

High Country News

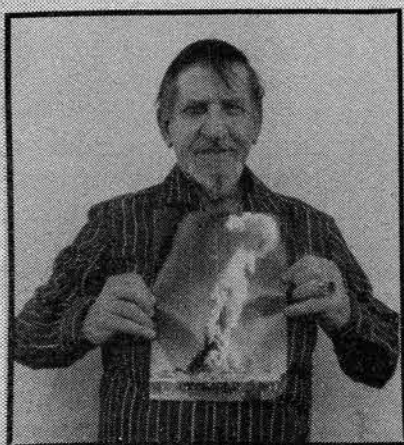
September 6, 1993

Vol. 25 No. 16

A Paper for People who Care about the West

One dollar and fifty cents

American Ground Zero: The Secret Nuclear War



Carole Gallagher
Ted Pryzgucki, Las Vegas, Nevada

I am waiting for my case to
come up

and I am waiting

for a rebirth of wonder

and I am waiting
for someone

to really discover America

and wail

and I am waiting
for the discovery

of a new symbolic
western frontier

and I am waiting
for the American Eagle

to straighten up

and fly right.

Lawrence
Ferlinghetti, 1958

Story, excerpts
from Carole
Gallagher's
book begin on
page 13

On their own Eagles make a comeback



Bald eagle

Neal and Mary Jane Mishler

by Stephen Stuebner



Bald eagles, those majestic, carnivorous birds with piercing eyes, fluffy white heads and six-foot wingspan, are rebounding with a vengeance in the West.

Driven to near-extinction by widespread use of the pesticide DDT in the 1960s, eagles have come back in nearly every Western state except Nevada. Bald eagle populations exceeded 950

nesting pairs last year in the seven-state Pacific recovery region, a dramatic rise from 285 pairs in 1980.

Nationwide, bald eagles have vaulted from a low count of 417 nesting pairs in 1963, to nearly 3,747 pairs in 1992. That's nearly a 10-fold increase in about 30 years.

Westerners now see bald eagles return to their old haunts in mountain valleys and river canyons. The adaptive birds are also taking up residence in places they've never been before, places perilously close to civilization — near man-made lakes, in urban subdivisions and even on a tall cottonwood tree next to the ladies' 15th tee at the Yampa Val-

ley Golf Course in western Colorado.

In a state like Colorado, which had just 18 nesting pairs in 1993, a pair of bald eagles raising young on a golf course is a big deal. Club pro Chuck Cobb says it's a treat to watch the birds — fondly named "Birdie" and "Bogie" — dive for northern pike in the river nearby or for catfish in golf course ponds.

"I was over on the 18th green, watching an eagle soar over a lake on the 11th hole, and suddenly he pulled out his talons, dove into the pond and flew out with a big fish," Cobb says. "And these guys were standing there on the 11th green, their jaws hanging wide open."

continued on page 10



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Dear friends,

Visiting journalist

Writer Valerie Taliman of Bishop, Calif., spent two weeks in August in Paonia as *HCN*'s first Visiting Native American Journalist. Valerie, a Navajo, spoke to the staff about Native American issues and observed how *High Country News* operates.

Valerie is one of the West's few Native American journalists specializing in natural resource issues. She writes regularly for two national newspapers — *Indian Country Today* and *News from Indian Country*, as well as *The Circle*, based in Minneapolis, Minn., the *Navajo Times*, *Smoke Signals* and *Indigenous Voices*, a Canadian paper.

In addition to her writing, she lectures widely on environmental racism, which usually refers to the placement of toxic dumps and incinerators amidst people of color. But, she says, environmental racism includes the recent killing of Indians by Brazilian miners. "It's the late 20th century, but Indians are still being killed for gold."

To Bozeman for a potluck

Isolated in Paonia, staff sees readers *en masse* only three times a year, at potlucks which take place around the region, following day-long meetings of the board that governs *High Country News*.

The next potluck will be in Bozeman,

Montana's, Lindley Park on Saturday, Sept. 18, at 6:30 p.m. If you can come, please RSVP to Linda at 303/527-4898, or return the card you received if you live within driving distance of Bozeman.

The event is casual and informal: there will be no speeches and no fund-raising. Entertainment will consist of conversation and discovering what kind of food other readers enjoy. It is also an opportunity for *HCN* to visit a part of its region and learn what readers think should be in the paper.

— Ed Marston
for the staff



Valerie Taliman

WESTERN ROUNDUP

Support drops for Clinton's timber plan

In a recent article published widely throughout the West, Alexander Cockburn, a columnist for *The Nation*, slams President Clinton's plan for Northwest forests as "a full disaster" and blames environmental groups for selling out.

He says mainline environmental groups such as the Sierra Club, the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, the National Audubon Society and The Wilderness Society were blackmailed into signing "articles of surrender" that prescribe the final rape and pillage of Northwest ancient forests. Only the militant Oregon Natural Resources Council, he says, held out against the rout.

If the mainline groups were ever happy with the Clinton plan, they are now doing some serious backtracking. Carl Pope, executive director of the Sierra Club, suggests Cockburn has his facts wrong, perhaps because he placed faith in a misquote published in *USA Today*. "If he would have checked his facts, he would have recognized that indeed the Sierra Club expressed deep disappointment in the president's proposal," Pope replied in a letter to newspaper editors. The Sierra Club is one of several groups calling on the president to strengthen his plan.

As Cockburn points out, the plan has many faults. It provides no permanent old-growth preserves; no prohibition on clearcutting in roadless watersheds; subjects 40 percent of the remaining unprotected old-growth to commercial harvests; allows increased harvests on land between reserves; and calls for increased harvests in forests east of the Cascades. The plan claims that it provides 80 percent assurance that the threatened northern spotted owl will survive, although some scientists privately say that figure is far too optimistic. Other scientists say mollusks and other forest species have far

less of a chance.

In various press releases, public statements and op-ed pieces, environmental leaders have sharply criticized the plan for these very shortcomings. In fact, if any group has been co-opted by the administration, it has been a grass-roots organization close to "ground zero" in the War of the Woods. That would be Headwaters, an environmental group based in southwest Oregon where the anti-owl sentiments are the strongest. Headwaters has taken a far more moderate approach than other groups by attempting to reach a compromise that won't put so many of its neighbors out of work. Headwaters director Julie Norman plowed this middle ground at the April forest summit in Portland and may have caught President Clinton's ear.

Groups working for the restoration of damaged salmon and trout habitat actually like parts of the plan, although their support is off the record. The groups are keeping quiet so as not to detract from the efforts of ONRC and other critics. The plan provides money for restoring watersheds and creates 300-foot-wide buffers along fish-bearing streams. Groups such as the Pacific Rivers Council say these measures are a vast improvement over existing conditions.

Cockburn bases much of his analysis on the work of a Portland environmental think tank, Cascade Holistic Economic Consultants, publishers of *Forest Watch*. Randal O'Toole, forest economist for CHEC, says Cockburn glossed over what may be the worst part of the plan — \$1.2 billion that is supposed to be spent on worker retraining and other programs designed to help communities weather the heavy economic impact.

"My basic problem is the plan is a big fat pork barrel," O'Toole says. "It comes to about \$200,000 a job."

Workers themselves will see little or none of that money. It will go to counties, the states, the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. "I don't see any point in spending all that money on something like that," O'Toole says. "It really is hush money — money aimed at telling people not to worry. And taxpayers will lose too — the government will take a bunch of their money and give it to people who don't really need it."

— Paul Koberstein

The writer free-lances in Portland, Oregon.

HOTLINE

Game warden stays

Two days before he was slated to take early retirement Aug. 8 to avoid a forced transfer to Denver, the top game warden for Montana and Wyoming received a reprieve. Joel Scrafford, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's senior agent in the two states, will not leave the agency until nominee Mollie Beatty is confirmed as U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service director and can review the order to move him, spokeswoman Sharon Rose said. Scrafford was ordered to move to Denver because the agency said it needed someone there to fight industrial polluters that harm wildlife (*HCN*, 8/23/93). But Scrafford said he may have angered his bosses by criticizing the agency's priorities. Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., asked Interior officials to stay Scrafford's retirement until Beatty could review the case.

WESTERN ROUNDUP

And make sure
you get Old
Faithful in
the shot.



Greg Kearney

Poacher shoots elk, video and himself

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK, Wyo. — A nationally known archer pleaded guilty in federal court in Wyoming Aug. 13 to killing protected elk in Yellowstone National Park while filming the poaching for a how-to hunting videotape.

A former paid spokesman for hunting equipment manufacturers, Donald Eugene Lewis admitted shooting three elk with bow and arrow a mile from a major park campground at Indian Creek. A friend of Lewis also admitted killing three elk during the same spree.

"We are outraged by this type of activity in the park, but it probably goes on a lot more than we'd like to think," said Yellowstone Chief Ranger Dan Sholly. "It's incredible that eight miles from park headquarters this could occur."

Wildlife investigators tracked down Lewis, of Cedar Bluff, Ala., after recognizing park vistas on a videotape seized by game wardens who arrested Lewis in Utah in 1991.

Authorities there started tracking Lewis after local sportsmen got suspicious about wildlife mounts Lewis was pictured with in a magazine called *Petersen's Bowhunting*.

Within days, Utah wardens arrested Lewis for poaching. When they searched his truck and found videotapes, their case widened.

"It looked funny to me, it looked like Yellowstone," said Dave Hintze, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources investigator who first saw the tape.

The tame appearance of the elk and charred lodgepole pine in the background — remnants of 1988 forest fires — led Hintze to conjecture that the scene was Yellowstone.

After viewing the tape, Hintze sent an alert to other wildlife management agencies in the West. He quickly heard from Yellowstone rangers, who found that Lewis and a friend, Art Sims, had signed a trail roster in September 1991 in the area of Indian Creek.

The pair had even obtained a back-country camping permit, which is

required in the park, Sholly said.

"They knew exactly what they were doing."

Federal investigators from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service later joined the case.

Lewis, 38, and Sims, 40, of Huntsville, Ala., pleaded guilty to illegally taking elk in Yellowstone, which is off limits to hunters. Sims works for the security division of the Boeing Corp.

Lewis and Sims were pictured on the videotape using bow and arrow to shoot at least nine elk, authorities said. They were hunting about eight miles south of Mammoth Hot Springs, Quadrant Mountain and Antler Peak, two peak landmarks visible on the tape.

They lured the elk by replicating their calls and then shot them, one after the other, according to U.S. Attorney Kip Crofts.

Although he did not appear in court, Lewis told a federal magistrate in a statement that he was driven to hunt in Yellowstone by keen competition among professional hunters for trophy elk.

"Where else in the world could an archery hunter find that many trophy bull elk in that short period of time?" Crofts asked.

"It was trophy hunting gone to its most awful extreme," he said. "You can't get those kinds of trophies with legal hunting."

Both Lewis and Sims were fined \$15,000 and sentenced to 18 months in prison for shooting elk in Yellowstone. A magistrate suspended Sims' sentence, but ordered him to spend 30 days of the total in jail, concurrently with a 50-day prison term he received in state court in Utah for poaching deer there.

The two were also placed on probation for five years, were ordered not to hunt or fish anywhere in the United States during that period, and were barred from entering national parks.

Before he was arrested in Utah, Lewis was a paid representative of Browning Arms and Cabela's, a mail-order hunting supplier. He was repeatedly

profiled in hunting magazines. One headlined an article about him, "Master of the Mega-Muley," because of his mule deer hunting skills.

It said Lewis had shot 23 record-class mule deer since 1976, including several bucks with antlers more than 30 inches wide.

The videotape of Lewis and Sims hunting in Yellowstone was one of six videotapes seized from Lewis' pickup when he was arrested in Utah, Hintze said. Other tapes were used to prosecute Lewis; his brother, Terry; and Sims for hunting offenses in Utah.

Lewis had made the tapes with plans to turn them into how-to hunting videos that could be marketed under his name. He was eager to promote himself as a professional hunter to maintain his advertising contracts.

"He hoped to get his own TV show," Hintze said.

"It was just a photo album that revealed that Don and his friends have gone crazy shooting wildlife the last couple years," Hintze said.

In the videotape depicting Lewis and Sims shooting elk in Yellowstone, the two men are laughing and smiling and making no attempt to hide their faces, Sholly said. They killed some elk only after shooting them with several arrows that penetrated the animals' guts.

"These were not well-placed shots," the chief ranger said. "These animals died over a long period."

If it were not for the tapes, Sholly noted, short-handed park rangers would never have learned of Lewis' activity in the park. With Yellowstone brimming with tourists, rangers have little time for patrols.

"We are on a reactive mode in this park — we respond to things after they occur," he said. "For every poacher we catch like this, there are probably 30 we don't know about."

— Michael Milstein

Michael Milstein works in Cody, Wyoming, for the *Billings Gazette*.

HOTLINE

Moving up at the BLM

An African American woman who has worked for the Bureau of Land Management for 20 years is now the agency's second-in-command. BLM Director Jim Baca appointed 41-year-old Denise Meridith as his new deputy director Aug. 17. Meridith began her career in 1973 as a wildlife specialist in the BLM's Las Vegas, Nev., field office. She went on to become the agency's first female field biologist, its first female senior executive and first African American state director. Her experience in the West includes stints as deputy state director of the New Mexico office in Santa Fe and associate director of the California office in Sacramento. Meridith said she would help Baca "set the stage for BLM's entrance into the 21st century."



