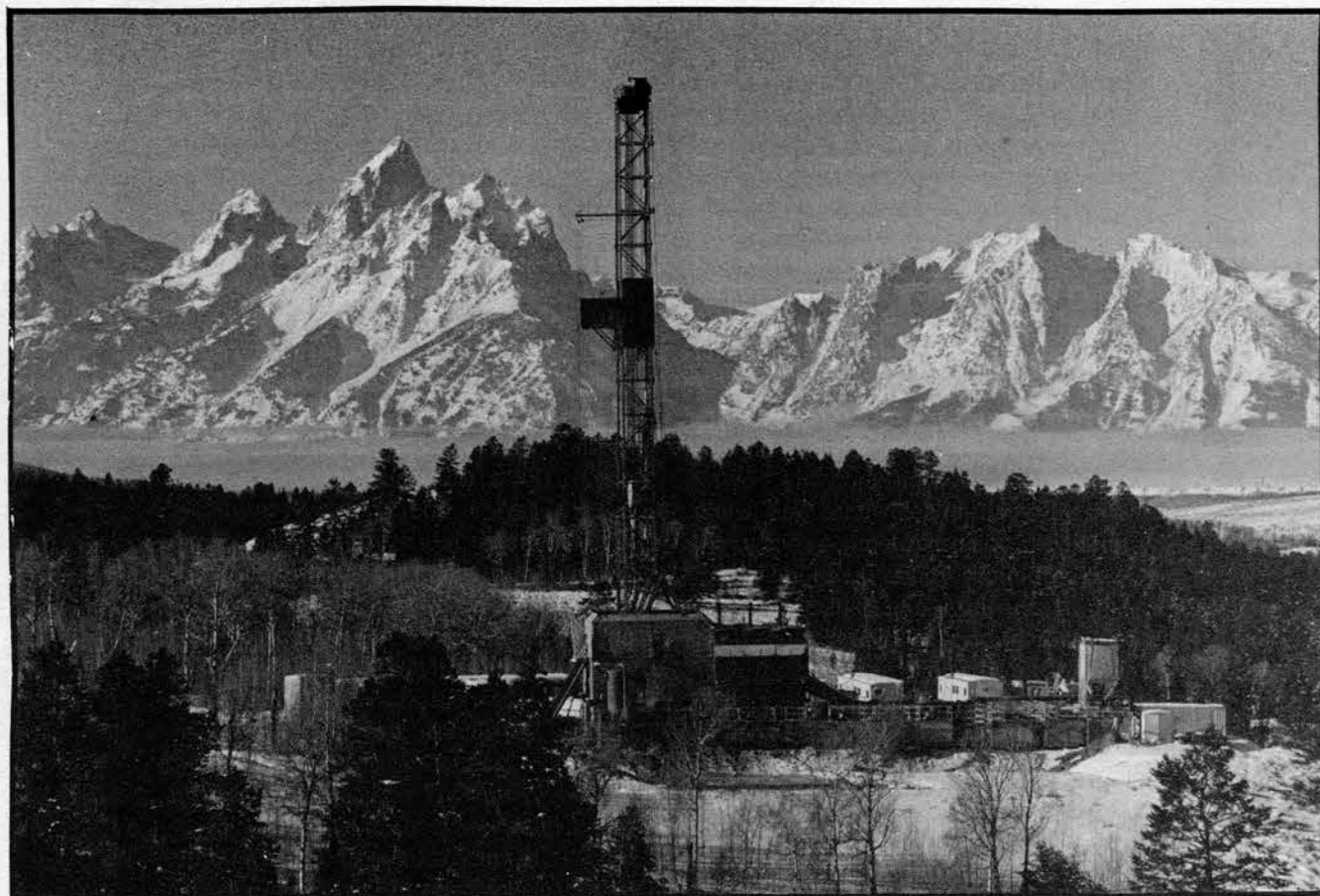
— Alex Angelo

HISTORIC POWWOW

The Northern, Southern and Ute Mountain Ute tribes get together for the first time in 130 years in Glenwood Springs, Colo., April 23-24. The White River National Forest will host the United Ute Powwow Celebration in conjunction with training sessions for agency staffers. Native American guest speakers plan to talk about issues such as sacred burial grounds and how forest lands are managed. The public is invited to participate in powwow dancing, storytelling and sharing gifts at the Glenwood Springs Middle School in West Glenwood Springs. Admission is \$3 for adults; children enter free. For more information call the White River National Forest, 303/945-2521.

DUMP DECISION IN COLORADO

A closed uranium mill in western Colorado may soon become one of two licensed dumps in the U.S. to accept "Naturally Occurring Radioactive Materials," or raw uranium, thorium and radium ores. The site at Uravan, Colo., a former company town, already holds 12 million cubic yards of waste from the old Union Carbide mill. In January, the Colorado Department of Health gave Umetco, a Union Carbide subsidiary, preliminary approval to bury 600,000 additional cubic yards of radioactive rock and sand. Carolyn Been, mayor of nearby Naturita, population 434, says most residents favor the dump expansion because it would clean up several abandoned mines in the area. But critics from other towns in the region say the dump is primarily designed for radioactive waste left over from experiments at the Colorado School of Mines in Golden, and could result in as many as 25 trucks of radioactive waste per day on Montrose County roads. Critics also cite a Colorado attorney general ruling which says the state can't prevent Umetco from accepting out-of-state waste. The Colorado Geological Survey has criticized the Uravan site because it is located on an unstable hillside directly above the San Miguel River, a tributary of the Colorado River. The state Health Department (303/331-4510) will hold a public hearing at 3 p.m. April 29 at the Nucla Elementary School in Nucla, Colo. Send written comments by April 29 to Judge Richard W. Dana, Hearing Officer, Judicial Arbitrator Group, 1601 Blake St., Suite 400, Denver, CO 80202. For more information, contact Western Colorado Congress at 303/249-1987.



An Exxon drill rig in the Bridger-Teton National Forest

Phil Hocker

Oil leases head for court

by Arden Trewartha
and Steve Hinchman

A battle to stop the wholesale leasing of national forest lands to oil and gas companies is about to be fought yet again.

Environmental groups won the first round in 1988, when a federal appeals court ordered the Forest Service to stop approving oil and gas leases until it evaluated the environmental consequences of energy development.

Now, five years later, the Forest Service is preparing new lease plans that could open the West in million-acre chunks to oil and gas exploration. But critics say the agency is again ignoring impacts to wildlands from drill rigs, pipelines and the spaghetti-like network of roads they require.

As in 1988, the battle centers on forest lands in the greater Yellowstone area, where the Forest Service plans to lease 3 million acres on three adjacent national forests. On one, the Shoshone National Forest in Wyoming, the agency proposed opening nearly 1 million acres to oil and gas leasing. Just across the Montana border, the Beartooth District of the Custer National Forest released a draft environmental impact statement that proposes to lease 178,000 acres. In 1990, the Bridger-Teton National Forest began leasing on 2 million acres.

The three forests lie above one of the richest oil and gas provinces in the West and are home to several producing oil fields. Although new exploration is sporadic, the energy industry, with an eye on rising gas prices, is pushing for future access.

However, regional environmental groups warn that the lease plans would open virtually the entire eastern half of the greater Yellowstone ecosystem to oil and gas development (except for wilderness areas and national parks, which are permanently withdrawn from leasing). More significantly, activists say, the leases would give industry iron-clad, long-term property rights on the forests.

"The effort to preserve the Yellowstone ecosystem will be won or lost

In March, the federal government signed an agreement to pay a New Mexico oil company more than \$18 million to buy back oil and gas leases it originally sold for \$1-\$2 an acre. The leases lie below 1,600 acres bordering Lechuguilla Cave in Carlsbad Caverns National Park. The area, environmental groups say, is so sensitive to disruption it should never have been leased in the first place.

As the following five stories reveal, Lechuguilla in New Mexico is just one of many flare-ups over federal oil and gas policy in the West. The debate centers on Forest Service decisions to approve new wells in now-wild country, and to open millions of additional acres of Western lands to oil and gas development.

today," warns a recent Sierra Club report titled *Yellowstone Under Siege*. "Once the decision (to lease) is made there will be no second look. Producers will have secured the right to develop these lands."

The controversy also goes well beyond Yellowstone. The Forest Service recently approved large-scale leasing in the Little Missouri National Grasslands in North Dakota, the Pike-San Isabel National Forest in Colorado, and the Manti-La Salle National Forest in Utah.

More than a dozen other EISs are in draft stage or are near completion on forests and grasslands throughout the Rockies, including the Routt, White River, Gunnison and Grand Mesa national forests in Colorado; the Thunder Basin National Grasslands in Wyoming; the Wasatch-Cache, Ashley, Dixie and Uinta national forests in Utah; the

Umatilla and Malheur forests in Oregon; and the Helena, Beaverhead and Lewis and Clark forests in Montana.

Almost without exception, the documents promote wide-ranging energy exploration and will open the West a million acres at a time to leasing.

The surge of EISs coincides with rising natural gas prices, but the studies were actually triggered by a 1988 court decision. Before 1988, the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management leased huge blocks of land without much environmental analysis, promising instead to do the studies if and when a company applied for a drilling permit.

But when activists fought drilling permits, they were told that because a lease confers property rights, an applica-

tion to drill cannot be denied or significantly modified even if drilling causes environmental damage. As a result, conservationists lost numerous battles over drilling proposals, especially around Yellowstone and Teton parks (*HCN*, 12/5/88).

So, in 1988, the National Wildlife Federation and other groups sued, charging in *Conner vs. Burford* that the Forest Service was playing a shell game. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco agreed and ordered the Forest Service to halt all leasing until it wrote detailed environmental analyses.

At first the Forest Service responded with a two-stage system. Forest plans were amended to determine which lands would be available for lease. Second, the agency agreed to do separate, site-specific analyses on each lease proposal before a lease was granted, much the way it prepares a site-specific timber sale. The Bridger-Teton National Forest leasing plan followed this method.

But in January 1992, an executive order by Forest Service Chief F. Dale Robertson combined the two stages. Now the Shoshone and Custer national forest EISs, like all the forthcoming studies, will serve as both cumulative and site-specific analyses. Upon approval each document would open huge chunks of land for immediate leasing without further study.

The streamlined approach has drawn fire as just another way to "get the leases out."

"The Forest Service policy of 'lease now, worry later' hasn't changed," says Tom France, an attorney with the National Wildlife Federation in Missoula, Mont., who filed the original 1988 suit.

