

High Country News

November 1, 1993

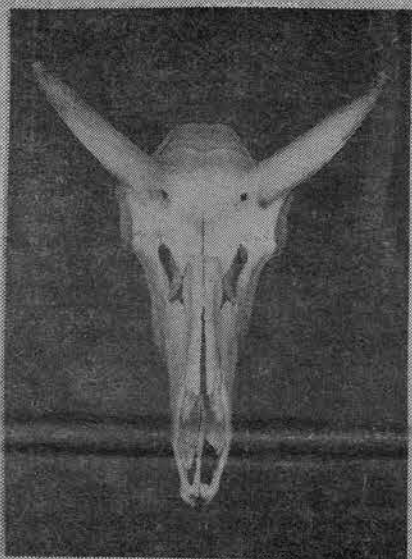
Vol. 25 No. 20

A Paper for People who Care about the West

One dollar and fifty cents

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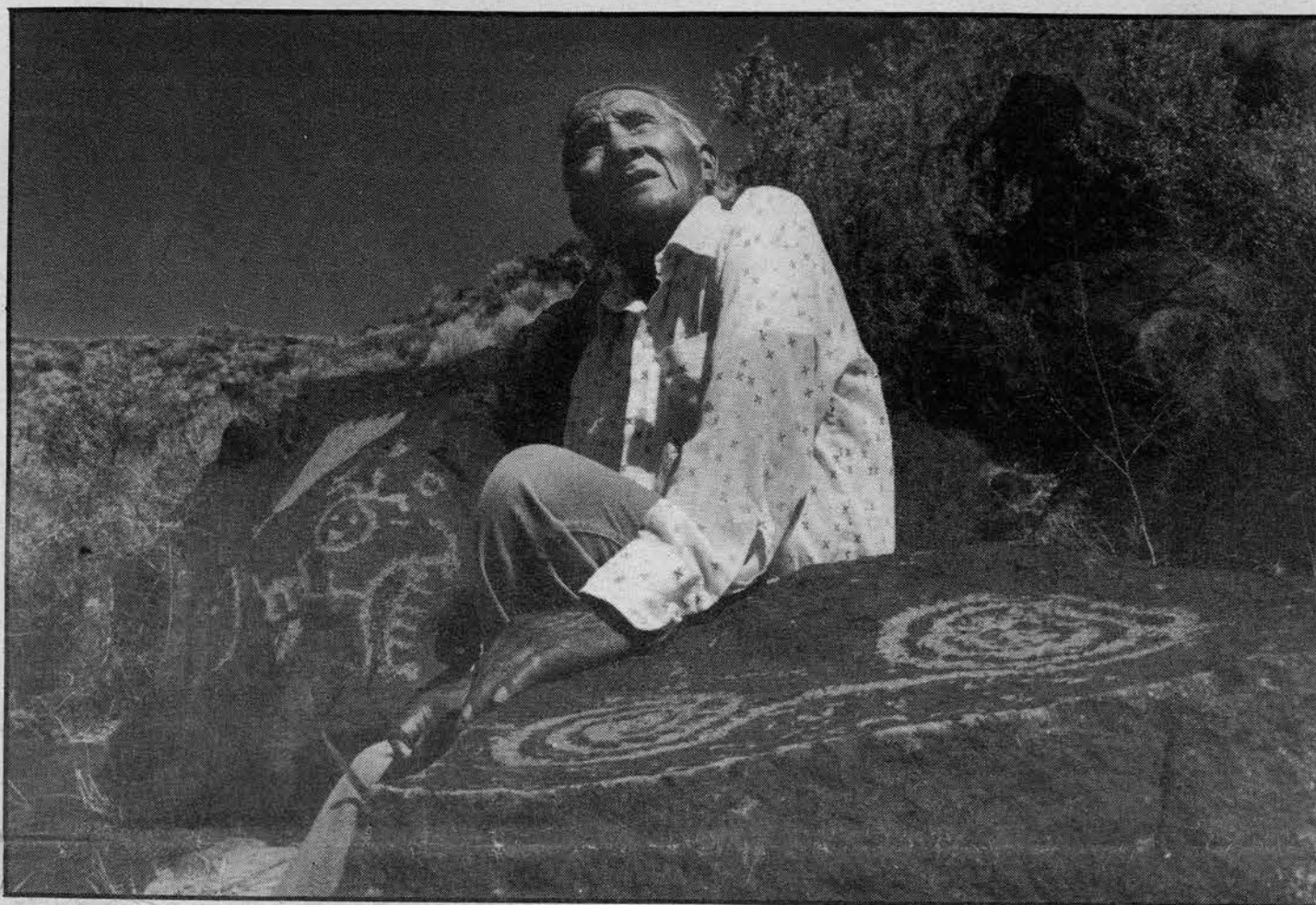
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Sunbelt confrontation