John P. George

Molar Rock and Angel Arch in Canyonlands National Park, Utah

Too many tourists

Crowds of tourists jammed southern Utah's national parks this summer, tying up roads and flooding campgrounds with trash. Nationwide, the gain in visitation in the nation's park system averages only 3 percent a year. But in Utah, thanks to several years of intensive advertising by the Utah Travel Council, business is booming. In Canyonlands National Park the number of visitors is growing 15 percent a year, forcing park officials to revise their management plans to protect Canyonlands' fragile high desert. Zion National Park has seen tourism increase 8 percent a year for the last 10 years, and this year the park is expected to clear 3 million visitors, doubling 1983 levels. Arches and Capitol Reef national parks have also boomed. As a result Park Service officials have urged the state travel council to switch its advertising focus to lesser known attractions such as Escalante Canyon, Cedar Breaks National Monument and some of the state's 85 scenic highways. The owner of a tourist business in Moab, however, says public money should go to improve established parks instead. "Why move the trash and people from an area prepared to handle it to an area that isn't?" asks Tag-Along-Tours owner Bob Jones.

HOTLINE

Black bear kills logger

Colin McClelland managed to squeeze off one shot from a high-powered rifle as an enraged male black bear ripped open his camper door in the mountains of central Colorado Aug. 10, near Cotopaxi. But state wildlife officials say the bullet just grazed the bear's side. Within minutes, the 240-pound animal killed the logger, then dragged his body outside and proceeded to eat it. Friends found the partially consumed body Aug. 11 after McClelland failed to show up for an appointment. When the bear returned to the site Aug. 15, state wildlife officers trapped and killed it. "This was a large male in excellent condition that had a real nasty disposition," says wildlife manager Willie Travnick. Wildlife officials speculate the bear was the same one that earlier raided nine empty cabins in the area, breaking windows, doors and, in one case, a cabin wall. Food and trash apparently attracted the bear to McClelland's camp. "People just refuse to take care of their own place," said Randy Cote, a district wildlife manager in Aspen. "They think that because they're there they have priority. People just keep moving in where the bears are."

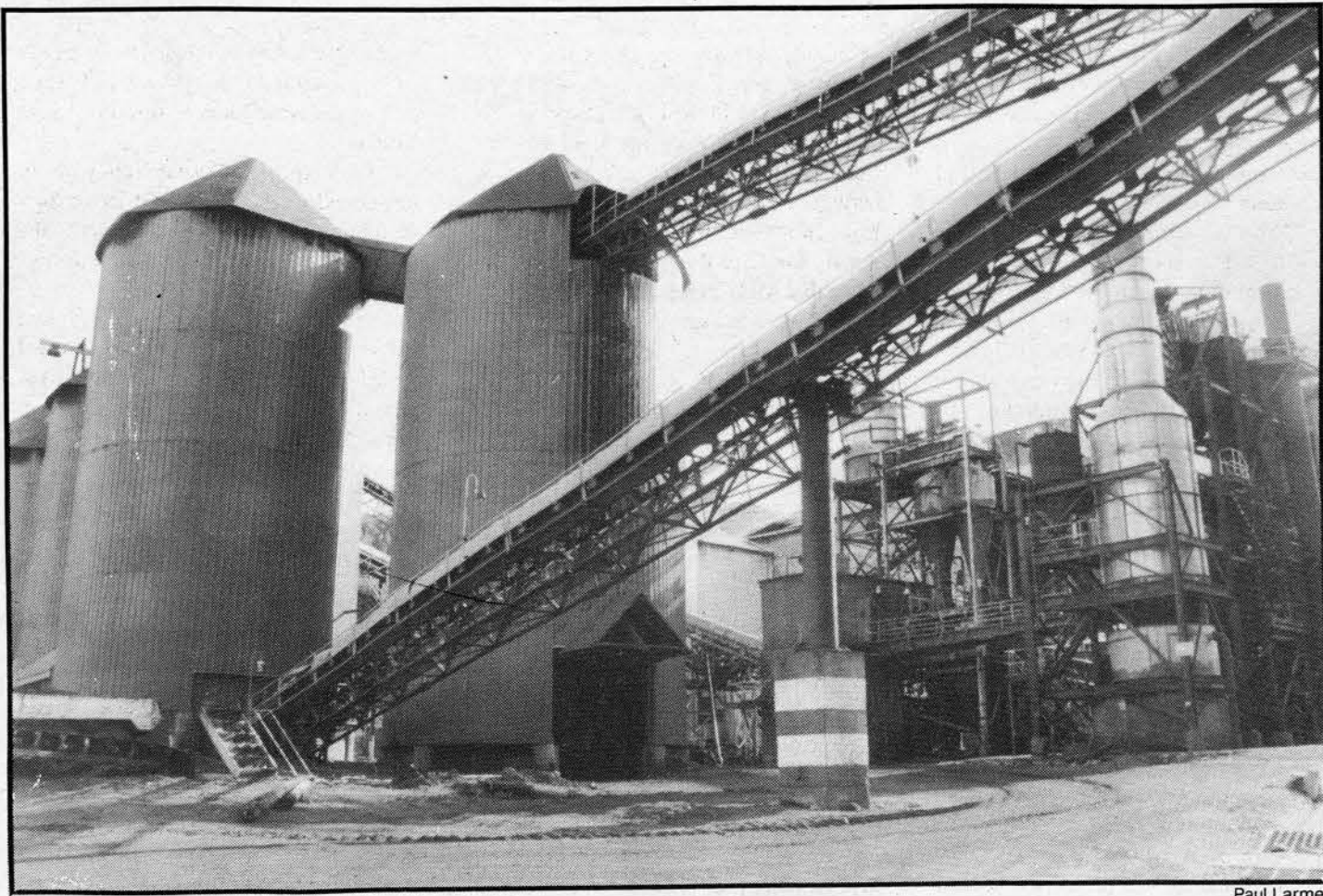
Lawsuit in sheep's clothing?

Wyoming attorney Karen Budd has filed suit in federal court to end state regulation of hunting on private land. Wyoming, like all Western states, claims wildlife as state property and tightly regulates hunting permits, especially for non-residents. Budd, who has gained fame in recent years as a legal gun for the Wise Use movement, says the suit is intended to give her plaintiffs, who live out of state and have had difficulty obtaining licenses, the right to hunt on property they own in Wyoming. However, Ron Arnold, assistant state attorney general, says Budd is being deceptive. The lawsuit, filed on behalf of Texas millionaire Clayton Williams and two Wyoming ranch families, charges that Wyoming Game and Fish regulations are unconstitutional and would make any wildlife found on private land private property. According to Budd's legal brief, the suit would give landowners "the exclusive right to hunt elk, deer and antelope ... and the right to transfer, sell and grant hunting rights to whomever each chooses." Arnold says the case should scare outfitters and hunters. "If they won," Arnold says, "landowners could command a huge amount of money for each animal. Only the rich would be able to hunt."

BARBS

Hollywood stands up for its principles.

Some 150 residents of posh Beverly Hills, Calif., turned out recently for a catered demonstration, AP reports. Protesters railed against a Londoner's plan to build a 51,000-square-foot home on less than four acres.



Paul Larmer

The main coal-washing facility at Mid-Continent near Redstone, Colorado

New mine disaster looms over Colorado

The waters of the Crystal River have periodically run black ever since coal mining resumed in western Colorado's Coal Basin in the 1950s.

"Anytime it rained, anytime you had runoff ... the trout came jumping out of the water crying for air," says Eric Johnson, a burly sculptor who has lived the last 20 years in Redstone, Colo., where Coal Creek empties into the Crystal.

"(Yet) at public meetings the mining officials told us it was Mother Nature."

Mining has stopped, but the worries remain. Some residents of Redstone fear the "blackwater episodes" will continue for decades because plans to reclaim the basin are as murky as runoff from the mine.

Mid-Continent Resources, which operated the site for 35 years, filed for bankruptcy in 1991. The property bond it

posted with the state will — by the company's admission — cover a fraction of what needs to be done. So far, the property has no interested buyers and there might not be enough money to fully reclaim the site.

The inadequacy of the bond conjures up images of the Summitville disaster for Bill Jochems, a lawyer who is president of the Crystal Valley Environmental Protection Association. Although Summitville mined gold and not coal, Jochems says the common thread is the apparent willingness of the Colorado Division of Mining and Geology to go to bat for industry (*HCN*, 1/25/93).

Jochems has the impression that the state agency is there to protect the mining interests. "They think the public is the enemy." Jochem's group wants the federal Office of Surface Mining to take control of the site.

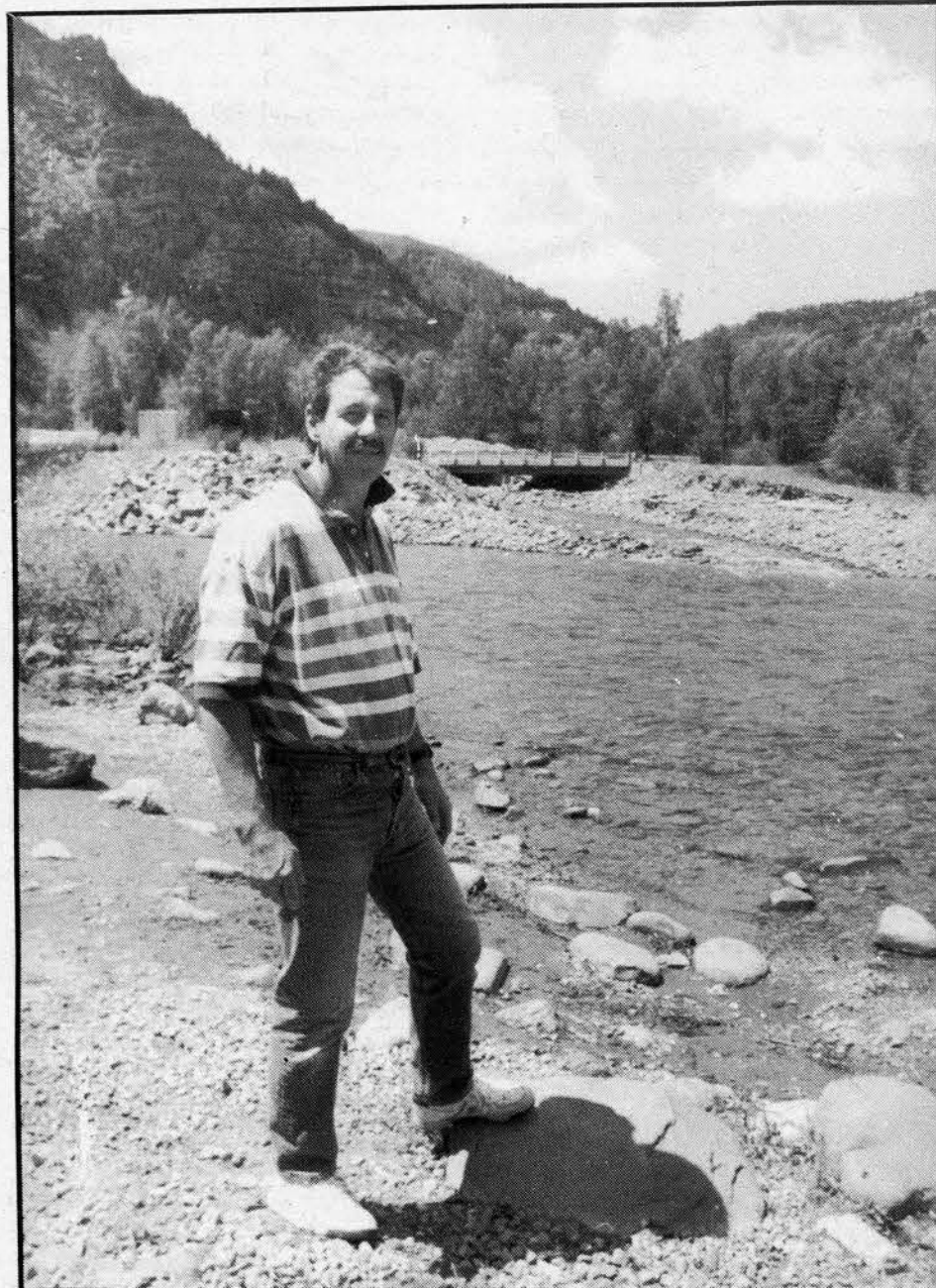
On a recent tour with mine representatives and federal and state officials, several local residents got a rare look at the high-mountain basin, which rises from 8,000 to 10,000 feet. Steep slopes, erodible soils, and heavy snows and rains make Coal Basin a difficult place to mine and to reclaim.

"I'm not convinced you could permit this site today," says Steve Renner, the state's coal program administrator.

Tony Svados, a soil scientist with the U.S. Forest Service, says his agency is concerned about reclaiming the site because it manages lands within and around 6,000 acres of company land. He says an urgent problem is the massive coal refuse pile held back from Coal Creek by a few spindly timbers and a patchwork of trees and grasses. A tributary is also nibbling away at the pile's base.

Another major worry, he says, is a 17-mile network of steep roads cut into the basin's loose shales. Some roads used for exploration in the 1960s have eroded into 30-foot-deep gullies.

The main processing facility, including a massive washing plant and a number of other buildings, lies in the floodplain. "Coal Creek is actually higher than some of the building foundations," says Svados. "A flood would wash right through



Paul Larmer

Brian Olesen, who owns a business near Redstone, stands near the Crystal River

them." Mid-Continent wants to bury these foundations after removing the buildings above, but local critics worry that electric transformers containing PCBs and other toxics will be buried with them.

"Mid-Continent is the worst coal mine site I've seen in the West — no question," says Carolyn Johnson, an environmental consultant from Denver who has spent the past 20 years helping environmentalists monitor mines.