Critics say that the new plans lease just about every acre of Forest Service land with oil and gas potential — including environmentally sensitive lands — again with only cursory environmental analysis. Dan Heilig of the Wyoming Outdoor Council says the Shoshone EIS, for example, is particularly sketchy.

"For the Forest Service to say they looked over and analyzed a million acres

for site-specific leasing is impossible." Heilig points out that the EIS doesn't identify tracts to be leased or look at impacts to soils, water quality, wildlife cover, recreation and other issues.

As more and more EISs are released, environmental groups from around the region are getting involved. Kate Zimmerman, a lawyer with the Land and Water Fund of the Rockies in Boulder, Colo., says the new EISs could create a disaster.

"The Forest Service is putting millions of acres of land under leases with 10-year lifespans with no real analysis done of cumulative impacts and no control over when or where it will go into development," says Zimmerman. "As soon as the price of oil and gas goes up, companies are going to be drilling holes and there's no way the Forest Service can stop them."

Forest Service officials say they can control much of the drilling. Bob Rossman, who heads the Shoshone EIS team, says areas that might warrant future protection or in-depth studies would be leased with stipulations. Those stipulations range from seasonal limits that protect wildlife migration routes or calving grounds, to a No Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulation. That means a company cannot occupy the land but must drill from an adjacent site.

The agency says the stipulations are more efficient than doing an EIS for every potential lease. "Only one out of every 100 leases ever has a well drilled, and only one out of every 100 wells drilled ends up in discovery," says Verne Schmitt, who heads the Rocky Mountain Region leasing program for the Forest Service in Denver, Colo. Schmitt says doing a full-scale EIS for every lease would waste taxpayers' money, but with stipulations the agency preserves the right to do additional analysis and set additional controls on those leases where a company applies to drill.

"We're looking at reasonableness here," says Schmitt.

Environmental groups say stipulations are a hoax. If the past is any guide, says Kirk Koepsel of the Sierra Club,

stipulations will be quickly and easily waived when a company wants to drill. Moreover, he says, the Forest Service relies on stipulations too much. Half of the proposed area to be leased on the Shoshone carries NSO stipulations because of concerns like big game winter range and endangered species habitat. Koepsel says areas that sensitive should not be leased at all.

Wyoming Fish and Game Department biologist Kevin Hurley agrees. "Stipulations are always a gamble," he says. "They are only as strong as the paper they are written on." Hurley says his agency recommended that the Forest Service not lease critical habitat for grizzly bear, elk, and bighorn in the Shoshone. "We have serious concerns with the preferred alternative," he says. "The thought of an oil rig in the middle of an elk calving ground is pretty scary."

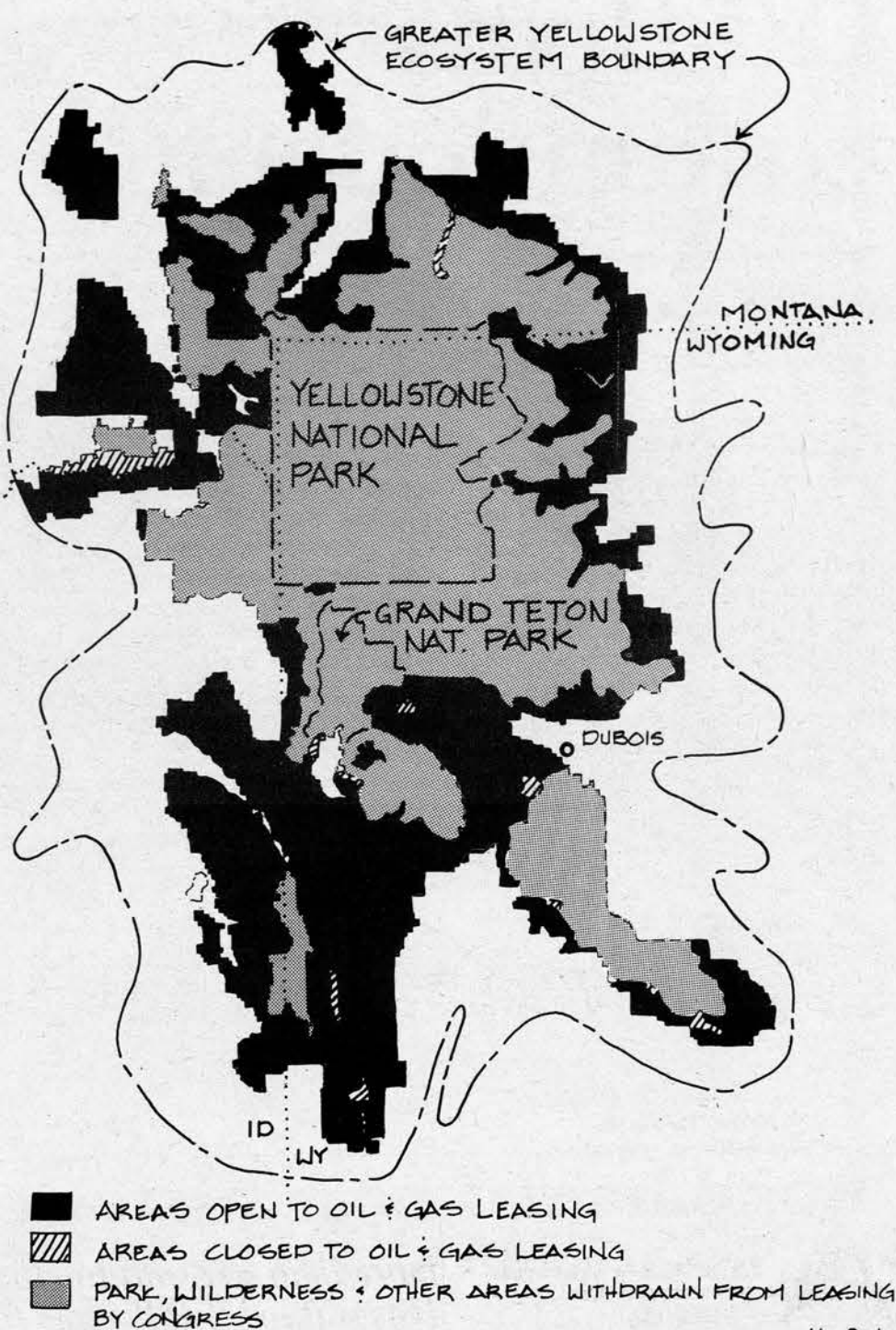
The Greater Yellowstone Coalition, the Sierra Club and the Wyoming Outdoor Council say they will appeal the Shoshone EIS. Other groups are gearing up to appeal oil and gas EISs in Colorado and other states. However, these cases will face a tough hearing before the Department of Interior's Board of Land Appeals, which recently dismissed a challenge to the Pike-San Isabel EIS.

Zimmerman, Heilig and others say that ultimately the environmental community will go back to federal court to challenge the agency on the leasing question. Most likely they will use the same procedural arguments as Conner vs. Burford: that the Forest Service can't issue leases without doing site-specific environmental studies.

But National Wildlife Federation attorney Tom France says doing a full-scale EIS on every lease is still not the answer.

"The secretary of Interior has to rethink how we do oil and gas leases in this part of the country," says France. "There are resources out there that should not be leased."

For a copy of the Jan. 4, 1993, Shoshone oil and gas leasing final EIS, contact Barry Davis, Shoshone National



Lisa Cook

Forest, 225 W. Yellowstone, Cody, WY 82414-2140 (307/527-6241).

For a copy of the impending Beartooth District oil and gas leasing final EIS, contact Curtis Bates, Custer National Forest, P.O. Box 2556,

Billings, MT 59103 (406/657-6361). ■

Former HCN intern Arden Trevartha works at Pack Creek Ranch in Moab, Utah. Steve Hinchman is a staff reporter for HCN.

Oil firms commandeer badlands

In a direct challenge to the U.S. Forest Service, an oil exploration company sent its bulldozers into the Little Missouri National Grasslands March 20 to plow a road and drill pad in a federally designated roadless area.

Duncan Energy Inc. notified Forest Service officials in North Dakota at 4 p.m. Friday, March 19, that it would not wait for a Forest Service environmental study before going ahead with construction on the 21,600-acre Kinley Plateau badlands — the largest roadless area remaining in North Dakota.

Duncan Energy president Ronald Spence says that because the minerals are privately owned, the Forest Service has no right to require an environmental impact statement, change construction plans or otherwise delay access.

The Forest Service says it does. "It was an illegal act," says Curtis Bates, Custer National Forest supervisor. Bates says his agency never questioned Duncan Energy's right to access, but did require an environmental study in order to reduce impact to a nearby bighorn sheep herd and to minimize the intrusion into the roadless area.

Bates made a last minute plea for help to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Bismark, N.D. But assistant attorney Steve Easton, a Bush appointee, said the



case lacked information and declined to file for a temporary restraining order against Duncan Energy. Easton's refusal to intervene infuriated environmental and citizens groups in the state.

"Duncan Energy essentially stole this section of the badlands from the people of North Dakota and the United States with no repercussions as of yet," says Todd Herreid, chairman of the Dakota Chapter of the Sierra Club. "The oil company's attitude is one of very pompous greed."

The case will now go to court, but not because of the Forest Service. While the Forest Service and the Department of Justice wrangled over possible legal action, Duncan Energy filed suit March 29 in North Dakota district court. The suit asks for a "declaratory judgment" legalizing

Duncan's now completed road and barring the Forest Service from invoking the National Environmental Policy Act for oil wells where the Forest Service owns the surface and a private company owns the minerals.

With a new producing well a mile away, and six more

exploratory wells to drill, Duncan Energy's challenge could lead to full-scale development of the Kinley Plateau roadless area.

This is the latest conflict in a series of developments that has turned the Little Missouri National Grasslands and Theodore Roosevelt National Park — North Dakota's most popular tourist attractions and the state's only significant wild areas — into a booming industrial landscape.

The chaotic tumble of prairies, peaks, plateaus, canyons and ridges was originally made famous by Teddy Roosevelt, who came to ranch the badlands after the simultaneous deaths of his wife and mother and his failed run for mayor of New York City. Roosevelt emerged from the Dakota Territories reinspired and a staunch conservationist. As presi-

dent he later helped establish both the National Park Service and Forest Service.