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Sandia Pueblo elder Phillip Lauriano in the Petroglyph National Monument

by Tony Davis



LBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Phillip Lauriano says he still remembers that morning in 1927 clearly.

He was 7, it was daybreak, and his 90-year-old great-grandfather was taking him for a walk toward the low-slung volcanoes west of town.

"He grabbed me by the hand and he said he was taking me to a sacred place," Lauriano recalled. Then, the old man "turned to me and pointed to the volcanoes and said, 'Now, don't you forget it. This is a source of joy and comfort.'"

Today, that boy is 73 and a religious elder for the Sandia Pueblo, whose one-acre reservation lies just north of this growing city of 500,000.

The volcanoes Lauriano saw as a child now lie within Petroglyph National Monument, a 7,000-acre home of ancient Indian rock art on Albuquerque's western edge. As Lauriano talked on a hot morning recently, he and a companion stood a few hundred yards from where a sea of houses collides with a 17-mile-long cliff of deep brown rocks. The only sound was the low rumble of bulldozers and earth-graders, clearing land for the next wave of newcomers.

These rocks contain petroglyphs — incised drawings — showing flute players, masks, birds, mountain lions, horned serpents, spirals, stick-figures, bears and sun symbols. It is the largest concentra-

tion of Indian rock art near an urban area and the most densely packed known concentration of rock art in the country. From 1000 B.C. to 1650 A.D., predecessors of modern-day Pueblo Indians used stones to carve these symbols into the rocks.

Towering 50 to 250 feet above the city's western edge, the cliff face snakes and swivels for 17 miles. Known as the

is less than a half-mile wide. The fight over whether the road, called *Paseo del Norte*, should be built has become the latest in a long string of battles over Sunbelt expansion.

People move to Albuquerque for the quality of life. To make room for them, the road would go through one of the National Park Service's newest additions. It's a monument so new it has no permanent visitors' center, a place so popular it draws nearly 100,000 people a year with hardly a road sign pointing to it.

Now two years old, the dispute pits environmentalists against neighborhood activists, developers against urban planners, city politicians against the National Park Service and the chamber of commerce against Indians. The longer it lasts, the nastier both sides' rhetoric gets, and the more likely that the battle will end up in court.

It's not hard to understand why. Its resolution will determine the direction of the city's growth and how much "progress" the monument will have to endure. It will also determine how much protection Lauriano and his fellow Pueblo Indians can win for land they consider sacred.

To those who want the road, the grasslands west of these rocks and volcanoes glisten with the promise of new suburbs. This road would lead to a planned development of 42,000 persons called Black Ranch.

Owned by a family of former cattle

Will Albuquerque roll over its past to reach its future?

West Mesa Escarpment, the cliffs run south from a suburb called Paradise Hills.

For Albuquerque's growth machine, however, the monument is both a gateway and a barrier to their dreams of a new city.

The mayor, the majority of the city council, the planning commission, highway engineers, developers and road planners want to lay six lanes of concrete across this section of monument, which

continued on page 10



HIGH COUNTRY NEWS
(ISSN/0191/5657) is published biweekly, except for one issue during July and one issue during January, by the High Country Foundation, 119 Grand Avenue, Paonia, CO 81428. Second-class postage paid at Paonia, Colorado.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to HIGH COUNTRY NEWS, Box 1090, Paonia, CO 81428.

Subscriptions are \$28 per year for individuals and public libraries, \$38 per year for institutions. Single copies \$1.50 plus postage and handling. Special Issues \$3 each.

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Articles appearing in *High Country News* are indexed in *Environmental Periodicals Bibliography*, Environmental Studies Institute, 800 Garden St., Suite D, Santa Barbara, CA 93101.