"After the inspection tour I literally had bad dreams three nights in a row."

Carolyn Johnson compiled a long list of environmental and safety violations at Mid-Continent. In the winter of 1989, for example, the waters of Coal Creek ran black for 39 days in a row after settling ponds failed. Biologist Kevin Wright, who works for the state Division of Wildlife,

says he found dead fish in the Crystal River, their gills clogged with dark silt. Since then, an ongoing study by the state and the Forest Service of Coal Creek and the Crystal River has found that sediment from the disturbed basin smothers the insect life essential to trout. The study has also discovered the presence of an unidentified toxin.

"There is a general rule here that you don't eat the fish below Coal Creek," says Brian Olesen, owner of the Crystal Valley Manor, situated at the confluence of Coal Creek and the Crystal. During the 1989 blackwater event local activists took water samples from the river. "You could fill a glass and let it settle, and three-quarters of it would be black muck," says Olesen.

"There has been a lot of misinformation, hysteria and environmental rhetoric that has grossly distorted the problem," says Robert Delaney, former vice president and general counsel for Mid-Continent. Delaney says his company worked hard for years to comply with cumbersome environmental requirements. "We did not write the law; we tried to survive under very difficult operating conditions," he says.

Delaney denies that there are any toxic runoff problems and he says the company is committed to seeing Coal Basin properly reclaimed. But two major obstacles loom: What exactly is proper reclamation, and will there be enough money to do it?

The federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 required coal companies to post a bond to cover restoration. But the state agreed to let Mid-Continent substitute its rock-dust plant in the town of Carbondale, making it the only coal mine in the state with a property bond.

State officials also agreed to let the company hire an appraiser to assess the value of the plant, which exclusively served Mid-Continent's Coal Basin mines. The assessment came in at just over \$3 million, a number which everyone now agrees is grossly inflated.

"It's kind of a difficult thing to sell," admits Delaney. "The value has dropped considerably."

"This was a political deal," suggests Carolyn Johnson. "It smells of very old, rotten fish. If they could get \$900,000 for it now, they'd be doing well."

The state's Steve Renner counters that the law allows his agency to accept property bonds. But, he adds, "It would

be mighty difficult to put up a real property bond today."

Local activists and Forest Service also question the state's decision to allow Mid-Continent to do its own reclamation work through a non-bankrupt subsidiary, Pitkin Iron. In a letter to the state last spring, Sopris District Ranger Kevin Riordan wrote that Mid-Continent, "with its reduced work force and experience in mining and

not restoration," was probably not the best choice for the job.

The state agency's role of brokering a reclamation deal with the Forest Service, the federal Office of Surface Mining, Mid-Continent and local activists has taken a toll on Renner.

"I can't deal with this twice in a lifetime," he says. "I'm eternally grateful there's not an acid or metals problem here."

Mid-Continent's Delaney says an additional \$1.75 million should be available for reclamation once the company sells some salvaged equipment from the mine and private lands in the basin. The plan depends, however, on the benevolence of the bankruptcy court, especially the main creditor, Sanwa Bank, which Mid-Continent still owes some \$20 million.

Even if Mid-Continent's financial plan is approved, selling any of its property — much of it at 10,000 feet — might prove difficult. The Forest Service wants the company to remove most roads that cross agency lands to reduce erosion and save money.

"There's no such thing as a no-maintenance road when you have 50 to 60 percent grades," says Bob Lawton of the Forest Service's Sopris Ranger District. "We can't afford them."

But an angry Delaney says that without roads, mine-owned property is worthless. He also says the Forest Service approved the cut-and-fill roads it now wants to remove. "They are changing the rules of the game at this late date," he says. "Swaying from approved regulations will be counterproductive to their goals and to conservation as a whole."

Complicating the issue is a clause in the law that exempts companies from having to reclaim any pre-1977 disturbances. Mid-Continent says some roads and most of the huge waste pile on Coal Creek pre-date the law, and the state seems to agree. Says Steve Renner, "We're kind of hamstrung on that."

But the For-

est Service believes the entire site needs to be reclaimed. "You can't just leave part of the watershed in disarray," says Svados.

For help, the Crystal Valley group has turned to the federal Office of Surface Mining. "Only when we get OSM involved will we get serious enforcement," says Carolyn Johnson.

In July, OSM officials inspected Coal Basin, cited Mid-Continent for several violations and prodded the state to do likewise. Because federal lands are involved, Steve Rathbun, chief of inspection and enforcement for the OSM's Albuquerque, N.M., field office, says the OSM is "more in the position to demand than request" action. He says his agency has the authority to take control of the entire reclamation process. But, he adds, "We have no plans to do that at the moment."

Delaney hopes they never will. "We're proceeding very expeditiously with the reclamation," he asserts. "Twenty years from now you won't be able to tell that there was a coal mine there."

Activists worry that even if the site is cleaned up, taxpayers will get stuck with a hefty bill. But OSM's Rathbun says another, rarely used option exists: pursuing the private assets of company executives if the bankruptcy funds are insufficient.

"The state might well be more at fault than Mid-Continent," says sculptor Eric Johnson, covered from head to toe with white marble dust. "They said Summitville won't happen again; it's going to be better now." And waving a finger up at Coal Basin, he asks, "That's better?"

— Udo Zindel, Paul Larmer

Udo Zindel of Stuttgart, Germany, spent four weeks with HCN as a visiting foreign journalist. Paul Larmer is HCN's assistant editor.

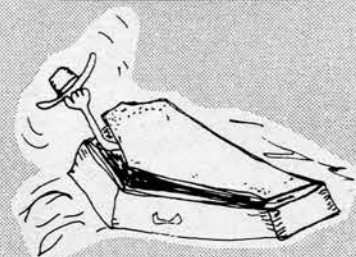
For more information, contact the Sopris Ranger District of the U.S. Forest Service at 303/963-2266 or Bill Jochems, Crystal Valley Environmental Protection Association (303/963-3662).



Redstone sculptor and activist Eric Johnson

Paul Larmer

HOTLINE



Voices from the grave

Across the West, ranchers made headlines this month as they protested the Clinton administration's proposed grazing fee increases. But a People For the West! rally in Roswell, N.M., may have been the most dramatic. As 300 people watched, a flatbed truck pulled up to the local Bureau of Land Management office carrying four caskets: one labeled "the people," another "custom and culture," the third "rural communities" and the fourth "Western states." Suddenly, the lids popped off and four ranchers jumped out of the caskets chanting, "We're not dead yet," AP reports. Then a parade of speakers warned that the proposal to double fees to graze on public lands would destroy ranching as a way of life. Others called on the New Mexico congressional delegation and Gov. Bruce King to fight the grazing fee proposal in Washington. One rancher, from Catron County, suggested ranchers use the National Environmental Policy Act to delay or reverse the plan. BLM officials say the livestock industry won't have much luck altering the proposed hike in grazing fees unless they can come up with hard data showing that it puts stockmen out of business.

Mescaleros pursue nuclear storage

Southern New Mexico's Mescalero Apaches have become the first Indian tribe to carry the nation's high-level nuclear waste sweepstakes to its next stage. The tribe has applied for a \$2.8 million federal grant to do intensive studies of a \$2 billion repository to store the nation's most dangerous radioactive wastes, which come from nuclear power plants. Originally, 29 Native American tribes and rural counties applied for grant money to do nuclear waste studies. Now, all but the Mescaleros and five other tribes have dropped out. The Skull Valley band of the Goshute Tribe, 80 miles southwest of Utah, is also applying for a \$2.8 million study grant. Other tribes doing preliminary work are the Northern Arapahoes near Fremont County in Wyoming, the Fort McDermitt Paiute-Shoshone Tribe on the Nevada-Oregon border, and two Oklahoma tribes. Mescalero officials say storing nuclear waste would bring 300 to 500 permanent jobs, but tribal leaders promise that before they allow waste trucks to enter the reservation they will hold a tribal referendum and inform and consult with the neighboring towns of Ruidoso and Alamogordo. Opponents, led by the National Environmental Coalition of American Indians, Greenpeace and Mescalero dissidents, charge tribal leaders with "genocide" and broken promises. Tribal officials brush off the charges. "These are study areas and we don't know whether the studies will show these areas are suitable," said Fred Peso, tribal council president.

BULLETIN BOARD

GETTING RICH QUICKLY

The industry that brought the West its office-building bust in the 1980s is hard at work on resort development for the 1990s. A real estate developer is holding a "Resort Development in the Pacific Northwest" conference Sept. 13-14 in Vancouver, B.C. "Seasoned experts from Aspen, Vail, Whistler/Blackcomb, Banff/Canmore, Okanagan Valley and Disney Development in Orlando, Fla., will discuss trends, challenges and opportunities in Western real estate." The brochure also says, "Western Canadian provinces and U.S. states have created economic alliances which are cutting ruthlessly across old borders and fueling unprecedented economic growth." By attending you can find: "Ways to enhance resort profitability by reorganizing existing communities to utilize premium land." After reorganizing the communities, you can "balance economic, social and ecological issues to achieve sustainable resorts and communities." Registration is \$648.80 in U.S. dollars. For more information, call 416/324-9604, or write: CanadawestFORUM, 1070 Royal York Rd., Etobicoke, Ontario M8X 2G7.

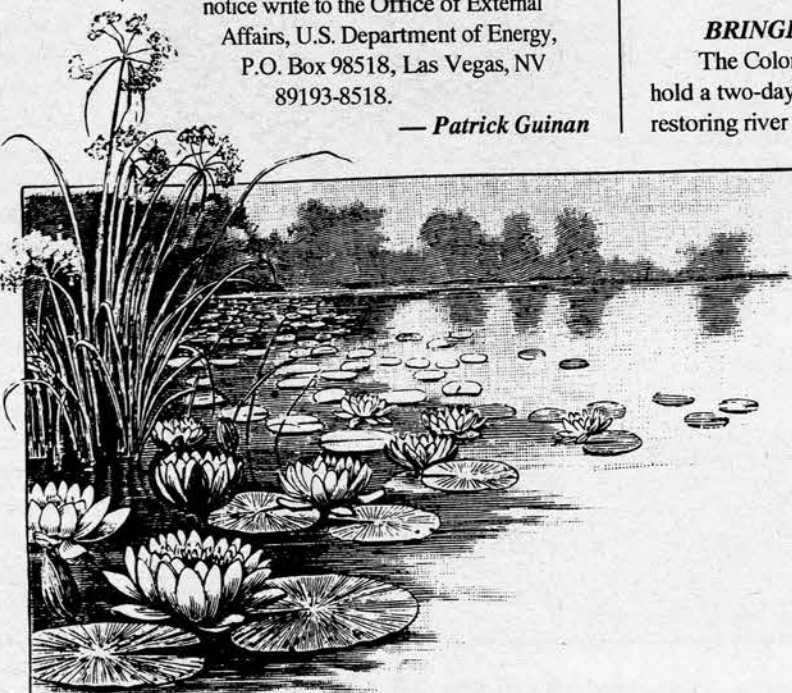
MONTANA CENTER CELEBRATES 20

Two of the environmental movement's luminaries will address activists at the 20th anniversary bash of the Montana Environmental Information Center, Sept. 11-12. Archdruid David Brower, whose work spans five decades and several organizations, will talk about current efforts worldwide to protect and restore natural systems. Denis Hayes, founder of Earth Day 1970, will discuss energy policy and the future of the Pacific Northwest. The conference, at Boulder Hot Springs Resort in Boulder, Mont., also features workshops on mining, forestry, land-use planning and the Wise Use movement. The Montana Environmental Information Center can be reached at 406/443-2520.

DOWNSIZING DEFENSE

The Department of Energy is once again revising its plans to overhaul the nation's nuclear weapons complex. The agency has started over again with a programmatic environmental impact statement (PEIS) on downsizing and consolidation that the agency first began preparing in 1991. It may be combined with another PEIS designed to study clean-up of the department's Cold War legacy of contamination. In the wake of President Clinton's extended moratorium on nuclear testing, the agency's goal — printed July 23 in the *Federal Register* — is to become "even smaller and more integrated than previously envisioned." The Nevada Test Site outside Las Vegas is listed as a "candidate site for any or all weapons complex nuclear functions," and weapons plants in Hanford, Wash., and Rocky Flats, Colo., have been eliminated as storage sites for plutonium and targeted for cleanup. To gather public opinion the Energy Department will hold 12 scoping meetings in 10 states including Rocky Flats, Colo., and Hanford, Wash., Sept. 8; Albuquerque, N.M., and Los Alamos, N.M., Sept. 15; Livermore, Calif., and Washington, D.C., Sept. 22; Oak Ridge, Tenn., and Pantex, Texas, Sept. 29; Idaho National Laboratory, Idaho, and the Nevada Test Site, Nev., Oct. 13. All dates are Wednesdays and all times are the same at 9 A.M.-9:30 P.M. For more information about locations and pre-registration call 1-800/683-0422. For a copy of the *Federal Register* notice write to the Office of External Affairs, U.S. Department of Energy, P.O. Box 98518, Las Vegas, NV 89193-8518.

— Patrick Guinan



WETLANDS WORKSHOP

Wetlands are the focus of a three-day workshop sponsored by the Thorne Ecological Institute and the Environmental Protection Agency Sept. 9-11 in Snowbird, Utah. Topics include management strategies for livestock grazing in and near riparian areas, examples of government, business and activist partnerships for managing wetlands, and how land trusts, regulations and education programs can protect and restore wetlands. For more information, contact Thorne Ecological Institute, 5398 Manhattan Circle, Suite 120, Boulder, CO 80303 (303/499-3647). Cost is \$110, not including optional field trips.