Until 20 years ago, the grasslands and Roosevelt National Park (the site of his old ranch) made up the largest intact prairie wilderness in the U.S. As a student in the early 1970s, Kirk Koepsel helped survey the badlands for a wilderness study and found over a half-million roadless acres.

"It was the wildest, most pristine land left in the Great Plains of North America," says Koepsel, who now works in the Sierra Club's Northern Plains office in Wyoming.

Today the grasslands are the largest money maker and most productive oil fields in the national forest system. At the height of the oil boom in the early 1980s, companies drilled more than 1,000 wells and built more than 1,000 miles of roads in the Little Missouri Grasslands. Federal royalties brought \$50 million a year to the U.S. Treasury.

The boom leveled out at 500 producing wells. But the Forest Service is planning for 500 more wells and 300 miles of new roads in the northern two-thirds of the grasslands alone.

Development has taken a heavy toll. Of the 500,000 acres of wilderness found in the 1970s, only about 100,000

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Oil firms commandeer ...

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acres scattered in small pockets remain undeveloped. And, like the Kinley Plateau, much of what is left is vulnerable.

"There are all-weather roads out there going everywhere to service the pumpjacks," says Wayne Schafer, chairman of the Teddy Roosevelt group of the Sierra Club Dacotah chapter. He says impact includes heavy truck traffic, drilling waste, water pollution and foul, sulfate-laden air that often drifts from the oil fields on Forest Service land into parts of the 80,000-acre Roosevelt National Park.

Custer National Forest Supervisor Bates says much of the development on the grasslands is due to its checkerboard ownership. Of the 1.3 million acres within the grassland boundaries, the Forest Service owns only about 700,000 acres of the surface and even less of the mineral estate. In addition, in the 1970s, the Forest Service put much of what it did own up for lease.

By law, Bates says, the Forest Service can't prevent drilling on private lands, private minerals or previous leas-

es. But Sierra Club staffers say the Forest Service is just giving the Little Missouri Grasslands away. A 1991 Forest Service EIS approved plans to lease 98 percent of the federal mineral estate in the northern two-thirds of the grasslands, located north of Interstate 90. That decision protects only 20,000 acres of lands in four parcels as roadless.

The agency is now writing a second EIS to approve leases south of the highway. Koepsel and others fear that most of what is left undeveloped there will also be leased as the oil companies push into newly discovered oil fields on the Kinley Plateau and other parts of the southern grasslands.

The Sierra Club also charges that the Forest Service is letting the oil companies drill without protecting eagle nests, bighorn sheep herds, sensitive plant species and air and water quality. Schafer points to an internal Forest Service memo, in which the grassland's one wildlife biologist, Clinton McCarthy writes, "... The Forest Service has often been willing to forgo regulations and policy for proposed, endangered, threatened or sensitive species to meet our



North Dakota Travel Department

An oil rig in North Dakota's Little Missouri National Grasslands

commodity resource targets."

Since September the club has appealed nearly two dozen oil and gas

drill permits issued by the Forest Service and won every case, virtually shutting down all activity on the grasslands.

The Forest Service response, says Schafer, is to do better studies and place more requirements on oil companies. But the industry has resisted, especially in cases where they own the mineral estate.

Faced with the loss of what the Sierra Club says are the last pristine lands in North Dakota, the club is calling for a halt to oil and gas leasing.

"The Forest Service should negotiate mineral exchanges and protect what roadless land is left as wilderness," says Herreid. "They should leave some natural areas untouched in the badlands."

For more information, or a copy of the impending Southern Little Missouri National Grasslands oil and gas leasing draft EIS, contact Curtis Bates, Custer National Forest, Box 2556, Billings, MT 59103 (406/657-6361); or Wayne Schafer, Sierra Club Dacotah Chapter, Teddy Roosevelt Group, 3305 Hillside Rd., Mandon, ND 58534-1430 (701/663-0944).

—Steve Hinchman

Road halted near historic ranch

The Elkhorn Ranch Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park is safe from a road and major bridge project — for now. Billings County, N.D., recently withdrew its permit to build almost five miles of paved highway and a 660-foot-long bridge over the Little Missouri River immediately adjacent to Roosevelt's historic ranch.

The road and bridge would have passed within 500 feet of the ranch boundary and crossed state lands set aside to protect the site. Their purpose: to cut down travel time for gas and oil trucks and for local residents.

"The county's excuse is 'we've been building these roads, how can you stop us now?'" said Terri Martin of the National Parks and Conservation Association. "But we've been fighting it all along."

The 220-acre Elkhorn Ranch Unit

is unique because unlike the surrounding badlands, the ranch remains undeveloped. It offers a glimpse of the view and tranquility that inspired Roosevelt.

The national park named for him has become the most heavily visited tourist attraction in North Dakota. A 1990 study by Colorado State University found that the park creates more than 2,000 tourism-related jobs and revenues exceeding \$100 million. But if more development such as oil wells intrudes on the landscape, visitors have said they would spend less time at the park.

The Park Service, State Historical Society, North Dakota Department of Fish and Game, and several other state and national organizations were all concerned about the visual and noise impacts the bridge and traffic would have on visitors as well as wildlife. The groups requested that the Army Corps

of Engineers do an environmental impact statement before issuing a permit for the project. Specifically, they wanted full consideration of an alternate site farther from the ranch's boundary, which was dismissed by the county in its environmental assessment.

According to Roger Andrascik, the park's resource management specialist, the Army Corps discussed with the county all the reasons for possible denial of the project. The county then withdrew its permit.

"My feeling is that they'll look for alternative sites. I don't know if they will look in the same area, or farther away from the ranch," Andrascik said. "It's a sleeping giant."

—Yvette La Pierre

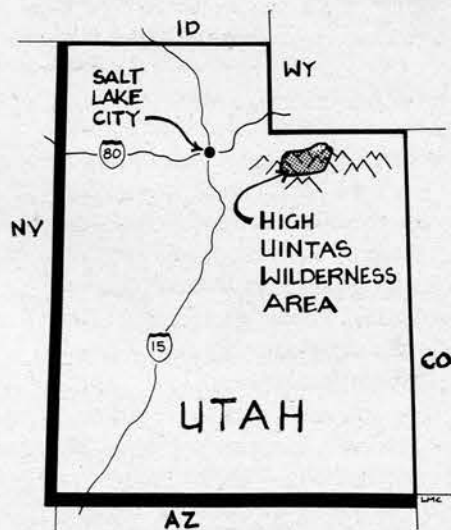
The writer free-lances in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

Chevron takes aim at Uintas

For decades, Chevron USA and other energy companies have made fortunes from the oil-rich Overthrust Belt, which extends from southern Wyoming to the Uinta Mountains near Salt Lake City. The industry has mostly looked for oil at low altitudes, on Bureau of Land Management land, private ranches and checkerboard lands owned by the railroads.

Now Chevron is widening its search to the heavily forested and heavily visited slopes of the Uinta Mountains. That has set up an angry confrontation with the Utah Wilderness Association, a Salt Lake City-based environmental group which calls itself the watchdog for the Uintas.

"The whole thing is a farce," says



the group's founder, Dick Carter, of Chevron's plan to drill an exploratory oil well at 9,400 feet, near the top of the

Main Fork drainage. The site is in a roadless area less than two miles below the boundary of the High Uintas Wilderness.

"The environmental consequences would be a permanent loss of character of this place. The whole drainage will be gone," Carter says.

The place Carter's group defends is a drainage lightly touched by development. At the turn of the century "tie hackers" logged the slope for railroad ties, and remains of their log flumes are now considered historic. A dirt track runs part way up the drainage, but otherwise the Main Fork is a forested haven for wildlife.

Chevron's Table Top Well proposal would mean extending a gravel road up the Main Fork for four miles, building a

bridge and clearing a four-acre drill pad. Besides being within sight of the wilderness, the well would only be a mile and a ridgeline removed from the popular Christmas Meadows campground and summer home area.

"We're not just going in there hell bent for leather and trying to be cavalier," Chevron's Steve Woodruff responds. "We recognize it's a sensitive area. But," he continues, "it's one of the best opportunities we're faced with."

Chevron has had its sights on the upper Main Fork for some time. It leased the property from the Forest Service 19 years ago, as part of a 25,000-acre "leasing unit." So far it has concentrated on high-potential sites in already roaded, lower elevation lands. But those sites are beginning to play out. Chevron says sus-

taining oil production in the region may require climbing upslope to the wilderness boundary.

"Are we going to zone out and parcel out land so the wilderness areas become isolated islands, and develop everything around the wilderness?" Carter asks. "The Main Fork is filled with wildlife and stunning beauty and is along a gem of a riparian area."

"The oil and gas reserves are diminishing," Woodruff points out from Chevron's Evanston, Wyo., offices. "A cattleman needs cattle, a farmer needs seed and an oil man needs oil. We're there to play and we think we can be successful."

Success is what worries Carter. Almost half of the 270,000-acre North Slope of the Uintas is blanketed by existing oil and gas leases. The Wasatch-Cache National Forest has just released a draft environmental impact statement that proposes to lease everything else. If approved, the plan would open the mostly roadless North Slope to oil and gas development clear up to the wilderness boundary.

"They are trying to give the North Slope of the High Uintas — Utah's wildest and most pristine mountain range — over to the oil and gas industry," says Gary McFarlane of the Utah Wilderness Association.

If Chevron's Table Top Well is successful, Carter and McFarlane fear the leasing draft EIS would open the door to more and more wells, potentially turning the whole of the North Slope into an oil field.

Chevron says it is experienced in

high-altitude restoration work, and will minimize its disturbances. The company also says the upgraded road in the Main Fork could lead to new parking areas and trails to the High Uintas Wilderness.

"We're going to respect the surface and we're going to do everything we can to minimize any impacts, but the bottom line is we're going to be there," Woodruff says.

Chevron is not entering the Uintas lightly. It will need to drill 17,000 feet to hit the formation it's aiming for, and a well that deep will cost at least \$6 million. So far the exploratory well has been approved by the Forest Service in a separate draft EIS. A final EIS and decision on the well is due by early May.

The Utah Wilderness Association says the Forest Service permitting process is full of holes. The agency's draft EIS on Table Top ignored alternatives such as helicoptering in the drill rig, slant drilling from another location or moving the well site to already developed and roaded areas. But the biggest problem, says McFarlane, is that the Forest Service contends that because no other wells

are being considered, there are no cumulative impacts and no need to look at the potential consequences if Chevron hits oil.