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Advertising information is available upon request. To have a sample copy sent to a friend, send us his or her address. Write to Box 1090, Paonia, CO 81428. Call *High Country News* in Colorado at 303/527-4898.



Printed on recycled paper:
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Dear friends,

A bizarre tale

On Wednesday, Oct. 6, an employee at A Clean Well Lighted Place bookstore in San Francisco called to say that her store had received a damaged box of books from Prentice Hall Publishers. In the box, which had presumably been repaired at the San Francisco Post Office, was a bundle of 14 copies of *HCN* dated Oct. 4, 1993. The papers had been used as packing filler.

The caller was good enough to dictate to us the names from the labels — they were all San Francisco subscribers — and Meg O'Shaughnessy sent off replacement copies by priority mail. In general, we are pleased with service the post office provides. We track the arrival of selected subscriptions throughout the nation, and delivery time and condition are usually good. But we were very disturbed at what appears to have been theft of these *HCNs* by the service's employees, and we have so informed the U.S. Postal Service.

Land Rush

The rush to buy land has affected this paper's unclassified advertising pages. The business staff, uncomfortable with ads urging readers to "snap up this last piece of untouched riverfront property," suggested that *HCN* no longer accept advertising from real estate agencies, and that suggestion was adopted as policy. As of now, we will only accept ads from *HCN* subscribers who are trying to rent, exchange or sell their personal property.

Congratulations

Best wishes to staff member Steve Hinchman on his recent marriage to Debbie Clary at the bridegroom's home above Paonia. The ceremony was held in a hill-top clearing beneath brilliant fall colors on the slopes of Mount Lamborn and Lands End Peak. In lieu of a minister, the bride, bridegroom, and the bride's three children — Evan, Karin and Toby — conducted the ceremony and spoke their vows, obligations and responsibilities. Families and friends came from around the country, to help celebrate the union with food, wine and music from an excellent dance band.

Congratulations to Teresa Erickson, executive director of the Northern Plains Resource Council in Billings, Mont., on receiving the first Jeanette Rankin Award from the non-profit foundation, A Territorial Resource. Jeanette Rankin became the first woman to hold national office, after Montana sent her to Congress in 1916. The award ceremony will take place on Nov. 19, in Seattle's Discovery Park Daybreak Star Center. For information, contact ATR at 206/624-4081.

Fall visitors

Veterinary pathologist Dónal O'Toole, who teaches at the University of Wyoming, stopped by on enroute to a conference in Las Vegas, Nev. In an

informal seminar with interns, O'Toole said that his research so far shows no correlation between the "blind staggers" that afflict cattle and selenium poisoning.

A while back, Veterans Administration physician Allan Prochazka visited along with his wife, Paula Peirce, and their children Valerie, 8, and Julia, 1. He last visited when *HCN* was housed in cramped quarters across the street.

Photographers Scott Smith and Mary Bedingfieldsmith, from Logan, Utah, came to Paonia after a llama trip. They were scouting western Colorado and eastern Utah for a small town to move to, photographing trees along the way.

Liz Caille met some staffers for breakfast at the Diner in Paonia. Liz free lances for the *Mountain-Ear* in Nederland, Colo., and for other publications. Kent, Diane and Megan Young of Red Lodge, Mont., came through on a visit to relatives. Kent is a board member of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. Michelle Sullivan, who heads the Snake River Alliance in Jackson, Wyo., stopped by with Tom Payne of Aspen.