DESIGNING A NEW WEST

A conference devoted to "The New West: Creating a design ethic," is set for the historic Stanley Hotel in Estes Park, Colo., Sept. 17-18. The focus is on economic development, land-use planning and sustainability, and the keynote speaker is Charles Wilkinson, University of Colorado law professor, whose topic is developing an ethic of place. Other speakers include Arizona State University professor Fred Steiner, who will talk about alternative urban scenarios for the arid West. For more information contact Peggy Witt at the Colorado Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, 1660 17th St., Suite 400, Denver, CO 80202 (303/830-0094).

DENVER VS. THE WESTERN SLOPE

Club 20, representing western Colorado counties and businesses, will explore rural Colorado's stormy relationship with its capital at the group's 40th annual meeting Sept. 10-11 in Grand Junction. Featured speaker Ed Quillen, a *Denver Post* and *High Country News* columnist, will address the question: "Is Denver necessary?" followed by a response from Denver Chamber of Commerce director John Lay. Other topics include highway and airport funding debates between Denver and rural Colorado, and a critical review by retired Inspector General Jim Richards of the cost-effectiveness of federal salinity, grazing and timber programs. For registration information contact Club 20, Box 550, Grand Junction, CO 81502 (303/242-3264).

BRINGING BACK THE BOGS

The Colorado Riparian Association will hold a two-day conference on protecting and restoring river corridors Sept. 30-31 in Boulder, Colo. *A Riparian Area Runs Through It* features speakers, technical sessions and case studies on protecting rivers through planning and working to solve conflicts with private landowners. Banquet speaker Larry MacDonnell, director of the Colorado University Natural Resources Law Center, will address laws affecting urban wetlands. For more information contact the riparian association at 2060 Broadway, Suite 230, Boulder, CO 80302.

DISPATCHES FROM THE FRONT

Montana's spectacular Rocky Mountain Front has spawned a new, quarterly newsletter. *HomeFront* is the publication of the non-profit Rocky Mountain Front Advisory Council, a group promoting protection of the lands where the prairie meets the mountains. The area includes 5 million acres of the Glacier National Park-Bob Marshall Wilderness, an ecosystem that is home to bighorn sheep, deer, hawks, grizzly bears and mountain lions. Nearly all its public lands have leases for oil and gas development, including the Badger-Two Medicine, Rogers Pass and Blackleaf Canyon. Editor Bob Yetter hopes that publicizing threats to the area will help preserve and protect it. The first issue of 16-page *HomeFront* tackles lax oil-drilling practices and a history of the Métis people. *HomeFront* can be reached at Box 8442, Missoula, MT 59807 (406/726-4223).

DOES THE MEDIA GET IT?

Environmental issues increasingly dominate political news in the Pacific Northwest, but the media, with its reliance on 10-second sound bites and flashy headlines, may be missing the story. The Huxley College of Environmental Studies and the journalism departments at Western Washington and Gonzaga Universities will conduct a conference and workshop, *Northwest Media and the Environment*, Oct. 14-15, in Bellingham, Wash. Speakers include biologist Jack Ward Thomas, chair of the Interagency Scientific Committee on the Spotted Owl, and others from government, industry, the environmental movement and the media, including *High Country News* editor Betsy Marston. Contact Professor Michael Frome, Huxley College of Environmental Studies, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225-9042 (206/650-3978).



Toni Evins

ANTI-COW CONCLAVE

Environmentalists intent on reforming federal grazing policy will rally their troops at the second annual National Public Lands Grazing Abuse Conference Sept. 18 in Albuquerque, N.M. The event, sponsored by the Public Lands Action Network and Rest the West, is an attempt to "turn up the volume" of the grazing-reform debate and educate activists about damage caused by public-lands ranching, organizers say. Speakers include Susan Shock of New Mexico's Gila Watch, Earth First! co-founder Dave Foreman, biologist and writer George Wuerthner and Tom Skeele of the Predator Project. For more information contact the Public Lands Action Network at 505/867-3062.

Unclassifieds

FESTIVAL OF THE DRUM at Zion National Park, Oct. 7-9. Beautiful sandstone canyons echo with the sound of drums from around the world. Concerts and workshops featuring Glen Velez, Keith Terry, Japanese, Nigerian, and MIDI percussion. For a brochure, contact NEW MUSIC UTAH, P.O. Box 301, Springdale, UT 84767 (801/772-3839). (1x16b)

LOBBYIST — UTAH CHAPTER SIERRA CLUB looking for state lobbyist. \$2,100 for two one-day interim committee meetings (November and December 1993) plus 45-day Jan./Feb. 1994 legislative session. Lobbying experience and basic understanding of environmental issues a plus. Send résumé by Sept. 30, 1993, to Utah Chapter Sierra Club, 177 E. 900 S. #102, Salt Lake City, UT 84111 (801/363-9621). EOE. (2x16p)

ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORIAN specializing in historical research and writing related to use-impact of riparian, grassland, and mountain forest-meadow communities in the Southwest as base data for management, bioremediation, and sustainable resource plans and projects and legal cases. Contact: Dan Scurlock, 1333 Arcadian Trail, NW, Albuquerque, NM 87107 (505/344-0482).

THE MIDWEST SUSTAINABLE Agriculture Working Group and Sustainable Agriculture Coalition are seeking a full-time policy analyst to evaluate agricultural and conservation policies in preparation for the 1995 farm bill. To be based in Washington, D.C. Starting date between Nov. 15, 1993 and Jan. 10, 1994. For a job description and application procedure contact Kris Thorp, Center for Rural Affairs, 101 S. Tallman St., Walthill, NE 68067.

MEET NEW FRIENDS, West, Northwest, and nationwide Outdoor Singles Network, established bi-monthly newsletter, no forwarding fees, \$35/1-year, \$7/trial issue and information. OSN-HCN, Box 2031, McCall, ID 83638. (6x14 coi-p)

ADMINISTRATIVE/FUND-RAISING ASSISTANT for environmental organization; Lander, Wyoming. Half-time, \$8,000-\$11,000/year DOE. Fund-raising experience not necessary; excellent writing and organizing skills critical. Wyoming Outdoor Council, 201 Main, Lander, WY 82520; 307/332-7031. Deadline: Oct. 1. (2x15b)

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HOTLINE

Walking to the Wheel

A short-term management plan for the Medicine Wheel Historic Landmark in Sheridan, Wyo., seems to be working. After months of negotiating, state and federal officials, Native Americans and members of historic organizations signed a memorandum of agreement redefining how people visit the windswept ridge. It limits car traffic by making visitors walk 1-1/2 miles from a parking lot to the site in groups of 25 accompanied by Forest Service guides. Although 50 percent of the people leave after discovering they have to walk, daily visitation is still 200-300 people, says Forest Service spokeswoman Mary Randolph. The agreement also sets aside 24 days when the wheel — made from rocks laid out on the grasses — is used for Indian ceremonial rites. Although the wheel won't be closed to visitors on these days, people will be asked not to walk up to it. Last year's guides were criticized for not knowing what role the wheel plays in Native American ceremonies. This year, says Randolph, local spiritual leaders are working with the guides. Recent opposition to the changes came from Cal Taggart, a former state legislator, who says he may pursue legal action against limiting public access during Native American ceremonial times.

Vandals back petroglyphs

Vandals obliterated three Anasazi petroglyphs in Arizona's Wupatki National Monument last month. "They were just acts of senseless destruction," ranger Kim Watson told the *Arizona Republic*. "They weren't chipped away in a fashion where they could be collected or sold." This is the first time petroglyphs have been vandalized in the northern Arizona park since it was protected 50 years ago, but such incidents in remote Southwestern areas are increasing rapidly. The 800- to 900-year-old petroglyphs were at different sites in the monument, and depicted bighorn sheep, a bird and an unidentified figure. Present-day Hopi, some of whom descend from the Anasazi, make annual pilgrimages to the site for religious ceremonies. If caught, the vandals face up to two years in prison and fines up to \$20,000 under the federal Archaeological Resources Protection Act.

Hot sludge

Workers at Los Alamos National Lab in New Mexico are disassembling a church septic tank in the town of Los Alamos after finding it contains radioactive waste. Teams from the federal nuclear lab are searching the rest of the town for remnant waste from atomic bomb research and construction during the 1940s and 1950s. Much of the town is built on a mesa where the world's first atomic bombs were manufactured. After new labs were constructed south of the town in the 1960s, the old labs were turned over to private owners. The "hot" septic tank, which was used until 1948 at the lab, is on a former Catholic church site on Canyon Road, and is now privately owned. Jim Aldrich, head of the cleanup project, told the *Albuquerque Journal* that the tank was attached to the main laboratory building and intended only for sewage.

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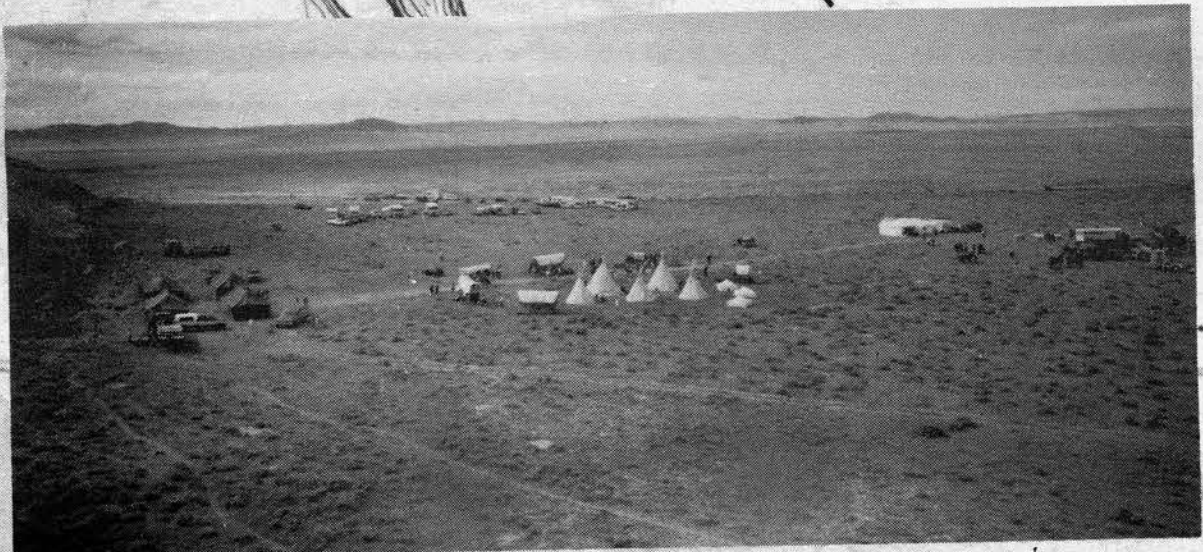
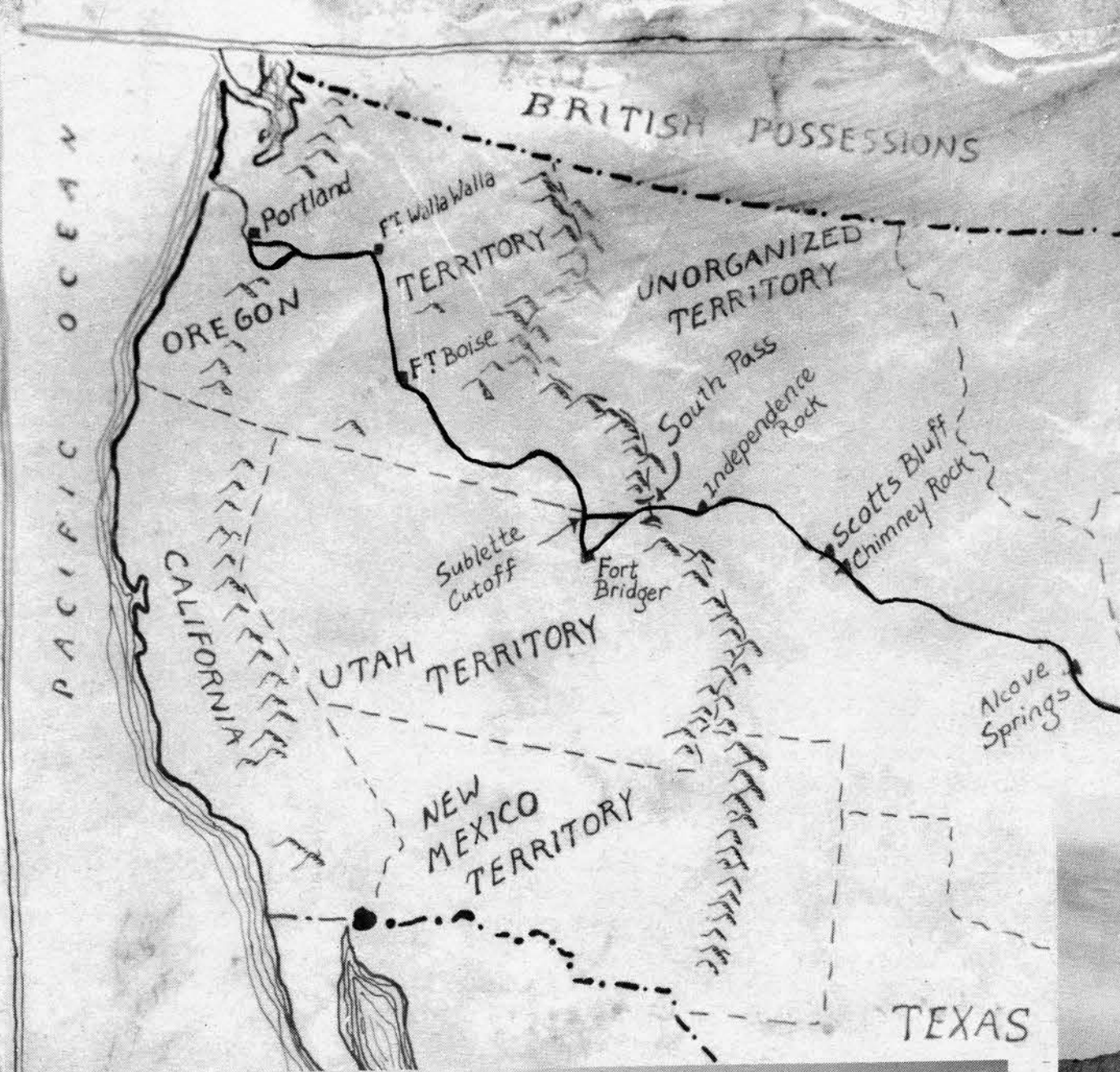
Conference fee: \$40. Registration deadline: October 29, 1993. Information: Arizona Humanities Council, 1242 North Central, Phoenix AZ 85004. Ph: 602/257-0335.