"If this well produces oil then clearly a full industrial oil field is planned," says Carter, "or why even explore?"

"Never mind that the agency is, in a separate process, considering leasing all the rest of the land," adds McFarlane.

UWA says the Forest Service is being intentionally deceptive, and warns it will fight both documents to federal court if necessary.



The north slope of the High Uintas Wilderness Area in Utah

Alexis Kelmer and Larry Swanson

Fouled water leads to court

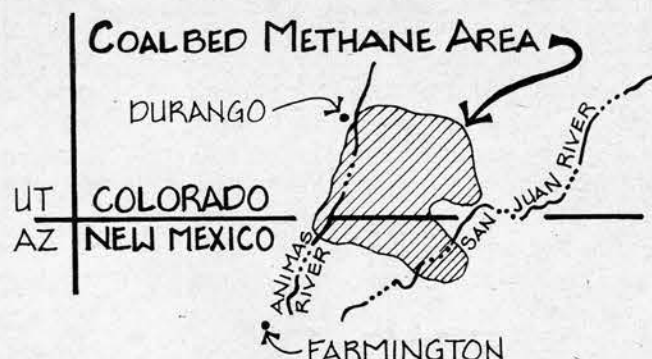
DURANGO, Colo. — After years of futile public hearings, letter-writing and media campaigns, residents of La Plata County in southwestern Colorado have turned to lawsuits and civil disobedience to protect themselves from the impacts of an oil and gas boom.

Since 1980, the year Congress approved lucrative tax credits for coalbed methane gas production, U.S. energy firms have drilled over 1,000 wells into coal seams south of Durango looking for pockets of trapped methane gas.

The wells are scattered throughout the Animas and San Juan river basins across a checkerboard of public and private land. While the wells have generated profits for oil companies, they have also brought pumpjacks, pipelines, compressor stations, and gravel transport roads to the residents of mostly rural La Plata County — sometimes right to their backyards (HCN, 12/4/89).

But what continues to unite residents there and in neighboring New Mexico counties are accounts of foul-tasting well water, flaming pitchers of lemonade and exploding kitchen pipes. For years, residents on both sides of the border have asked the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service and the Colorado Oil and Gas Commission for tougher regulations, arguing that gas production is polluting their wells and drinking water. So far the agencies have refused to slow the boom.

Recently, the growing coalition of residents and environmentalists found an ally in a U.S. Geological Survey draft report released earlier this year. In a two-year study, USGS scientists found methane gas in one-third of water wells



inspected and concluded that oil and gas drilling is the main source of contamination of the shallow aquifers in the Animas River Valley.

Western Colorado Congress president Jerry Swingle says the report shows that "the industry isn't anywhere near as competent in preventing that kind of contamination as they have led everyone — including regulators — to believe."

Based in part on the USGS report, lawyers representing hundreds of area residents filed a class-action lawsuit Feb. 11 charging four oil companies — Amoco Production Company, Meridian Oil Inc., Southland Royalty Company, and Phillips Petroleum — with recklessness and deliberate disregard for the safety of local residents. The suit says the four oil companies ignored their tests, which showed that methane from their deep wells was polluting shallow aquifers, and asks for both actual and punitive damages. A victory could result in strict new controls on oil and gas drilling, well maintenance and groundwater monitoring.

"You're not looking at a bunch of hippies who live out in the wilderness or Earth First!ers who have come in to file this lawsuit," says Chris Shuey, a water resources specialist who acted as a technical consultant for the residents. "These

are people who have lived there for generations and some of them work or have worked in industries associated with the oil and gas industry. I think they felt litigation was the last avenue available to them."

However, both the oil companies and the BLM, which regulates oil and gas drilling on public lands, say they think the methane migrates into upper aquifers naturally through cracks and fissures underground.

They say the USGS report is a product of bad science and bias. "We are somewhat disturbed," the BLM responded in written comments, "that several apparent contradictions are present and many conclusions are drawn based on what could arguably be characterized as inconclusive data."

"We are also concerned that, to a certain degree, the tone of the document seems to lack objectivity," said the agency's district manager, Sally Wisely, in a letter.

The USGS, which was hired in a 1989 compromise among the various parties to the dispute as a neutral investigator, stands by its research. "I find (the BLM's comments) really peculiar," says USGS district director David Lystrom. "We're both Department of Interior agencies. What axe are they grinding?" Lystrom says his agency stands by its report, and will issue a final document within a year.

Local residents and environmental groups say the BLM's reaction reflects a long-standing refusal to trust evidence linking rising numbers of methane-con-

taminated private wells with the gas boom.

Residents have also battled with the U.S. Forest Service, most recently over the agency's decision to allow Amoco to drill 15 wells on environmentally sensitive lands in the HD Mountains on the eastern edge of La Plata County.

Last September, the Forest Service closed the drilling area to the public after Western Colorado Congress and the San Juan Citizens Alliance blockaded and shut down Amoco's drill rigs. After a second protest, which drew 80 people, the Forest Service charged eight people with criminal trespass.

In a January trial, two women, including a San Juan Alliance organizer, were found guilty and fined \$250. However, Judge Edward Schlatter said he was troubled by the verdict. Protesters had intended the rally to be peaceful and legal at all times and, he believed, did not know they were across the closure line.

"The Forest Service acted as a publicly financed security force for Amoco," says Western Colorado Congress' Swingle. "The decision to prosecute was motivated not by justice, but was intended as punishment, intimidation and a clear message to all citizens that dissidents will not be tolerated."

For more information, contact the BLM/Forest Service offices at 701 Camino Del Rio, Durango, CO 81301 (303/247-4082); or the Western Colorado Congress and San Juan Citizens Alliance at 820 E. 7th St., Suite B, Durango CO 81302 (303/259-3583).

— Ken Wright

Ken Wright, a former HCN intern, covers environmental issues for *The Daily Times* in Farmington, New Mexico.

BOOK NOTES

by Jim Fergus

I can't tell you what makes one man a hunter and another not. But I can tell you how this all happened for one hunter.

It began when I was a boy growing up in the midwestern suburbs. I was small for my age, asthmatic, quiet and somewhat timid, solitary and frequently afraid; at night I would make a tent of my covers and read sporting magazines by a pen flashlight, while my parents battled downstairs, saying things to each other that their boy simply could not bear to hear. My mother had dark troubles with drink; only a few years later she would die young, a hard death, alone on another continent.

Under the covers of my den with my flashlight I was safe; my dog, Sugar, a little Welsh terrier, nestled beside me. Under there, enormous fish leapt on mirrored lakes and huge coveys of game birds blackened the sky over field and forest, while jocular, self-reliant outdoorsmen such as I longed to be cooked hearty meals over an open fire and slept in bedrolls under the stars. These were my companions, all superb shots and incredibly proficient anglers. Of course, later I would learn that many of their tales of sporting triumphs were pure fabrication, but I didn't need to know that yet.

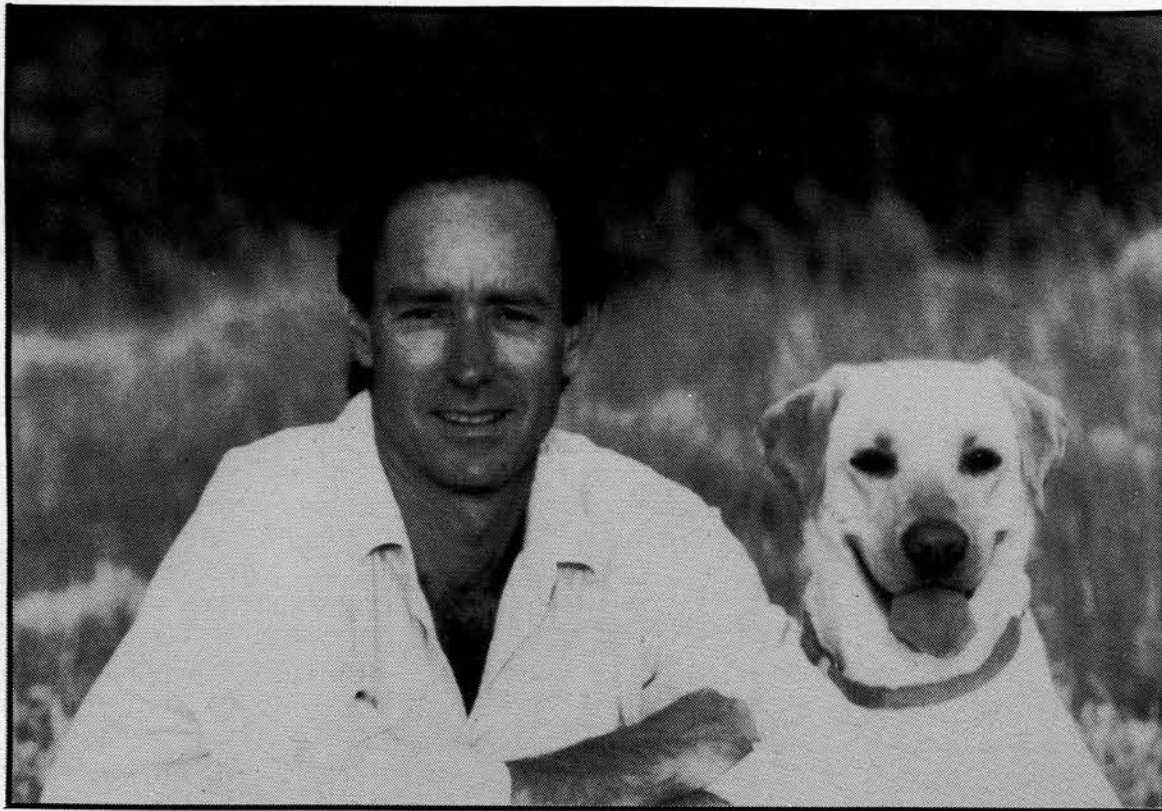
I had a slingshot that I used to hunt squirrels with in the ravine near my house, although for a long time I never actually hit any. I did kill a few robins with my slingshot, and one time I made a campfire in the ravine and roasted a robin on a stick as a kind of sacrament. Even then I believed in eating what I killed and not killing what I wouldn't eat. I plucked and drew the bird first, and it was quite delicious. But a neighbor saw the smoke from the campfire and called the fire department and that put an end to my robin roasts. I got in a good bit of trouble at home.

One day I finally hit a squirrel with my slingshot, but I only wounded it and then I had to kill it with a stick; it was a nasty, messy business and the squirrel suffered. This made me feel terrible. I still, all these years later, feel terrible thinking about it, and to this day I remain squeamish about killing things. I hate suffering of any kind, human or animal. Don't think because I'm a hunter that this is not so.

I had a cheap spun glass fishing rod, too, and I often fished for perch in Lake Michigan. The lake was only a few blocks from my house, and I would walk down there with my rod and tackle box. Already I wanted a bamboo fly rod, and I had my eye on a Daisy BB gun at the hardware store, but I wasn't old enough to have that yet.

Frequently my parents gave cocktail parties and I would be sent off early to my room. I would lie in bed and listen to the revelry downstairs — the chatty, animated voices of the grown-ups, the tinkling of glasses and ice cubes, and my mother's peculiar shrieking laughter which became dangerously higher pitched and more hysterical as the evening wore on.

There was a woman friend of my parents' who always used to come up to see me in my room during these parties. I believed she was a drunk, too, but she was very nice, and she would sit on the edge of my bed and smoke and sip her drink and talk to me — sometimes for hours — and eventually I would fall asleep while she talked on and on. In the morning I would find ashes from her cigarettes and sometimes burn marks on my blanket. Though I was only a boy, she would confide in me, tell me strange adult things that I wouldn't understand until many years later. But I did understand some of what the woman told me, and I understood that she had a very unhappy marriage. I liked her and felt sorry for her in that instinctive way that children do.



Jim Fergus with his yellow Lab, Sweetzer

Dillon Fergus

A man and his dog, in search of grace and innocence

One time while she was in my room talking to me, the woman's husband came in looking for her. He told her to go back to the party and then he sat down on my bed. He was very drunk and he breathed heavily and gave off an unpleasant sour smell. He asked me if his wife had tried to have sex with me. I wasn't altogether sure what the man was talking about; I knew what sex was but I didn't see why his wife would want to have it with me. So I said by way of answer, "I'm only 10, sir." Then the man asked me if I wanted to have a pillow fight. I said no thank you, that I was supposed to be asleep. But the man insisted, and he grabbed the pillow from under my head and started striking me with it. "C'mon, fight back," he said, "fight back," and he hit me harder and harder with the pillow. "Fight back, you little shit!" I covered my head with my arms and I did not fight back, because, you see, he had my pillow.

Sugar was under the bed and I could hear her growling. Finally she could take no more of this, and she sank her teeth into the man's ankle. He hollered and jumped up, but terriers are notorious for not letting go, and the man dragged the dog out from under the bed at the end of his leg; he was dancing around the room and trying to shake her loose. It was quite comical. My trusty companion Sugie hung on tenaciously, growling all the while, until I told her to let go. How I loved that little dog.

After that the man left my room, promising darkly that he was going to talk to my father about this, but I think he just went back down to the party and had another drink because I never heard any more about it. The very next week, the man died in a car wreck on the expressway while driving home from work. He had "fallen asleep at the wheel," which was the euphemism parents used in those days for drunken driving. I still held a fresh grudge against the man, and I was secretly glad that he had died. I knew that this was a terrible way to feel, but I was an angry boy, and even then I understood the need for a tonic to my anger. That is the point of this story, in case you're wondering, the beginning of my plan, the seed of my life as a sportsman. When you're an angry boy, sport can offer some real measure of peace and escape — not just escape from something bad, but escape to something wonderful: grace.

That night of the one-sided pillow fight, Sugar and I firmed up our plan, made our pact under the covers with my pen flashlight and sporting magazines. The

plan was a simple one, universal perhaps to boys — to girls, too, for that matter — which may account for all the runaways in our society, the difference being that most of the runaways have no place to go and no resources once they get there. But this boy and his dog did: we were headed for the open country. There was a giant oak tree outside my bedroom window; its branches would scratch at the glass at night, beckoning us. This would be our escape route when things got really bad at home. I had already climbed down it many times in preparation, had even carried Sugar down to make sure I could do it; she was not crazy about this part but she trusted me.

We would travel across the country, Sugie and I, with my fishing rod and that Daisy BB gun which I now intended to steal — desperate measures, I knew, but I was a desperate boy. We would hunt and fish and live off the land, a vast storybook land of beauty, goodness, and bounty, a land studded by farms and ranches and villages, inhabited by fine, upstanding, honest folks. In this fantasy, we would trade our abundant harvest of game to the locals for produce and pies or whatever else we needed, or simply for a spot in the barn to spend the night, and sometimes along the way someone would invite us into their

home to have dinner with the family, a family that bore no relationship whatsoever to my family. We would eat fried chicken with mashed potatoes, gravy and biscuits, prepared by a kindly mother in a white apron, a woman I am sad to recall now, who bore no relationship whatsoever to my own mother. Sugie and I would spend the night curled together in the hay in a corner of the barn, warm as toast, and the next morning after a hearty farm breakfast we would be on our way, off to a new unknown destination, another day of sport and adventure.

It would be nearly 30 years before I actually implemented this plan, and, of course, Sugar would be long gone by then, tragically struck by a car the year after my parents both died. This is a difficult thing to acknowledge, but her death was harder for me in an immediate way than theirs had been. That little dog had protected me from so much harm.

I would, over the ensuing years, lose interest in hunting in favor of organized sports; indeed, this dwindling interest had started with my inept dispatching of the wounded squirrel. I would maintain a keen lifelong interest in fishing, though even that would be superseded periodically by other interests and concerns. And I would travel widely and live in several different regions of the country and parts of the world. Eventually I would make my home in the countryside of the American West.

At age 39, I suddenly developed a strange, overpowering obsession with bird hunting, an obsession childlike in its single-minded intensity. I had started doing a bit of hunting again over the preceding few years, but this newly discovered passion was no longer casual or even particularly gradual. I started buying all the sporting magazines again, something I had not done since I was a kid, and I bought an old double-barreled shotgun, the possession of which seemed somehow to placate finally my boyhood desire for that Daisy BB gun — which I never did own. I bought books about bird hunting, both contemporary and classic, books about shooting technique, and bird dog training books — even though I didn't own a bird dog. Then one day I brought home a yellow Lab puppy, ostensibly as a gift to my wife, who had lost her beloved old dog the year before and pined for a replacement. Of course, I had designs of my own on that puppy.

I am well aware that such an obsession, standing as I

was on the precipice of middle age, might easily be mistaken for a "midlife crisis," although it hardly seemed like a crisis situation to me. Rather it seemed like a conscious attempt to complete some unfinished business from the past, to keep an old pact, to put into action a dusty plan that had been stored away all these years in an ancient trunk in one of those attic garrets of the mind, put away so long that I had nearly forgotten it was there. At the same time, it still seemed like a reasonable way of diffusing old childhood angers. Sometimes just knowing that we can always climb out that bedroom window and down the branches of that old oak tree and head for the big country actually keeps us alive.

Midlife crisis or not, my new obsession seemed pretty harmless, and except for the fact that I had appropriated her dog for my own nefarious purposes, my wife hardly even remarked upon it. She just watched quizzically as packages arrived at the door — more books or gear, yet another shotgun. Pretty harmless even to the birds, in fact, given the size of my bag from the nearly daily hunting excursions that first season. "Did you get anything?" my

wife, tolerant and vaguely amused, would inquire of us every day upon our return. She had named the new puppy Sweetzer after a summit in Idaho on which we had once been stranded in a blizzard. That's right, *Sweetzer*. Over the next year, I would take a lot of abuse from hunting companions about this apparently sissified name, but secretly to me it seemed like a kind of magical coincidence that Sweetzer sounded like the name for a Sugar substitute.

By the time I had turned 40, Sweetz and I had our first hunting season together under our belts — not a complete success, but not a total bust, either. We had hunted hard in Idaho, where my wife and I had moved recently, and in late January after the season there closed, we took a trip to Nevada to hunt chukar partridges alone in the high, desolate rimrock around Battle Mountain. It was there, on a cold, clear winter day, having climbed for several hours up the steep face of a rocky, barren mountainside, having finally gained the top of a broad, snow-covered, wind-whorled plateau, all alone on what seemed to be the very top of the world, that Sweetzer flushed a covey of chukars — grayish birds, with intense black and white stripes on

their flanks. I can still see that covey rise in my mind's eye, as if it's happening right now: the vast, empty, somehow prehistoric country stretching away below, the wild cries of the birds on the wind, and those black stripes stenciled against the snow. I shot and killed a chukar, my first of the species, and Sweetzer proudly retrieved it for me. Then I sat in the snow with my gun broken in my lap, and opened the bird's crop to see what he had been eating before he died. The crop was packed tight with a fistful of bright green cheatgrass blades. I held the still warm bird in my hand, and put the grass up to my nose and inhaled deeply; it reminded me oddly and intensely of my childhood — exactly the smell of mowing the lawn on a warm summer day in the Midwest. I opened my fist and let the grass blow away on the wind. ■

Jim Fergus is a free-lance writer who lives in Colorado and Idaho. The excerpt above is from his book *A Hunter's Road, A Journey with Gun and Dog Across the American Uplands*, published by Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 115 W. 18th St., New York, NY 10011.

Leaving America, for Montana

by Richard Manning

My house would have something to say to all houses, rural and urban, but it needed to gather its information by living in the trees.

This idea of rural landscape guided the project onto its most dangerous ground, the problems of people living in the woods. Writing about the joys of rural living is even more dangerous still, in that publicity can amplify a bad trend. Environmentalists of my region are coming to regard subdividers and rural newcomers as an even greater threat than loggers, and in many ways they are.

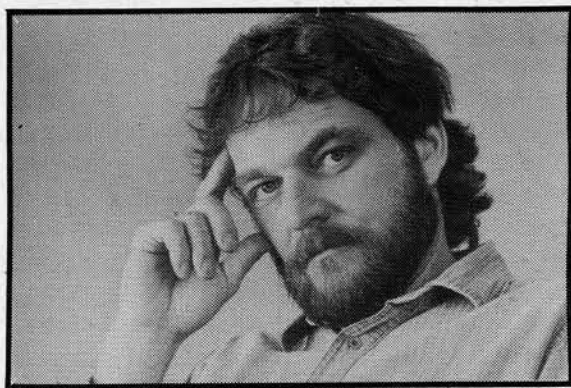
We now believe, with justification, that we protect nature only where we succeed in excluding people. I have seen what people have done to the countryside, so I understand this rule's origins. Still, if we adopt this exclusion as our ultimate goal then we have lost the fight. We have succeeded only in reinforcing our distance from nature, which is the root cause or the hubris that has caused so much damage. There must be another way to go about this, a way my house would seek. Ultimately, then, this house was about seeking, picking a quiet path among the trees.