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Modern campsite, Oregon Trail Wagon Train, Independence Rock, Wyoming

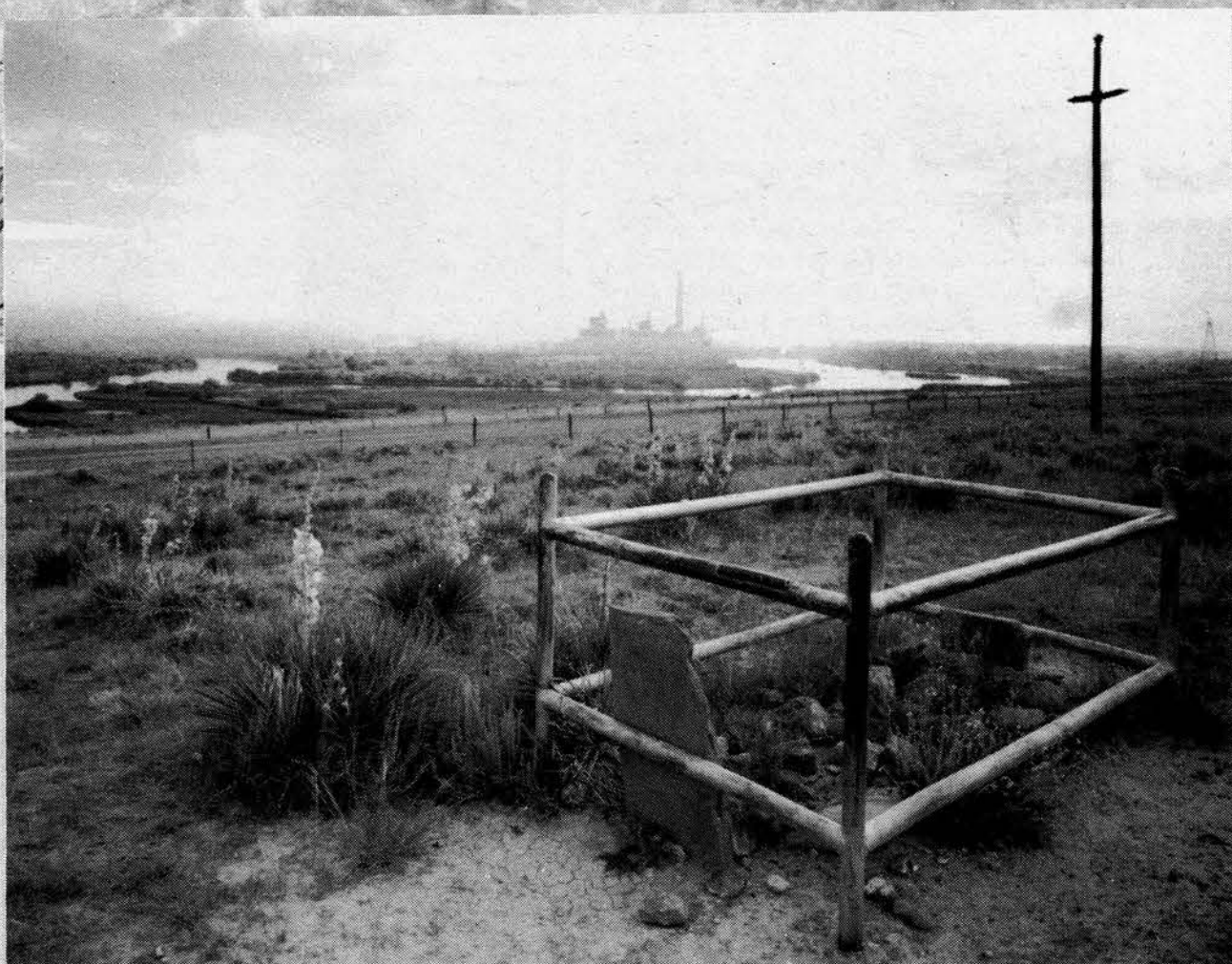


Modern Wagon Train Campsite, Independence Rock, Wyoming





ATLANTIC OCEAN



A. H. Unthank Grave, Glen Rock, Wyoming



Scotts Bluff, Nebraska



Oregon Trail ruts near Guernsey, Wyoming

"I remember one afternoon, when the teams were tired and some of the oxen limping with sore feet, I was looking far away in the direction we were traveling, across a dreary sage plain, to all appearances extending to the ends of the earth, and I got to wondering where we were trying to get to."

- Jesse A. Applegate, 1843

In the spring of 1843, Jesse Applegate led 120 wagons - 1,000 men, women and children - from Missouri to the Oregon Territory along the Oregon Trail. About 350,000 travelers would eventually follow him and complete the five-month trek. Ten to 17 percent died along the way, most from disease, some from accidents, bad weather and Indian attacks. A few of their graves can be seen 150 years later, the worn tombstones forlorn and incongruous beside the cities and highways that now sprawl across the country. Here and there the trail survives, too, its ruts worn deep as gullies in the landscape.

In the spring of 1993, Dale Schicketanz retraced the Oregon Trail, camera in hand, from Chimney Rock, Nebraska, to Independence Rock in Wyoming, just west of present-day Casper. Along the way he made these photographs, and looked into the past.

- Diane Sylvain



Chimney Rock, Nebraska

Eagles make a comeback ...

continued from page 1

At the Yampa Valley Golf Course, eagles have become a real asset. Golfers stop by this remote town on the Western Slope to play golf next to bald eagles. Noting that the birds moved across the Yampa River from a gravel pit three years ago, Cobb says, "We like to say that the birds moved up from the slums to the country club. ... It's been a great addition for us."

As bald eagles soar into new civilized and wild residences in the West, local governments, private landowners, housing developers and public land managers face new challenges to avoid harming bald eagles and their young. Experts say eagles need tall old-growth trees for nesting, hiding cover and perching trees, and a dependable food supply.

Minimizing human disturbance during the nesting and incubation period also is critical. To keep the eagles, developers and land managers will have to tap-dance around eagle nests, perching trees and foraging areas.

"We have to provide secure habitat — that's what it's all about," says Karen Steenhof. She heads the bald eagle recovery team for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Pacific region. "Their populations are rebuilding on their own. We don't need to captive-breed them like the peregrine falcon or the condor. We just need to make sure they have a place to call home."

Some say the return of bald eagles, a federally listed threatened species, is one of the greatest environmental success stories in the United States and the West. Thousands of people have been thrilled to see the eagles return, to watch the eagles dive for prey, to see the giant birds ride the wind.

Along the Boise River in the city of Boise, Idaho, riverside homeowners get to watch wintering bald eagles perch in cottonwood trees outside their kitchen windows. "It's really neat to be able to see the eagles so close to your house," says Ray Ryan, a riverside resident.

DDT was the culprit

The return of the eagle is due, most experts



Ann Pankonin

An immature bald eagle sits on a golf tee in Craig, Colorado

say, to the banning of the deadly pesticide DDT in 1972.

"It's a great success story, but we didn't have to make that many tough choices like we face today with so many other endangered species," says Allison Banks, fish and wildlife biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Portland, Ore. "For the eagle and the falcon, we had one very specific problem. Banning DDT was the single most important thing we did."

DDT was sprayed on crops and forests to fight pests in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. Once in the food chain, DDT affected the eagles' calcium metabolism and caused them to lay eggs with thin shells. Eagle reproductivity plummeted.

Bald eagles died in other ways, too. Ranch-

ers shot them, fearing they killed newborn lambs; predator-control agents poisoned them by mistake with toxic-laced deer carcasses; eagles perished from eating waterfowl full of lead shot; and birds were electrocuted by high-voltage powerlines.

Because of rapidly declining numbers, the bald eagle was listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1978. Since 1990, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been pondering whether to downlist bald eagles from endangered to threatened.

The agency has a final proposal — no one's saying what it is — resting in its Washington, D.C., headquarters. The Clinton administration has yet to appoint a director of the agency, and no announcement is expected until the position is filled.

Based on sheer numbers, the recovery goal of 800 nesting pairs has been exceeded. There were 958 pairs in the seven-state Pacific Region in 1992.

Steenhof has recommended reclassifying bald eagles as "threatened" in Montana, Idaho, Nevada, Wyoming and California. A similar recommendation has been made for Colorado and Arizona, though they are technically part of another recovery region.

"It is difficult to think of the bald eagle as still being on the brink of extinction in the West," Steenhof says. "Team members, however, are not entirely optimistic about the future of bald eagle populations. Few believe that the increases observed in the past five years can continue, and many believe the trend will soon reverse," she adds.

"Unless more aggressive habitat protection measures are implemented, the bald eagle may have to be relisted in 20 or 30 years," Steenhof says.

Joan Guilfoyle, spokeswoman for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Minneapolis, Minn., says the proposal on downlisting looks at future threats as well as those that exist today. "More numbers aren't the only criteria for downlisting," she says.

The biggest challenge to preserving bald eagles in the West may lie ahead: Will homeowners, developers, public-land managers and golf course officials be willing to make timely sacrifices to protect eagles and their habitat?

"We've convinced the public that the eagle has value. It's big, it's a bird, it's majestic, it has so many things going for it," says federal biologist Allison Banks. "But people have to be convinced that the value of protecting the key features on which the eagle depends for its survival — the rivers, the lakes, water quality, the trees, the food supply — is what's most important for the eagles, and ourselves, to survive."

"In essence, if we learn to protect the eagle, it will benefit us all in the long run."

On private property, the biggest hurdle for bald eagles to overcome could be the tarnished moniker of an "endangered species." Knee-jerk negatives associated with protecting the spotted owl, such as thousands of people thrust out of work, have scared some people into thinking that protecting any species carries big costs.

"If a pair of eagles moves into somebody's property, some people automatically assume they'll have to take it in the shorts to keep them there," Banks says.

People assume they won't be able to log their property or build a house. But only a few small concessions might be needed, such as leaving a buffer of trees around a nest tree or minimizing disturbance during egg-incubation period.

Along the upper Blackfoot River in western Montana, for instance, a landowner wanted to build a summer cabin on his land.

Then he discovered that a pair of bald eagles was nesting about 100 yards away from

Do eagles suffer from bad moral character?

The great inventor and philosopher Benjamin Franklin reportedly opposed the selection in 1782 of the bald eagle as the national symbol of the United States.

"He is a bird of bad moral character; he does not get his living honestly," Franklin said at the time, calling the bald eagle a "rank coward."

It's true, the bald eagle is an opportunistic predator that may choose to scavenge for food, feeding on a road-

killed or winter-killed deer, elk or bison, instead of diving for a fresh salmon.

Nevertheless, the Continental Congress selected the bald eagle as the symbol of freedom for the United States.

In flight, eagles unfold huge wings that span six-to-eight feet. Once you hear an eagle scream, you never forget it. Fish, snagged after dives that reach 100 mph, are the preferred meal. That's why eagles most often nest and roost near rivers and lakes that feature a large fish population. Eagles also feed on carrion, rabbits, turtles, waterfowl, prairie dogs and other birds.

Mating begins in late winter, after which the eagles pair off to raise young. They build huge nests out of sticks, branches and pine boughs, often on top of the tallest trees in sight. In rare instances in the Southwest, eagles have been known to nest in cliffs or on rock spires. Nests are used over and over again, and some have been known to weigh more than 2,000 pounds.

Female eagles lay one to three eggs. Males and females, which weigh eight to 16 pounds, take turns incubating the eggs for about 35 days until they hatch. Young eaglets begin to grow feathers — replacing down — after about a month, and learn to walk at six to seven weeks. They begin flying about three months after birth and fledge the nest some six months after birth.

Immature eagles are brown and resemble a golden eagle. It typically takes about four to five years for bald eagles to reach full maturity and acquire the classic brown-and-white plumage. At that point, they're ready to reproduce and start a new generation. For a bird of prey, bald eagles live a comparatively long life — up to about 35 years.

—S.S.



Glenn Oakley

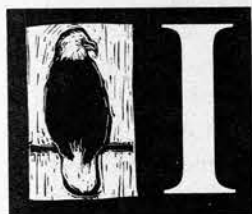
Bald eagle in flight

the building site. Dennis Flath, non-game coordinator for the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, contacted the landowner and asked him to hold off on construction until the newborn bald eagles had fledged the nest.