There are a couple of stories that frame this house's issues in their largest perspective. The first comes from the work of ethnobotanist Gary Nabhan. In his important book, *The Desert Smells Like Rain*, Nabhan writes about the traditional lives of the Papago Indians in a region straddling the border between Mexico and Arizona.

Our experience tells us that where humans venture, wildlife instantly becomes troubled. As a species we are notorious for making little room for the rest of nature. We are Shiva the destroyer. We are the engine of extinction. Accordingly, it has become our habit to set aside areas free from human intrusions, areas we consider wildlife sanctuaries. Normally this is considered one of our good acts, but in another sense it is an admission of our greatest failing.

With the goal of protecting nature the federal government in the 1950s set aside a bird sanctuary in Papago country by evicting farmers whose culture had inhabited the place for thousands of years. Decades later Nabhan visited the sanctuary with a group of ornithologists. They found 32 species of birds. The next day, visiting an adjacent and traditional Papago village, they found 65 species of birds living among those people. Nabhan asked his Papago friend to explain this phenomenon. "I've been thinking over what you say about not so many birds living over there anymore," he said. "That's because those birds, they come where the people are. When the people live and work in a place, and plant their seeds and water their trees, the birds go live with them. They like those places, there's plenty to eat, and that's when we are friends to them."

I've carried that story with me now for years, revisiting it often. Many of us have come to accept the destruction of nature as inherent to the human condition, yet the cases of the Papago and of hun-



Michael Gallacher

Author Richard Manning

dreds of traditional cultures around the world suggest otherwise. The common denominator of these traditional cultures is an awareness of nature, an awareness of the context of their lives. They consider themselves part of the weave, not the weavers.

My other story is also about context.

I was flying back to Montana one clear winter's morning early in 1991. I had been on a magazine assignment of a curious sort, one that had originally been my idea. I had been chasing groups of people who live in motorhomes, a new sort of nomad class. Most are retirees, people we call "secure" when what we mean to say is that they have a lot of money. They must have to afford the life they have chosen: cramped "houses" that cost well over \$100,000 on average, sometimes going as high as \$500,000 or more. These behemoths stalk about the country at the rate of about five miles per gallon, seeking nothing so much as the road. We see them mostly queued up at the gates of national parks or, during the winter in the Sunbelt states, stanchioned cheek by cowl in RV parks, aluminum ghettos wrapped around golf courses. We conclude that these people are seeking scenery or sun or something like that, but this turns out to be not at all true. They are not seeking, they are fleeing.

They flee the death of cities or small-town America or community, or, in a darker sense, they flee people different from themselves. They flee change and loss of control. In their refugee status they are not that different from all of us, a lost and wandering people, a people without place. Whenever I visit the suburbs I am amazed at how few people walk. The curtains are all closed, making windows useless. Virtually all houses face not outdoors to their land but indoors to the television, our identical window on our identical world.

I once talked to a motorhome nomad who had been camped for months in the middle of the California desert. Outside her \$100,000 motorhome an inverted garbage can lid served as a bird feeder.

"What birds are those?" I asked her, because I was new to the region and couldn't identify desert species. "What are those shrubs they use for cover?"

"Those," she said, "are just birds. Just birds you always see. And that is just brush."

There was no use in her learning the names of the birds that had come to live there. She watered no trees

and planted no seeds. In a short time she would be gone, down the road. Her culture — ours — is incapable of inhabiting a place for thousands of years.

Her husband pointed out the nearby mountains as the scenic advantage of their place, and I asked him their names.

"Those are the foothills," he said, as if mountain ranges required no more identity than "the mall," or "the strip," or "McDonald's."

In this, the motor nomads are simply a distillation of what all of us have become: a people without a place. We have taken our lives out of the context of the land, above the land. Literally. One can see this most clearly on airliners. Watch the new class of flying itinerant merchants, men in gray suits and laptops. Watch them board and stash carry-ons in the overhead, then throw identical folds into identical jackets and stow them at the top of the rack. Even before takeoff, briefcases are snapped open, calculators are powered up, and numbers are crunched. Watch them land in a new place and never notice the window, as if the view were identical to that of the last place they did not see. To them, whose job it is to distill all places to the ultimate line of a profit and loss statement — the new map of the landscape — this place is indeed identical to the last. They are at ease here above the land, distant and disdainful of Earth.

As I flew around the country chasing motorhome people, I watched such scenes play repeatedly. I saw America, and then I flew home to Montana. I was convinced it was time I built a house. The clear winter morning that I headed home was a Sunday. In a half-full airliner the sun broke hard through the right bank of windows. Few gray suits were present. These were different people. The crowd ran heavy to jeans and nylon jackets. As the airliner neared Missoula, I noticed people moving around the plane, shifting to the right side and watching the sun play across the snowcaps of the Continental Divide. Most of us, it appeared, were going home. We began naming names. People pointed out the Bob Marshall, the Swan Range, the Mission Mountains, the Garnets and the Sapphires, and below, the sedate, winding valley of the Clark Fork River. They said the names.

Then the airliner banked over Mount Sentinel and began its descent to a runway at Missoula. A descent to a landing. Land that I know. As we approached, I could see it all coming into focus on progressively more intimate scales: first the mountain ranges; then individual valleys; then creeks and draws; and finally, tucked behind a softly rounded but hard-cut mountain, a gulch that held the very land that is the context of my house. As the focus shifted from the grand sweep to the minute and individual bits of land, it occurred to me that this is how we find our homes. We find them, then we build them. ■

Richard Manning is a free-lance writer who lives in Missoula, Montana. The excerpt above is from his book *A Good House, Building a Life on the Land*, published by Grove Press, 841 Broadway, New York, NY 10003.

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

by Paul Koberstein

As President Clinton learned at the April 2 forest conference in Portland, the legacy of logging Northwest timber is written not only on clearcuts visible from outer space but in the dejected souls of shuttered timber towns up and down the West Coast.

The authors of this dark chapter in Northwest history are chiefly the timber companies, with considerable help from their friends in Congress. With the industry idled in political and legal gridlock, the conference was an attempt by the president to redress decades of overcutting Northwest forests by seeking ways to restore damaged ecosystems, to redirect devastated lives and to revitalize the depressed timber economy.

The surrogate for this debate is a fuzzy, two-pound bird that barely merited a headline in *The Oregonian* in 1987 when an obscure environmental group in Massachusetts, Greenword, asked the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to protect it as an endangered species. It's fair to say few people had heard of the northern spotted owl before then.

Today many people are casting the owl as a factor in the current spate of mill closures and worker layoffs. Again last week, headlines in *USA Today* depicted the struggle in the idiotic terms of jobs vs. owls, and that newspaper was not alone in its characterization. In fact, the owl is no more to blame in 1993 for economic upheaval than it was in 1930, 1960 and 1980, when previous rounds of closures and layoffs uprooted thousands and thousands of Northwest families.

For decades, Northwest forests were cut so rapidly that the region was afflicted with log shortages, species extinctions and worker displacements. The layoffs we are seeing today share the same cause.

Aaron Jones, longtime owner of the Seneca Lumber Mill in Eugene, recalls the late 1950s, when as many as 300 tiny timber mills dotted the tidewaters along the Oregon coast. As would be readily apparent to anyone driving the coast these days, those mills are long gone, with only shreds of rotting buildings to remind us of that reckless era. The mills closed without so much as a whimper about the owl or angry words for environmentalists. To blame these groups for today's crisis amounts to blaming the messengers, as though they were somehow responsible for abusing the Northwest's precious natural heritage.

Actually, the volume of timber cut in Oregon peaked in 1952, when nearly 10 billion board-feet of wood fell on public and private lands. By 1962, the rate of cutting had declined by half. (Today, the debate focuses on whether the forests can cough up 1 billion board-feet in the three coastal states without threatening the existence of the owl and hundreds of other species.) In Washington, the pace of cutting peaked decades earlier, mainly at the hands of loggers working for Weyerhaeuser Co., the Tacoma timber giant that had purchased millions of acres from the Northern Pacific Railroad. The clearing of forest lands is a pattern dating back before the American revolution. Clearcutters had earlier leveled lands in the Midwest, South and East. The debate today is whether the last stands, and the fragile resources they support, should be left alone.

As Spokane environmentalist John Osborne said three years ago, we aren't up against the spotted owl. We're up against the Pacific Ocean.

Years ago, the preponderance of logs were being

taken from private lands, whose owners were busily converting their old-growth stands to new crops of second growth. On Weyerhaeuser lands and elsewhere, that conversion is essentially complete. Now the only significant remaining stands of old-growth are on public lands, and until recently the industry had expected permission to convert those as well.

Now, with the Northwest's old forests apparently off limits to further clearcutting, environmentalists worry that forests in the Rockies will be the industry's last stand. An unspoken concern at the president's forest conference was the specter that old forests west of the Cascades would be spared at the expense of increased cutting elsewhere. Clinton has promised to present a path out of this gridlock by early June, and it will be worth watching to see whether that path will

Is the Northwest ready to live within its forests?

include trampling eastside forests. Forests there are already creaking under extensive clearcutting and patterns of fragmentation that tend to isolate and then eliminate local populations of wildlife.

In the Northwest, there was no way to sustain the pace of the 1950s. In an important 1975 study, overseen and written by Professor John Beutter, Oregon State University foresters warned of a future timber "gap."

During this period, which would last years, the flow of old-growth logs would slow significantly while the next crop of timber would still be immature.

In 1989, a revised version of that study affirmed the earlier conclusions. The pace of cutting cannot return to levels seen in the 1980s for more than 100 years.

That is precisely why the Northwest faces this crisis. The problem would be less severe, however, had government agencies, the industry and Congress been willing to adjust to the implications of the OSU studies.

Instead, they conspired to quicken clearcutting on federal forests to help local mills boost production. That policy, set in the mid-1980s, led Oregon from the depths of a deep recession. But it set the stage for a showdown.

That showdown continues to be played out in two arenas: in courts and in Congress. In April 1989, Seattle federal Judge William Dwyer issued the first injunction blocking timber sales from federal lands. Dwyer ruled that the federal government was illegally selling timber, not in violation of the Endangered Species Act but of the National Forest Management Act. That 1976 law, which did not require the government to sell a single stick of timber, required instead that any such sales be done without diminishing any species of wildlife in any part of its range. Those injunctions are due to

expire this August.

At the same time, members of the Oregon congressional delegation, worried about management of forests by the courts, convened in Salem for the first timber summit.

That June 24, 1989, event apparently broke the impasse with a compromise hammered out during a private lunch. Rep. Bob Smith reportedly said the best course of action would be no action at all. To that, Rep. Les AuCoin, a congressman who occasionally used profanity to emphasize a point, replied, "If we do nothing, Bob, we're all (expletive)."

The compromise from Timber Summit I, which set logging levels while protecting old growth, was forwarded to Congress, which adopted it with immunity from court challenges. But it was no solution at all. It expired after barely one year, and failed to address the declining forest ecosystem as it affected not just owls but salmon, marbled murrelets and 480 other species that depend on that ecosystem.

But this time, members of the Northwest congressional delegation, especially House Speaker Tom Foley, D-Wash., were conspicuous in their absence from Clinton's summit. Members weren't invited, and most preferred it that way. An important vote on the House floor on Friday offered a convenient excuse. Only Sen. Bob Packwood, R-Ore., a champion of timber companies and workers, made noises about coming West for the event.

As the Clinton administration writes its plan, it could do well to learn from history, and to focus on sustainability, a buzzword that's often misused and misunderstood. Sustainable harvesting of timber implies far more than merely cutting the same amount year after year in perpetuity, although it does mean that. Georgia Pacific, Inc., a timber giant that chewed through most of its Oregon holdings in the 1950s and 1960s, professes to practice sustainable harvesting. But it does so broadly, across its vast acreages in the West and South. Local communities have always been at risk to the capricious "cut and run" operations that saw GP roam the country for localities rich in sawtimber — only to pull out when it was liquidated.

Sustainability must be practiced to ensure that communities are no longer subject to the cut and runners, so that lumber cut in watersheds varies little from year to year.

The timber industry, in an expensive and extensive public relations campaign that began in 1990, proclaims that Oregon will never run out of trees. No doubt that is correct. Industry tree farms do a good job producing wood fiber for housing, paper and other products. A typical tree farm contains patches of a single tree species, each tree of the same age. It suffers, however, from lack of the complex character of a natural forest composed of many species, of varied sizes and ages, including species of little or no economic value.

But the debate is not about trees anymore, nor is it about jobs or owls. It is about forests, and rivers, and wildlife, and people. Timber harvesting in the future must sustain and nourish all of these values. As Mike Draper, executive secretary of the Western Council of Industrial Woodworkers, said at the recent conference in words that, if not politically correct, hit the point squarely: "Together we can find a solution that protects not only the forests of God, but the families of man."

Paul Koberstein free-lances from Portland, Oregon.

How we pros covered the summit

by Ed Marston

For weeks I looked forward to my first real act of journalism. With a thousand other reporters, I was going to attend the forest summit. After two decades of covering events and people in places real journalists did not know existed, I was off to Portland to a national event.

It was a lucky break. I had to be in Portland on

April 3 anyway, so going a day early would cost little. My luck continued in Portland on the morning of the summit; the expected traffic jams didn't materialize and I was able to take a trolley to within a few blocks of the Portland Convention Center. There, my laminated White House press pass let me penetrate one police line after another until finally, after a thorough search, I was admitted to a huge basement room.

Inside I found 1,000 of my fellows — some in cur-

tained rooms against the walls (CNN, CBS, NBC) and some, like me, wandering homeless around the center of this cube-like room. There were gradations among the homeless. The electronic types were clustered together at table after table, closest to the food concession. Dotted around the room were various stages, like small boxing rings, with TV reporters standing under illuminated umbrellas sending off reports as if they were somewhere, rather than nowhere.

The "traveling White House Corps" had scores of long tables with telephones for their use. (Next to each telephone was a sign telling us non-White House Corps types to keep our hands off.) At one time, their telephones probably gave them an advantage. But today the telephones simply dated them, for most of the drop-in reporters had cellular telephones.

And everywhere were television monitors, whose significance I was yet to understand.

When the monitors showed the summit about to start, I asked a woman with a White House press tag how I could get into the meeting. She looked startled, and then said, "You can't. Only pool reporters can go in and the pools are filled. You get to cover it from here."

April Fool! a day late.

It took me a while to figure out what she meant by "pool," but then I remembered the Gulf War, where a few privileged reporters got to the front, presumably on behalf of the thousands of reporters who, like me, were milling around miles from the action.

Unfortunately, I never got any information from the members of the pool. The only effect on me was that periodically the loudspeaker blared: "Would the 11 a.m. pool please assemble near the concession stand," drowning out the dialogue on the TV monitors.

Nevertheless, the pools were important. Without them, we had no way of knowing if there were a summit above our heads. It might be taking place in Rhode Island, or have been taped weeks earlier in Little Rock.

To non-journalists, that may seem a small thing. But to the thousand of us in the basement, it was important; it meant we could put a "Forest Summit" dateline on the story, rather than a "C-Span" dateline.

But the arrangement raised several questions: Why hadn't the Office of the Vice President's Communications Office (that's its title) told me that I would be incarcerated during the summit? And why had they searched us so thoroughly at the door — did they fear armed reporters would turn on each other in frustration at their lack of "access"?

Aside from that, locking the reporters away made sense. Had 1,000 of us been admitted to the summit, we would have dominated and disrupted it searching for people to interview, setting up cameras, and chatting on cellular telephones.

For President Clinton to run the day as a teach-in, he had to keep the press at bay: he had to place the

thousand of us where we could see and hear, but couldn't dominate events or distract participants and audience in our search for 1,000 different angles.

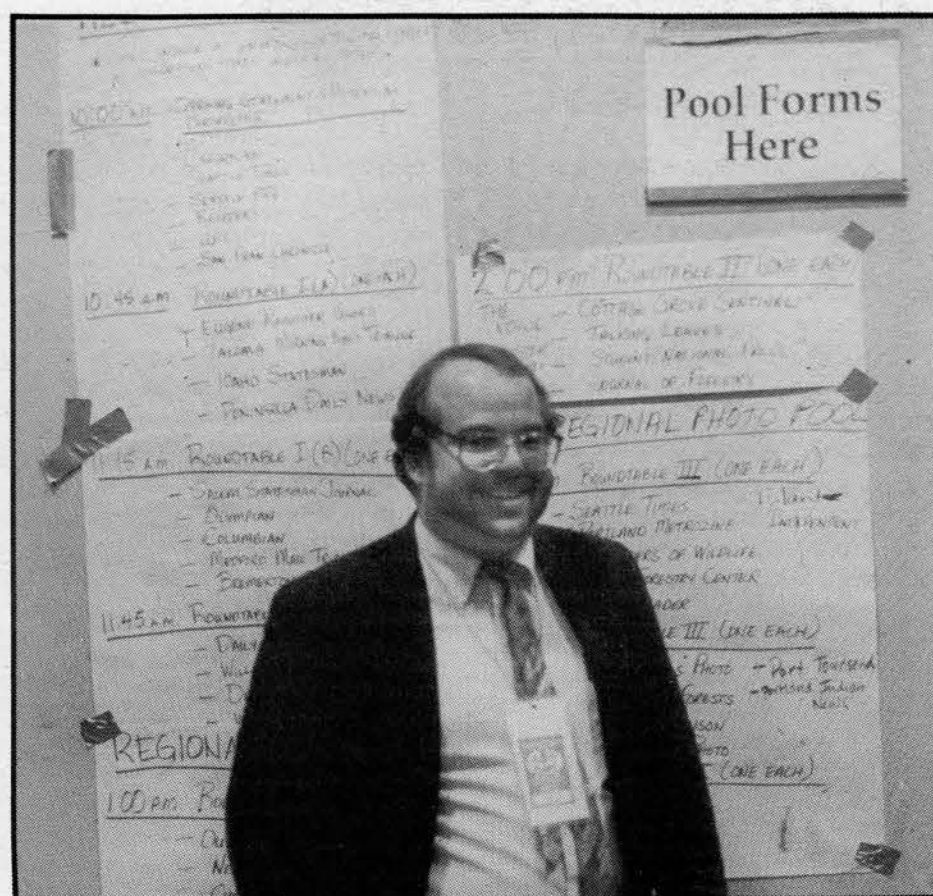
Watching it on television would have been the perfect way for me and my fellow journalists to cover it, if we hadn't been brought together in that basement, where instead we chatted with each, interviewed each other, flirted with each other, talked on our cellular telephones, played solitaire on our laptops, and compared technologies.

Luckily, by afternoon, about one-third of the reporters had left, making it easier for the rest of us to hear the proceedings and shortening the lines at the espresso stand. And a few nights later, back in Paonia, C-Span

replayed the event and I could watch it at my leisure, and marvel at how the Northwest's anguish and opportunity to transform itself were being laid out for all to see and hear.

After April 2, no one, except perhaps the inattentive or distracted reporters in the convention center's basement, will be able to pose the conflict as one of jobs versus owls. Nor will they be able to deny that the timber industry, the Bush-Reagan administrations, the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the Northwest's congressional delegation have collaborated over the past decade to create an irremedial mess, extend human suffering, and devastate natural systems.

Clinton comes to this problem years, if not decades, too late. Nevertheless, he must play the cards he has been dealt. He played the first hand perfectly —



Ed Marston

Idaho Falls Post-Register reporter Rocky Barker prepares to plunge in his 3 p.m. pool

his day-long summit laid out the Northwest's reality. With diagnosis over, he must now play his second hand — that of battlefield surgeon, lopping off 20 mills here, throwing away several ecosystems there.

Triage will be the order of the day — triage of communities, economies and ecosystems. He has no choice; he has been elected president, not God, and the political, economic and cultural forces that created the mess are still in place.

The question is, will Clinton's triage provide a basis for long-term recovery of the Northwest's human and natural communities? Or will it be another temporary patch job that comes apart almost as quickly as it is fashioned? ■

Ed Marston is publisher of High Country News.



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Vol. 25, No. 7

LETTERS

SURVIVAL OF THE LUCKIEST

Dear HCN,

I remain astonished at the golden light the "lost skiers" of Aspen continue to enjoy in most media except HCN March 8. This is a story of what a group did wrong.