"The guy was happy to do it," Flath said. "He sees the eagle as an asset — it enhances the value of his property. I mean, how many people in this country can say they've got a pair of bald eagles nesting on their land?"

Cooperation depends on a landowner's point of view. In eastern Colorado, for instance, two landowners had eagles move onto their property to raise young, and reaction bounced from one polar opposite to the other. "One landowner likes the eagles and is very protective of his birds, and another one downriver cut the nest tree down," says Jerry Craig, state raptor biologist for the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

"But by and large, in the last decade, the attitude of rural folks has changed profoundly. Most of them want to keep the birds around, and they don't want anyone messing with their land," Craig says. "This one guy, a ranching foreman, told me that he'd be fired if he told anyone about the eagles nesting on this rancher's property. It's really neat to see the attitude that we have here."



It's a chilly, clear morning on the South Fork of the Snake River in eastern Idaho, and as usual, the Conant boat-launch site bustles with activity at sunrise. Wisps of clouds, painted pink by the emerging sun, hang over the basalt cliffs bordering the stream.

Fly-anglers, decked out in their rust-colored neoprene waders and beige fishing vests, swap stories and sip coffee while they wait in line to launch their drift boats. Just downstream, a mature bald eagle circles a hundred feet above the cliffs. The early-morning light highlights the bird's distinctive white tail as it swerves toward the opposite bank.

Bald eagles are common here on the cottonwood-lined South Fork. With 10 long-established nesting territories, the South Fork canyon has been considered the most productive nursery for bald eagles in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem. But due to heavy fishing pressure on the South Fork, a dying cottonwood forest that's not being replaced, conflicting demands

for water out of Palisades Reservoir (located a few miles upstream), and new housing developments nearby, bald eagle production on the South Fork may be declining.

"This year we had the lowest productivity ever recorded, primarily from very low river flows in the winter," says Justin Naderman, a wildlife biologist for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

When water levels drop in the winter, the river tends to freeze over and eagles have a difficult time catching fish, their primary diet on the South Fork. Because of deep snowpack in 1993, the river flows next winter should improve, and eagle production may increase.

But other factors place stress on eagles. During the nesting season of February through August, high boating use on the South Fork, primarily by outfitters and private anglers, can cause conflicts with eagles. Fishing pressure is so high, as dozens of boaters launch on the stream every day, that a steady string of drift boats move into a prime fishing hole, one after another. That means eagles can't fish there for hours, even days.

Eagles starve as people fish

"We've documented situations where adults couldn't feed their young for two days because of fishing pressure. The young are begging for food, and the adults are unable to feed them," says Naderman. "That is not good."

An obvious solution would be to set a quota on recreational boating on the South Fork. But Bureau of Land Management officials say it is too early to do that. A 1992 user survey, however, tallied 70,622 boaters on the Snake River in eastern Idaho, most of them on the South Fork. The agency has posted signs adjacent to bald eagle nests telling boaters to refrain from stopping there, and researchers have conducted studies to determine the impact of recreationists on eagles.

"We recognize the problem, and we're trying to find a way for the two to co-exist," says Ann Van Buren, BLM spokeswoman in Idaho Falls, Idaho. "We're trying to control the population boom in recreation by trying not to invite any more use than what's already there."

If fishing pressure actually forces a pair of eagles to relocate a nest, or move out of the South Fork drainage altogether, Naderman argues that could be considered a "taking" under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. In such instances, the agency is supposed to take swift action against the offending party, as

long as it can prove the incident caused "jeopardy."

But since bald eagles are recovering at a rapid rate, Naderman gets the sense that Fish and Wildlife Service officials are not willing to take forceful action against offending parties, in this instance other federal agencies.

He has seen similar situations along the Henry's Fork of the Snake, where the Targhee National Forest wiped out bald eagle habitat by allowing widespread clearcutting. But the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has done nothing about it. Other bald eagle coordinators in adjacent states have noticed the same trend.

"They kind of treat the eagle as recovered," Naderman says of the Fish and Wildlife Service. "They go through the paper shuffle in Portland ... but nothing ever seems to happen."

Banks admits her agency is not as tough as it should be, but she says it is caught in a Catch-22. "It's kind of ironic, but because the eagle is doing so well, it's hard for the Service to make a jeopardy call. It's kind of an awkward situation."

The good news in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem is that bald eagle numbers are increasing rapidly along the Henry's Fork, another blue-ribbon trout stream near the western boundary of the park. Twenty pairs of bald eagles nested in the Henry's Fork watershed this year. On the Montana side of Yellowstone, another 16 bald eagle pairs established nests and raised young this year, some of them on the Madison River.

Overall, the nesting population of 36 pairs in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem exceeds the recovery target of 32.

What concerns raptor experts is whether they can maintain the gains of the past decade. Can they prevent potential eagle habitat from being cleared for new housing developments, timber production or other activities demanded by the civilized world?

In urban areas, meanwhile, other challenges lie ahead to protect bald eagles from new development and people. "It's not buildings that scare away eagles, it's the people that come with them," says Steenhof.

Their tolerance is baffling

Bald eagles continue to baffle raptor experts with their tolerance of people. Wintering bald eagles along the Boise River, for example, didn't seem bothered last February by

continued on next page

Bald eaglets in Arizona have guardian angels

Bald eagles nest early in the high deserts of Arizona, usually in February. When about 30 pairs move into Sonoran country, paid eagle watchers move nearby with their binoculars and spotting scopes.

In a way, the 24 humans help parent the eagles' young. They tally each year's new chicks, monitor feeding and behavioral traits, and watch for disturbances that could harm an eaglet's chances of survival.

One year, nest watchers in the Arizona program blocked a bulldozer from toppling a nest tree while the nine young shrieked with fear. Elsewhere, they pulled eggs out of a nest that was about to be flooded. Warned in advance by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, nest watchers jumped into a boat, rescued the eggs and placed them in an empty nest of another pair of adult eagles. Eventually, the chicks fledged the nest successfully.

When nesting eagles get tangled in monofilament fishing line left on the water or shore, nest watchers move in to catch the eagles and cut the line.

At one nest, nest watchers noticed that a chick had fallen into a jumping cholla, a spiny cactus species. Then they saw the chick had a spine in the corner of its eye.

"The guy just ran it down and threw a blanket over it," says Greg Beaty, raptor biologist for the Arizona Department of Game and Fish. The nest watcher then plucked out the spine and put the eaglet back in the nest.

Beaty figures that Arizona's nest watch program has saved dozens of eaglets over the last 15 years.

In a state like Arizona, where many eagles nest along the Salt and Verde rivers and along reservoirs near Phoenix and Mesa, the program has been critical to the resurgence of eagle populations.

"We've got a limited amount of habitat with a lot of recreation pressure on it," Beaty says.

Although other Western states do not have an official eagle watch program, bald eagle coordinators in each state do their best to keep track of nesting, relying on volunteers and fellow agency officials to keep them informed of any threats to nests.

In Colorado, raptor biologist Jerry Craig of the state Division of Wildlife has engaged in several rescue operations. One of the biggest threats to the state's 18 nests is high winds, he says. At Barr Lake, north of Denver, gusts snapped off the top of an old-growth tree, sending a 300-pound eagle nest crashing to the ground. After Craig rebuilt the nest with a wire foundation, the eagle pair moved back in and have used the artificial nest for the last five years.

On 2.8 million acres of private forest land in Washington and Oregon, Weyerhaeuser Corp. has tweaked its timber management program to protect 50 nesting pairs of bald eagles. Under federal law, the company is required to refrain from cutting down nest trees, and state forest laws require certain levels of protection for eagle habitat.

Bob Anderson, wildlife research biologist for Weyerhaeuser, says the company adopted a policy in 1967 to protect bald eagles on company property. For more than 25 years, the company has seen eagle populations increase about 10 percent per year, while it continues to harvest timber around eagle nests and perching and foraging habitat.

"We think the birds are pretty special, and over the years we've fine-tuned our techniques so that we can live and work with them. Eagles are treated as an asset instead of a problem," Anderson says.

To protect eagle nesting trees, Weyerhaeuser leaves a screen of live trees around the nest for one-quarter to one-half mile, he says. Most of the birds seem to prefer to nest in the tallest ponderosa pine or Douglas fir trees available. "Eagles like trees with a prominent view," he says. Screening nests and perching areas from open views also seems to help eagles, he says. "It keeps people from seeing eagles and the eagles from seeing people."

— Stephen Stuebner

For more information about Arizona's Nest Watch Program, which relies on private funding, contact Greg Beaty, Arizona Game and Fish Department, 2221 W. Greenway Road, Phoenix, AZ 85023-4312.

Eagles make a comeback ...

continued from previous page

a construction contractor who installed a new sewer line next to a row of cottonwood trees on the river bank.

As a gas-powered generator blared in the background, Doug McMaster, owner of MASCO Inc., a Boise construction company, kept a watchful eye on bald eagles as his crews installed the 48-inch sewer line along the south bank of the Boise River, just west of downtown. A quick consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service allowed his crew to install the pipeline in return for planting 100 cottonwood trees and moving a couple of snags to strategic perching locations, where MASCO set them in concrete.

As McMaster explained the project to a reporter, two mature bald eagles flew into a tree over his head. "Much to our amazement, the eagles have never left the work site," he says. "I think those eagles are streetwise."

Some eagles simply have a much higher tolerance for people than others, experts say. "Eagles are like people — they have different personality traits; some are loners and others like people," says Chuck Lobdell, chief of the Fish and Wildlife Service's Boise field office.

"Some will let you walk right up to them and others will flush at the sound of a car door slamming 500 yards away," adds Jim Michaels, endangered species coordinator for the agency in Olympia, Wash.

Morley Nelson, 75, an internationally renowned raptor expert and long-time Boise resident, predicts the eagles will remain in Boise. "As long as we protect the food in the river and the trees on the shoreline, the eagles will stay," he says. "They're such a beautiful

bird that we need the whole world to do this."

Boise passes a plan

The Boise City Council recently passed an ordinance called the Boise River Plan, which establishes 200-foot buffer zones along the river to protect cottonwoods and other riparian habitat. Steenhof wonders if the city should also close certain areas of the Greenbelt recreation path that winds along the river to prevent walkers, joggers and cyclists from scaring eagles away.

Research indicates that when people stop and stare at eagles, the birds get nervous and fly to a more distant perch.

A special survey of Greenbelt users indicated that 83 percent of those questioned were willing to use alternative pathways for eight weeks if their activities (bicycling, roller blading, running, race-walking, walking, etc.) were found to be scaring eagles.

Many Greenbelt users, however, blamed others for disturbing eagles. "Joggers typically blamed the walkers and bird-watchers; walkers often blamed dogs and bicyclists; and some tried to blame the fishermen," Steenhof says.

With eagles moving into areas so close to civilization, is it possible that they could become as habituated to people as elk and buffalo are in Yellowstone National Park? Jim Frazier, a professor of fisheries and wildlife science at Virginia Polytechnical Institute, says that bald eagles are generally "nowhere near as adaptable" to man or urban settings as other wild critters.

Frazier has studied bald eagles for more than a decade around the perimeter of Chesapeake Bay, where 250 pairs reside close to

thousands of homes and people. He's found that eagles do not like being around people continuously. "We had a pair of eagles that nested right next to someone's driveway, and they've since abandoned the nest," he says.

For eagles to remain in urban and suburban settings, they need a place to hide nearby that's free of people. "If you want to make sure you have eagles over the long run, you've got to give them a refuge," Frazier says.

In the West, the eagles' refuge often consists of public lands and public waters. In Chesapeake Bay, the eagles may lose 70 percent of their habitat by the year 2020 to housing and other developments on private land, Frazier says. He isn't sure that the Endangered Species Act has enough strength to preclude development from destroying eagle habitat on private land, an issue looming in the West.

"It's been the position of the Fish and Wildlife Service that if you don't kill the animal, we won't prosecute," Frazier says. "Anyone who's passed Biology 101 can figure out that if you cut down all the eagles' perching trees, you won't have eagles anymore."

If any endangered species has a chance to succeed, officials say it's the bald eagle. Since Congress passed the Endangered Species Act in 1973, the bald eagle is one of only a few species that have bounced back to the point where downlisting may be possible. It's a highly opportunistic creature that has defied the experts' understanding of where it can live, what it will eat and what it needs to survive.

As Karen Steenhof says, all we have to do is give them a place to call home. ■

Steve Stuebner writes in Boise, Idaho.

Guns, theft still kill eagles

Beyond the loss of habitat, bald eagles face a multitude of threats, including shooting, electrocution and the sale of eagle parts in the illegal wildlife trade.

Federal wildlife law enforcement officers don't know how many bald eagles are shot each year for black-market sales, but officers say the take is significant.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agent Joel Scrafford (*HCN*, 8/23/93) says the black market in eagle feathers amounts to millions of dollars each year. Most go to history buffs and cowboy and Indian clubs in Japan, Germany, Britain and eastern Europe, Scrafford says.

Bald eagle feathers and talons are valued by Native American tribes for headdresses, necklaces and religious ceremonies. Whole mounted bald eagles also are valued by Japanese corporations, federal officials say. Officers running a federal undercover investigation in Washington found eagles stashed inside elk and bear carcasses, ready to be shipped overseas.

Federal penalties for poaching bald eagles are stiff. Shooting a bald eagle is a misdemeanor offense punishable by a maximum of a \$100,000 fine and one year in jail. Killing a bald eagle for the purpose of selling its parts increases the offense to felony status; the maximum penalty is five years in jail and a \$250,000 fine.

Bald and golden eagle carcasses collected from electrocution, road kills, poisoning, poaching or natural death are sent to the National Eagle Repository in Ashland, Ore. There, eagle parts are preserved temporarily at the lab, then sent free of charge to Native American tribes across the nation.

Demand for eagle parts is high, says Tom Rayl, chief of evidence and property at the National Eagle Repository. Nearly 950 bald and golden eagles were distributed to tribes in 1992, up from about 800 the year before. The demand is going up daily, he says, and the time lag on fulfilling a request is 18 months.

Dean Tresch, special agent for the U.S. Fish and



Kathleen Marie Menke/Crystal Images

A bald eagle cleans its beak on a branch

Wildlife Service in Spokane, Wash., says more bald eagles may be shot by gun nuts than poached for the illegal wildlife trade.

Tresch said he is working on six cases of illegal shootings right now. "Most of it is just wanton disregard for wildlife ... just shooting them to be shooting them."

Although tribes can get eagle parts through the National Eagle Repository, some tribal members have been arrested for poaching bald eagles to sell on the black market. A Yakima Indian, Nathan Jim, 32, pleaded guilty recently in U.S. District Court in Portland on charges of poaching two bald eagles, two golden eagles and seven rough-legged hawks. All were apparently killed on the same day.

Although the defendant said he killed the animals for religious reasons, a tribal elder from the Warm Springs Indian Reservation testified that he did not

support the poaching of eagles for tribal use.

David McMullen, a law enforcement director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Portland, says if Oregon State Police officers had not noticed that the man was transporting wildlife, he would never have been caught.

"This guy just happened to be stopped by the state police. It was just blind luck, a fluke," McMullen says. "That's why it's very difficult to say how much of this goes on."

But officials say habitat loss is still the most significant factor affecting the recovery of bald eagles. "We're losing more potential eagles to habitat loss than to shootings," says Allison Banks, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist in Portland.

"Birds that get shot can be replaced if we have the habitat. But habitat loss affects them forever."

—S.S.

America declared war on ... Utah

by John Marshall

The five-pound package finally arrived and Carole Gallagher started to open it in her New York apartment with growing apprehension. There were so many things that could go wrong with this book to which she had devoted a decade of her life (*HCN*, 7/6/87).

But she pulled off the wrapping and before long she found herself weeping — tears of gladness, tears of relief.

Because *American Ground Zero: The Secret Nuclear War* was perfect, from the reproduction of her powerful photographs, to the layout of her wrenching interviews, all these faces and testimonies bearing witness to a national disgrace, these victims of American nuclear testing in the West.

The book had turned out, Gallagher thought, just the way she had envisioned during those lonely years when she confronted so many doubters. The five literary agents who fell by the wayside, many convinced her effort was doomed. The 30 publishers, large and small, who rejected the book, reiterating what became a kind of litany: "Too expensive, too depressing, and why would people care about what happened to a few farmers in the West?"

To write a book and get it published is often an act of single-minded determination, but few authors endure what Gallagher did on behalf of *American Ground Zero*. The snubs and hostility of many of those in Utah whose story she was trying to tell. The years of living in grubby rented rooms, in a basement, above an auto parts store. Subsisting on a diet of cereal and little else, her weight dropping 40 pounds, requiring hospitalization at one point. The never-ending battle with depression, from what she was trying to accomplish, from what she was hearing and seeing in what would eventually be 1,000 interviews, and how it changed her in ways she did not like.

"The only thing that kept me alive was that I really believed in this book," Gallagher said last week in Seattle. "Either I was going to get it published or I was going to die doing it. I was driven, in both the worst and best sense. But I felt this issue was so important that life was not worth living if I did not get this done."

Gallagher did get it done. *American Ground Zero* has been published by MIT Press (\$50). The first printing of 10,000 copies has almost sold out, a phenomenal accomplishment for such an expensive book.

There have been reviews filled with praise and anger about what Gallagher has uncovered. At 42, she is likened to such esteemed photographers as Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange and Eugene Smith. She has been awarded a \$15,000 grant from the Pope Foundation for outstanding individual achievement in journalism. And next year, ABC-TV plans a documentary about her work.

Though a \$20,000 loan owed to a friend is still not repaid, Gallagher is breathing easier for the first time in years. But that in no way softens her outrage over a nuclear testing program that detonated 126 atomic bombs in the atmosphere during a 12-year span, with each bomb dispersing as much radioactive fallout as the Soviet nuclear accident at Chernobyl. And though the fallout spread across many states, residents were repeatedly assured that health risks were minimal.

These people were human guinea pigs for science and government run amok, although they usually did not recognize that until many years later. Which is one

of the reasons *New York Times* environmental writer Keith Schneider, in his foreword to Gallagher's book, calls it "the most prodigiously reckless program of scientific experimentation in United States history." Or why Gallagher likens the testing and its victims to the Holocaust.

The book puts faces and voices on this tragedy: the workers at Ground Zero test site in Nevada, the military personnel who were forced to do maneuvers in the

150 miles an hour, peppered the hell out of us and everything went flying ... Before we boarded trucks to go back they simply used whisk brooms to get the dust off us, alpha particles, and that was the end of decontamination. When we got back to camp, we showered with our fatigues on, then we had to throw them away."

For decades, the government fought attempts in the courts to establish any link between the atomic tests and the diseases. When Congress finally awarded compensation to the victims in 1988 and

1990, restrictions were placed on who could get what, and the total amount available for all victims was no more than the cost of one atomic test (\$100 million).

Gallagher has no doubt that the atomic tests caused cancer and birth defects, especially after hearing so many of their stories firsthand, often through their tears and hers. "There wasn't a day on this project when I didn't cry," she admits. "Because this is original sin."

From the days of duck-and-cover drills in school, Gallagher had been fascinated with The Bomb and things nuclear. She did reports on reactors and wondered what had happened to the people out West.

Eventually, she packed a duffel bag in her car and set out for Utah. She thought she would be gone for a few months.

What she didn't anticipate was the resistance she would encounter, especially among Mormon downwinders in Utah. These are conservative folks who long put their faith in their God and their government.

As downwinder Claudia Boshell Peterson summarizes, "They probably thought, 'Here are these isolated communities of Mormon people who are patriotic and hard workers.' ... I think we were just sitting ducks for them because Mormons don't cause trouble."

Gallagher won some over, getting them to share their stories, but certainly not all. She remains, to this day, "bitter about how hard they made it for me to live and work in that state."

She has finally begun to resume her life, aware of what her obsession with *American Ground Zero* has cost her. "I had no life. That book was my life," she says. "Men couldn't get near me for my being near it. They didn't want to be part of a death trip — and I

was on a death trip ...

"Before, I was the kind of person who used to make people fall down laughing. I'm trying to retrieve that part of myself, but it's not easy. I wish, in some ways, the book had taken less out of my life; I wish I could go back to my original innocence. But I just can't. This made me very angry, and it's been a struggle ever since against hopelessness." ■

John Marshall writes for the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. This article is reprinted courtesy of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.



Author Carole Gallagher

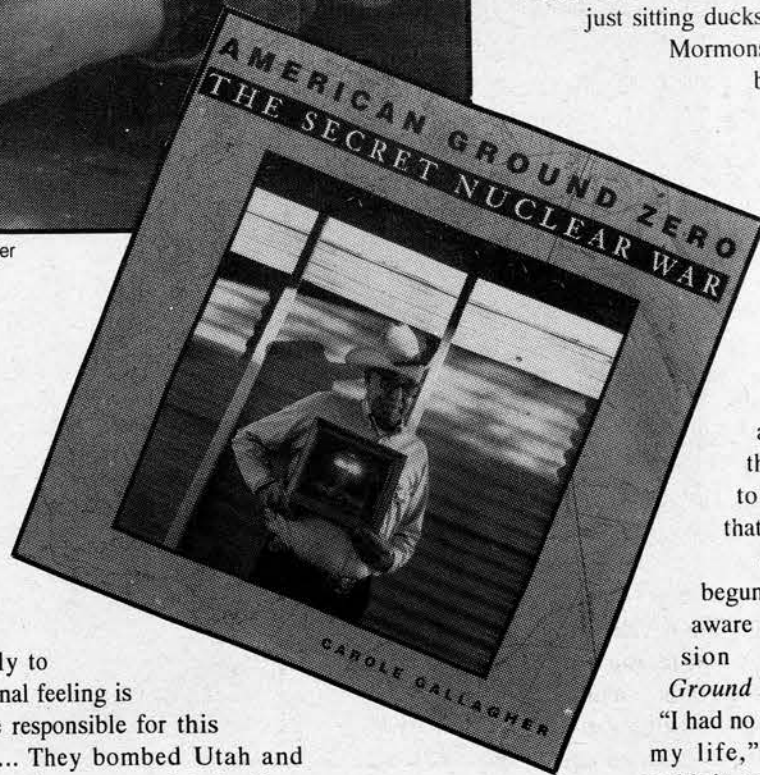
Marion Ettlinger

test site area, and the people who lived downwind of the blasts, in the path of the fallout.

There is downwinder Elmer Pickett, who lost 16 members of his family to cancer, saying, "My personal feeling is that those people who are responsible for this are absolutely criminal ... They bombed Utah and we're paying the price. They done to us what the Russians couldn't do."

There is Army veteran Russell Jack Dann, who lost his teeth and was found to be sterile following maneuvers after an atomic test. He recalls, "We wore no protective clothing or anything, no gloves, no gas masks. We were in completely open space, right on top of the hill, like a bunch of dummies out there. At 3.8 miles the heat and light are instant. First of all, when the bomb went off, the light was like a thousand suns and the sound was like a million cannons. Then we saw a tidal wave of dirt and dust and sagebrush and rattlesnakes and wires coming after us ...

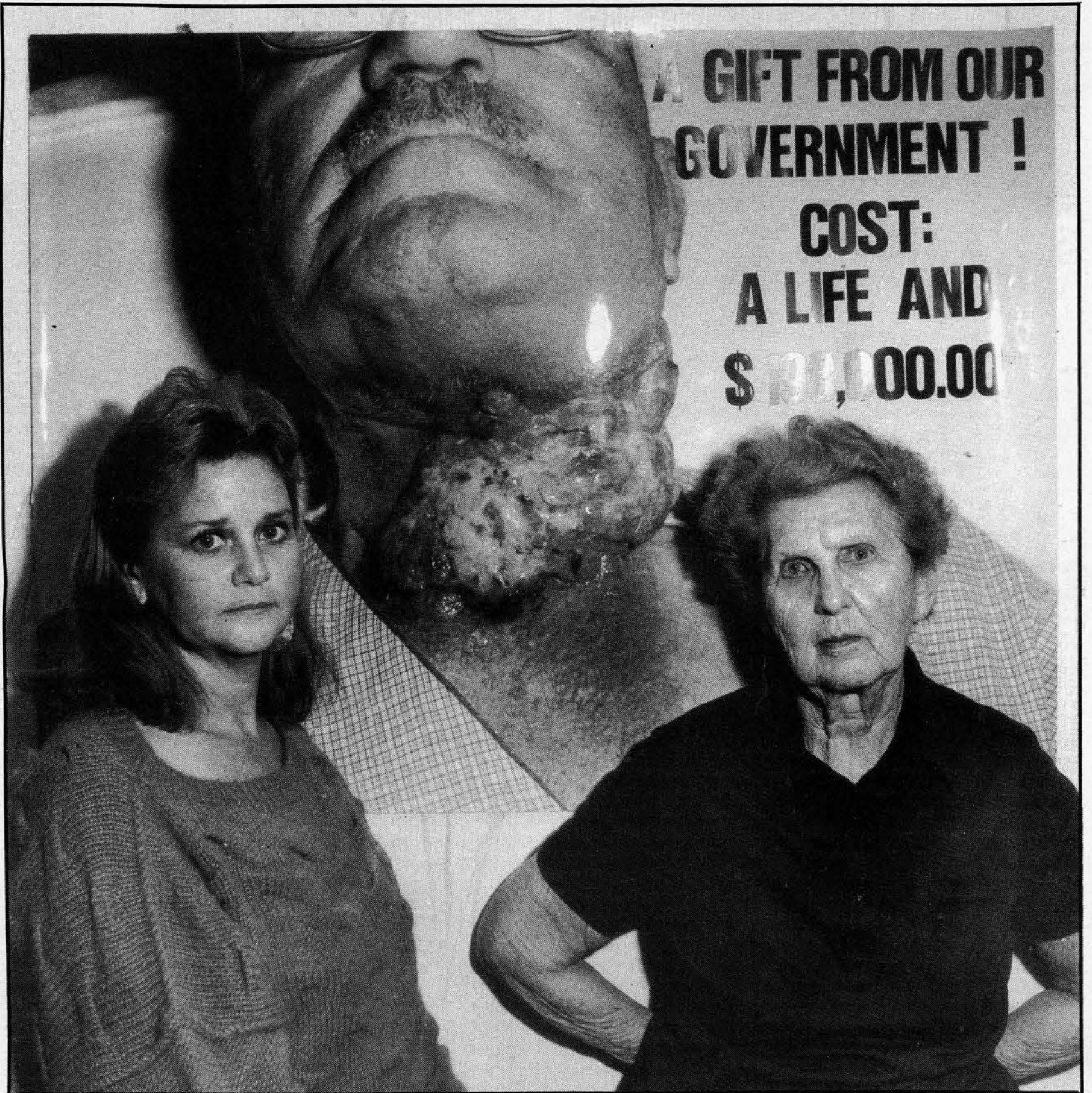
"You could see right through your arm as if it was an X-ray, the sound was just earth-shattering and deafening and a tremendous roar. The wind was blowing



Photos and excerpts follow

AMERICAN GROUND ZERO: THE SECRET NUCLEAR WAR

Photographs and excerpts from the book by Carole Gallagher, 1993, The MIT Press.