Just for starters (and these are all assumptions based on newspaper stories): They did not discuss and agree upon a plan and contingency plan before leaving. They did not discuss their individual and group expectations and goals, taking into account their varying abilities and comfort levels. They did not prepare appropriately for a night out. They do not appear to have had or prepared the skills to find the hut. They went out even though a storm had moved in the previous Wednesday and dumped, continued to dump, as much as 80 inches of new snow. The leader did not accept his obligation to the group, apparently unwilling to compromise to a group plan, ascending in a blizzard in a known avalanche area and leaving the others to get back without him. These actions led to a dangerous, exhausting, expensive rescue effort.

And here they are, safe, lucky to be alive and relatively unharmed, and looking at big fat offers for a movie about their experience. This sort of misadventure happens all the time, often with much more dramatic and tragic results, as any ski- or mountain-rescue person can attest. Why were the media so taken with this particular version on an old theme? Perhaps because it occurred out the back door of the beautiful-people-rich-movie-star-capital of the ski world, where journalists can rub elbows with the rich and famous, while looking for a story.

I was amused and only a bit outraged by the vacuous awe of the media and the American public, until I heard a Hollywood producer-type on the radio, explaining his interest in the story. He said, "It's kind of a story of survival of the fittest." That's when outrage outbalanced amusement.

The fittest had nothing to do with this story. The fittest took a look at the weather and stayed at the pub in Aspen. The fittest left early and made it to the hut, or were prepared with appropriate gear and knowledge for a night out, or turned back when the day got late and the hut wasn't found. The fittest turned back together after evaluating the situation at timberline, and made it back to town with no drama.

This is a story of survival of the luckiest, survival of people apparently unfit to lead and unprepared to follow. To publicize their story in order to teach them and ourselves something for next time is one thing. To glorify it as if these people, too arrogant to know that they shouldn't have been where they were and lucky enough to survive their errors, piled as deep as Colorado powder, as if these dangerously casual skiers were some sort of heroes, is quite another.

Elizabeth Rothman
Seattle, Washington

The writer is a founding member of *Women Climbers Northwest*.

HCN PRINTS "MUDDLED NONSENSE"

Dear HCN,

Ed Marston's simple-minded editorial in HCN, 3/8/93, divides The West into good guys and bad guys. The bad guys (Greg Hobbs, miners, ranchers, land managers...) don't respect or encourage the free flow of information and ideas. The good guys (Prof. Wilkinson, Amory Lovins, newspapers like

HCN...) come up with new ideas, break impasses, embrace change and bring about reform. What horseshit!

Charles Wilkinson, for example, is no less a cheerleader than Greg Hobbs. For years Wilkinson has been cheering the four lower-Columbia River tribes who blocked genetic studies of anadromous fish indigenous to the Salmon River basin in Idaho so they can continue to harvest these threatened/endangered species. What is the difference between a "good" cheerleader for a coalition of tribes that blocks essential genetic studies and a "bad" cheerleader for a coalition of irrigators?

Also, as an economist working on resource issues for tribes, I'd suggest that

talking about the old Soviet Union and so would tell me that the cure for its economy is political freedom and a free market. I don't know whether they would change their conclusion after I told them that I was talking about the West.

FREE INQUIRY STILL LIVES IN THE LAND GRANTS

Dear HCN,

Mr. Marston suggests that land grant universities in the West are so beholden to "dam builders, ranchers, miners, oil companies, loggers and row-crop agriculture" that they are incapable of free inquiry (HCN, 3/8/93). As a result, he argues, citi-

fact that we can do more does not mean we are held in check by a conspiracy of land developers and oilmen. The route to free inquiry of our environmental problems is through partnerships and cooperation, not hyperbole and false accusations.

Mark A. Emmert
Bozeman, Montana

The writer is the provost of Montana State University.

DAM IS ROOTED IN HISTORY

Dear HCN,

Congratulations for your superb overview of the Animas-La Plata project, March 22. As a long-time opponent of this massive federal boondoggle, I know how difficult it is to describe this project, especially after it got divided into phases. There is, however, one point I would like to clarify: the dates the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute reservations were created.

The 1868 treaty that created the original Ute reservation, which comprised roughly the western third of Colorado, was declared null and void in 1880, following the Meeker incident of 1879 in which a few Utes at the White River Agency rebelled after being forced into virtual slave labor to dig irrigation ditches. They killed Meeker, the utopian-socialist Indian agent who thought he could transform the nomadic Utes into yeoman farmers in three months, kidnapped his wife and several others.

Gov. Frederic Pitkin and other Denver ballyhoos used this incident to cry, "The Utes must go." Uncompahgre leader Ouray, aware that 7,500 Utes could not fight the Anglos, led a delegation that ceded all Colorado Ute-owned lands in 1880, and agreed to be removed from Colorado.

The Yampa, Pariah and Uncompahgre bands were subsequently dispatched to Utah, but due to various political forces, the Weminuche, Mouache and Capote bands were allowed to stay in Colorado.

The 1895 Hunter Act provided that Ute families could file on homesteads. The Mouache and Capotes accepted the deal. The Weminuche voted no, so the feds agreed to the establishment of a reservation on the first 40 western miles, essentially the boundaries of the contemporary Ute Mountain Ute reservation.

The Southern Ute Tribe was not incorporated until 1936. Most of the Southern Ute lands in the Animas-La Plata project area were not ceded to the tribe until 1937.

This reservation history and two court rulings mean that there is no way the Southern Ute Tribe could claim 1868 water rights in the areas involved in this project.

In my opinion, the above is why the Utes stayed in the project even after their water-delivery facilities were removed from the federal one (Phase II). The some \$60 million in cash and water storage in the main project reservoir were still a better deal than they could have gotten in court.

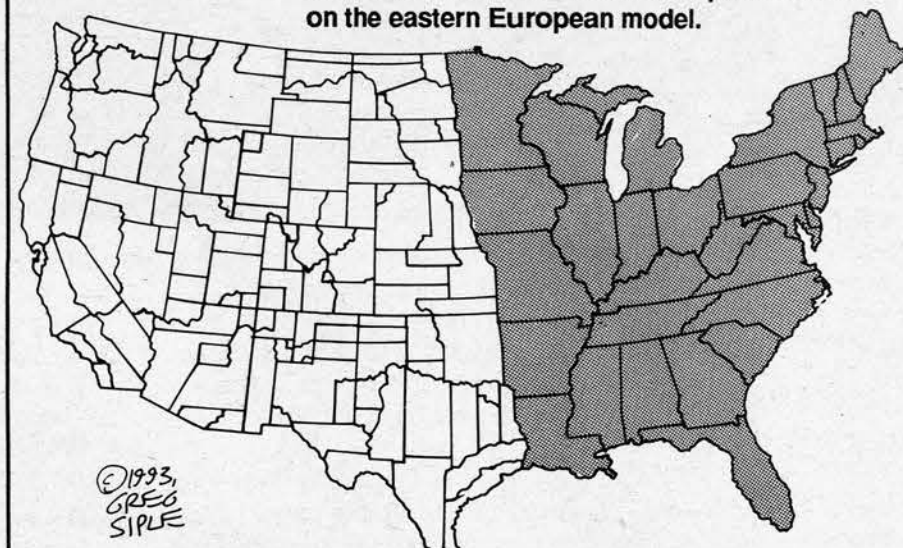
As I once said, "Sam Maynes and Leonard Burch bluffed in a \$500 million poker game." But however much I admire their gambling skills, I think it is immoral to force poor dirt farmers into an expensive water project or to indebted the widows and orphans in Durango and the New Mexican communities for water they don't need and can't afford.

I thus hope that former state engineer Jeris Danielson will develop some practical alternatives so that the "dam that won't die" will finally kick the bucket, and we can get on with the rest of our lives. It's been too damn long.

Jeanne W. Englert
Lafayette, Colorado

OFF THE WALL

The Clinton administration proposes a solution to Western America land use disputes based on the eastern European model.



Just keep making more states until everybody is happy.

the publisher of HCN wander into the economics department at Boulder or Fort Collins — doesn't make any difference which one — and ask why his statement that the ranch-for-a-ranchhouse equation is due to the West not being free to exchange ideas is muddled nonsense. Ed needs to reach around in back of his thighs, grab his neck, yank downward and open his eyes.

Charles Pace
Challis, Idaho

The writer is director of Regional Services, Inc., a consulting firm specializing in policy analysis in the areas of economic development, energy and use of natural resources.

Ed Marston replies:

There is much to disagree with in my essay on the land-grant universities. But the West's economic backwardness is not a matter for debate. Were I to walk into the economics department at the University of Colorado or at Colorado State University, as you suggest, I wouldn't ask, openly, about the West. Instead, I would inquire about some unnamed region whose economy is largely subsidized and controlled from a government center 1,500 miles away, with the decisions made by that government determined by a handful of officials doing the bidding of the interests that receive the subsidies.

I would also explain that the region's officials have great weight in the center of power because they represent a handful of people, and therefore need relatively little in the way of subsidies, on a per capita basis, compared to representatives from more populated areas. I would also explain that the rural region they represent has been trashed ecologically by this made-in-a-political-center, non-market economy. Finally, I would say that most public discourse and the factual information on which that discourse is based are tightly controlled by government bureaucracies and by research institutions.

The economists would assume I was

zens have been forced to rely on his profession, journalism, for objective science. To improve this situation, he wants to coin science, public policy and public debate as the route to objective inquiry.

We do need "good science and policy" in order to address the pressing environmental issues of the High Plains, and Western universities can and should be contributing more. But universities are responding to these needs in many ways. Nearly every public university in the High Plains region is moving aggressively to develop further their research efforts and teaching programs in environmental studies and sustainable development. At Montana State University, our College of Agriculture has introduced a new degree program in Renewable Natural Resource Management. Researchers here are also developing exciting new pesticide-free biocontrol technologies. Moreover, at MSU we have over 50 faculty conducting research on the Yellowstone ecosystem, and they are offering courses in environmental studies within the Yellowstone Center for Mountain Environments and in many other departments.

Can we do more? Of course. There is an enormous amount of research and study to be done. We also need to find better ways to integrate our research and teaching into the public debate. But the

BARBS

It looked that way from the outside, too.

Dealing with the Bureau of Indian Affairs is like stepping in Jell-O," retiring Interior Department Auditor James Richards told the *Salt Lake Tribune*.

"It's slippery. It wiggles. No one takes responsibility. Every year we tell people what to fix. Every year we come back and it's still broken. When we ask them why, everyone just shrugs."