Bonnie McDaniels and her mother, Marjorie Lease, with a photograph they took of their father and husband, Hap Lease, who worked at the Nevada Test Site for 14 years.

MARJORIE: The cancer started in his throat, it was real sore. We went to our own doctor, who said, "You have a sore throat, I'll give you antibiotics." He took them for six weeks, but didn't seem to improve any. We went to a throat specialist. He said, "All I can tell you, you sure have a sore throat. I'll give you some antibiotics." We told him we already had some, but he said, "Well, try them three or four weeks longer." It kept getting worse and worse. Finally, desperate, I looked one up in the telephone book. We went in right away and he said, "I sure don't like what I see. I want you in the hospital tomorrow morning for a biopsy." After the biopsy we went to the UCLA hospital and they took out his larynx. They took his whole head off almost. When he came out of surgery he looked like a mummy, he was so wrapped up. He didn't come to for a few days. Bonnie (a nurse by profession) quit her job to take care of him and she literally did intensive care for seven months.

He worked at the Test Site for fourteen years, since 1962. He was a monitor so he was one of the first guys in (into the test tunnels to recover equipment and check radiation levels) after these shots. I remember Hap

said that there were some areas up there that was infected with plutonium so bad it will never be fit for anything.

BONNIE: I worked out there too in 1963 and 1964. I was a secretary and bookkeeper for Rad Safe (the Test Site's Radiation Safety team) so I knew a lot of what he was doing. He was a draftsman so he made all the drawings for all the maps of the entire Test Site. He was on every road there was, on every piece of ground, measuring, right in the middle of all the shots. He was in the clean-up of Baneberry (an underground test that had a massive venting in 1970) and had to give people showers and feed them beer and give them paper clothes. Cars were buried in big ditches out there because they were so contaminated they couldn't clean them up. In the cafeteria everything was contaminated. He was one of the front ones up there. They had one of these T's to hang onto, a pipe in the ground with a crossbar to hang onto when the ground shook. The day that Baneberry took place, they were all standing at these certain spots (the T's) for the shot. It *really* shook because it ruptured. When the smoke and dust or whatever it is came out, that cloud, Hap was right on top of it.



AMERICAN GROUND ZERO

Della Truman, mother of Jay Truman, at rest, West Jordan, Utah. Her thyroid, damaged by radioactive fallout during the 1950s, led to her death.

JAY: I remember in school they showed a film once called *A is for Atom, B is for Bomb*. I think most of us who grew up in that period, we've all in our own minds added *C is for Cancer, D is for Death*. In my own life I try not to think about the future in a sense because I don't know that the future is ever there. The realization comes that you don't really have a future.

I was born in December of 1951. (Atmospheric) testing started in January of 1951. I can remember one of the earliest memories of life: my mother and father would drive me out on the farm and watch the bombs go off. It was kind of weird in the sense that they were always there and they were very much a part of life. Not only did you have the bomb tests going off all the time, you also had the government's monitors and their PR shows going on in those areas. I can remember really well right after kindergarten had started, this would have been in 1957, we had a general, he had ribbons all over his chest, talking to the school kids about testing and how it was necessary, and how the Russians would be here in the morning, that type of thing. How it was perfectly safe, we shouldn't worry about it. He did say little kids shouldn't go outside and play when the cloud is overhead, and he tried to explain a principle called "cloudshine" to the kids. I remember very distinctly when he explained that cloudshine was the stuff in the cloud radiating onto the ground. Once that was gone there was no danger.

There were a lot of attempts to get the public involved in the test program to keep the chance of opposition down. They had a "sky watch" program where they had volunteers from the little communities watching the skies different hours of the day, looking for Russian spy planes. Women would volunteer to do that, and they were given a roll of dimes and a phone number to call.

In one year, fall of 1958 and spring of 1959, there were a large number

of miscarriages in town, I remember that. My mother lost a child and some others did. There were stories about the sheep all the time, and I remember seeing cattle — it was obvious that there was something wrong with them.

... I think the most difficult thing for people was the fact that they knew on a personal level, a visual level by going to the church and cemetery for leukemia cases and others, they knew something wasn't right. In order to accept that, they also had to accept that the government not only did it to them, but was carrying on an extensive con job to show them there was no danger.

In 1966 ... I kept on waking up really sweaty and clammy in the night, and have chills by morning. I was out target practicing and I shot a couple of shots and my nose started bleeding, I guess from the concussion of the shots. Then I had a growth removed from the bottom of my foot and it was a month before the damn thing finally stopped bleeding. I had nosebleeds all the time. I was very frightened of it for two reasons. Number one, I thought it was leukemia. If you had those symptoms, that's what you thought. My mother was extremely sick at the time and I had a fear of what my own problems could cause regarding her.

One of the doctors in St. George had quite a bit of experience with this kind of situation, and found Walderstrom's disease, a type of lymphoma where the blood becomes extremely thick, has the tendency to bleed easily.

If the same thing had happened in New York they would have hung the bastards. The people out here were taught not to do that. The Mormon upbringing had a lot to do with it. Also, the feeling of helplessness, what the hell can you do? The government has all the facts. The anger, the feeling of being lied to, hopelessness and despair, and a deep down personal feeling inside of "when's my turn, am I next?" And I think this is as important, as far as victimization goes, as the cancer itself. People wrote themselves off any time the symptoms came, whether those symptoms were cancer or not, and for that reason I think there were a lot of needless cancer deaths.

Babbitt is no Stegner or Abbey

essay by Jeffrey St. Clair

Proving once again our power to negate, environmentalists successfully prevented Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt from becoming the next Supreme Court justice. But I'm beginning to wonder if this was anything more than a Pyrrhic victory at best and a strategic blunder at worst. Not because I believe Babbitt belonged on the Supreme Court as our best liberal foil against Antonin Scalia's strict constructionist broadsword.

The real question in my mind is whether Bruce Babbitt should remain Secretary of Interior. Despite his anointment by leading conservationists and the national media as the Gandhi of public lands, Babbitt may prove to be much more dangerous to the fundamental interests of environmentalists (as well as spotted owls, grizzlies and goshawks) than his predecessors, Manuel Lujan and James Watt.

Why? Two reasons. First, Babbitt is now largely unassailable by environmentalists who, from the acting president of The Wilderness Society to the director of the Environmental Defense Fund, convinced President Clinton that Babbitt was "indispensable and irreplaceable" in his current position as Secretary of Interior. The Wilderness Society had a particularly parochial interest in keeping Babbitt at Interior: At the time, the nomination of the society's former president, George Frampton, as assistant secretary for parks and wildlife was still pending before the Senate Interior committee and may have been in jeopardy under another Interior secretary.

After dispensing those accolades (and cashing in the attendant political chips) how can we now effectively criticize Babbitt's role in crafting a forest plan for the Northwest that is a legally indefensible scientific experiment designed to minimize job loss? How can we expose the gaping holes in his grazing plan, which aims to preserve the small rancher at the expense of federal rangelands, wild predators and taxpayers?

Many argue that in order to be politically effective the secretary of the Interior needs to be a Westerner. (I suggest just the reverse: Anyone bred, born and raised beyond the 100th Meridian should be automatically precluded from the job.) By this logic, Babbitt is the perfect person to bring "timber, cattle and water" Democrats like Norm Dicks, Max Baucus and Dennis DeConcini aboard the administration's campaign to reform management of Western public lands. But Babbitt doesn't exert influence over these politicians so much as he shares allegiances with them.

"No harm will come to ye," seems to be Babbitt's palliative to the small towns, loggers, ranchers and miners of the West. Babbitt, like his congressional compadres, wants to use the federal government and treasury to freeze the flow of history, a history typified by the control over millions of acres of public lands by a fractional minority invested with grossly disproportionate political power. Babbitt did not come to Washington, D.C., to change this paradigm, but to update it and make it more politically palatable.

Yet this is ultimately a lose-lose scenario for the economy and the environment, where the only winner is the telegenic image of the administration. With Gore in the White House (somewhere) and Babbitt at Interior, environmentalists are now largely irrelevant in major policy decisions affecting public lands. Babbitt didn't even consult with national environmental leaders before signing off on a controversial compromise for the Everglades, a plan that, in true Bush-era style, suggests development, chemical agriculture, and conservation can coexist. In the end, Babbitt may be willing to light the dynamite at the defunct Elwha Dam at the same time he siphons more funding into multibillion-dollar hydro-disasters like the Central Utah Project.

Since early May, Babbitt and aide Tom Collier have been the administration's most ardent advocates for insulating Clinton's forest plan from judicial review. In fact, Babbitt continues to arm-twist environmentalists to release more and more old-growth timber from court injunctions — a sign to the industry and

Congress that the administration can control the often irascible environmental movement. Babbitt's legal philosophy seems typically Western: If the courts go against you, place yourself above them (sufficiency) and then change the law. (A prediction: The Endangered Species Act will be altered more drastically under Babbitt than was ever possible under Watt, Donald Hodel or Lujan.)

The real problem with Bruce Babbitt is his vision of the West. Babbitt is not the philosophical heir of Wallace Stegner and Edward Abbey, but the political descendant of Frank Church and Mo Udall. At heart, Babbitt is more a communitarian and regionalist than a conservationist. His instincts are to preserve the quaint anachronisms of Western culture first, and only then worry about its frayed ecosystems. After all, how can you have a frontier mentality without at least the semblance of a frontier?

As social historian Patricia Nelson Limerick said recently, "Like it or not, the new West is being lived in Phoenix, Seattle and L.A. — not Butte, Farmington or Sweet Home." And the people who live in the cities of the West want more wilderness, less government and lower taxes, a new reality that is completely counter-intuitive to politicians steeped in the saws 'n saddles porkbarrel tradition of Western liberalism.

Ultimately, environmentalists must overcome our infatuation with the charismatic leader, the shaman-like figure, who through the power of his personality, can enact revolutionary changes in environmental policy and human ethics. Until the iron triangle linking Congress, agencies and industries is cracked, and new political structures and financial incentives are introduced, even charismatic leaders like Babbitt will be captured by the very institutions they are supposed to manage and reform. ■

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Forest Service: Villain and scapegoat

essay by C.L. Rawlins

To say the Forest Service is divided into two groups, a young one which loves the forests and an old one which loves the agency, is too easy (*HCN*, 12/28/92). We get a picture of old, white, male herd bulls brandishing axes while an advance guard of educated — yet sensitive and diverse — persons key their computers and smile knowingly at the trees, waiting their turn.

Which is a nice cartoon, but hardly so. Some of those old bull-necked agency guys deserve more credit than that, but you won't find them in Washington or perhaps not even in regional offices. They're on ranger districts, dug in deep and taking fire from all sides.

Meanwhile, some of the educated, careerist young folks are as cynical as corporate lawyers. After years of *New Perspectives* and glossy propaganda that never touched the ground, a lot of the younger folks operate in a conceptual void: They've learned that words are one thing and action another.

So they dutifully move their lips and wait for the next revelation from on high, fooling themselves that when they achieve that next level they will be able to exercise their covert love for the forest, safely. This is how they climb the government ladder into those coveted 12s and 13s and higher. They are the bureaucrats of the future: women and men, of all colors and heritages.

Why? Because the Service lacks a moral center, which ought to be the forest. But what is the forest? There isn't a single ideal forest, but a succession of real places: New England hardwoods, the sparse limber pines of the Great Basin and the mossy old-growth conifers of the Pacific rim. The forest isn't one thing, as the Forest Service tries so hard to be.

What's missing is a legitimate, personal bond with a place, because that's what a forest is: a place you can stand on. No two are the same. It takes time and sacrifice, rather than transfers and promotions, to get to

know one. And that the careerists have given up.

It's a process of conditioning: the agency links promotion to transfer. The stated reason is that "good managers must learn a variety of methods," which means *move*. But for young people, often with young



David Wilson

children, the moves can be hard. And ambitious professionals may move four or five times in their first 10 years.

By this time, the places have become a blur. Communities are interchangeable. Dislocated and displaced, the professional land manager finds stability in the Service itself, and has become dependable, predictable, and *flexible*, all in exchange for belonging.

What do you owe to a place? A certain spring, a meadow, a single grove of pine? How well do you know it? How are you part of its life? In the agency, despite hordes of grad students and mountains of scientific data, the emotional bond is weak, the loyalty unforged. Places have become categories: trees = board feet, water = acre-feet, and wilderness = recreation opportunity zones. The personal goal is higher numbers and fatter checks. Quantity is all.

Lacking a personal, unashamed loyalty to the land, the Service — like the nation — exists in a moral void. Instead of rising from ground-level, the values trickle down, from chiefs who sell their souls to undersecretaries, and from deputies who suck around Congress, hustling timber dollars.

The Forest Service is easy to hate because it is so thoroughly American. It's a good scapegoat, a convenient focus for our collective anger. Like us, it has gone through the change from the frontier/pioneer illusion, through the military model, through science-fiction, and into the corporate lockstep, always lagging a bit, but trying valiantly to keep up.

It represents the imperial ideal that slaughtered the bison, wired the prairie, clearcut the woods and raised up a thousand dams. At its best it also represents the public trust, real forests and a stubborn love for the land.

And if we think that struggle — that split — exists only in the Forest Service and not in ourselves, in the basis of our national culture, then the point has been missed. And the change we want will not be the change we need, nor the deeper change that the land itself now compels. ■

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