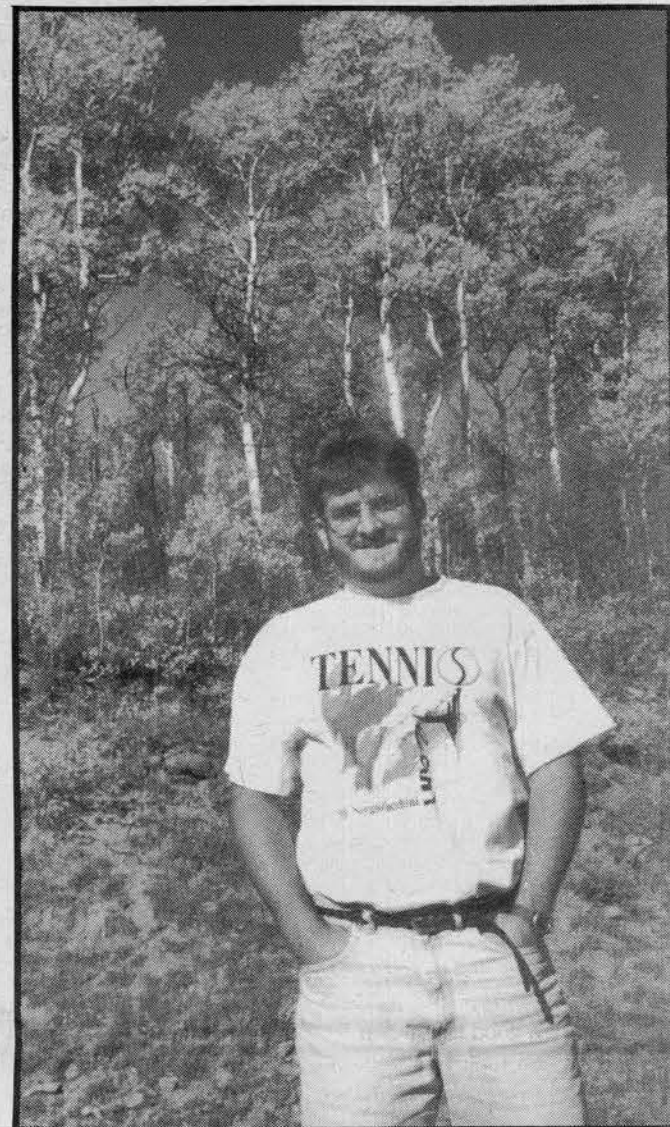
In other news ...

Don't forget that the founder of Earth Day is Gaylord Nelson and not Denis Hayes, writes Mary Hanley, vice president for public affairs for The Wilderness Society. We wrote about Hayes and his new job running the Northwest's Bullitt Foundation. But it was Nelson, then a United States senator from Wisconsin, who managed the original Earth Day '70 out of his office until it began to overwhelm his staff, Hanley reminds us. Hayes was hired four months before the big event to coordinate college events.

Locations in the West change, but the stories are the same: Bears, cougar, deer and elk move to the "wrong" place. They annoy or harm people; the people retaliate and the wildlife die.

A recent clash occurred close to home. John Benjamin, a reader who lives on Redlands Mesa some 15 miles from Paonia, wrote to us about the end of a

mountain lion mother and her three cubs. After neighbors lost four sheep to predators, they called state wildlife officials. In a few days, the mother mountain lion and one cub were shot; the two other cubs were trapped. "Four sheep dead. Four mountain lion removed from this area. How do equations such as this ever get balanced?" John asks.



Cindy Wehling

Intern Chris Eldridge in front of changing aspen

With a southern accent

New intern Chris Eldridge comes to *HCN* after spending four years in the mountains of North Carolina, where he majored in English at Appalachian State University. A native of Atlanta, Ga., Chris says he has always been drawn to the mountains, first to the Appalachians and now to the Rockies. To truly appreciate mountain weather Chris suggests spending a summer in the high humidity and heat of Georgia.

His interests include American literature and an occasional crack at writing short fiction. He says a major adjustment to life in Paonia is losing touch with the sports world. To fill up any spare time Chris intends to rip through a box full of novels that he always wanted to read but never seemed to have time for.

— Ed Marston and Betsy Marston
for the staff

HOTLINE

Award to the Dann sisters

A Swedish philanthropist has announced that one of his annual "Right Livelihood Awards" this year will go to Mary and Carrie Dann of Crescent Valley, Nev. The Western Shoshone ranchers will split the \$200,000 award, also known as the Alternative Nobel Prize, with three other women from around the world who have shown "courage in crisis and conflict." The Dann sisters have fought

the U.S. government for recognition of Western Shoshone land and grazing rights for more than 20 years from their home in north-central Nevada. The announcement of the Swedish prize commends the Dann sisters for their courage and perseverance in asserting the rights of indigenous peoples. It also condemns the U.S. government for attempted expropriation of their land and degradation of the land by mining and nuclear testing. The Right Livelihood Awards were established in 1980 by Jakob von Uexkull, who sold his valuable postage stamp collection to

provide an endowment for the cash prizes. Von Uexkull felt that the Nobel Prizes were narrow and ignored work and knowledge "vital for the survival of humankind." The awards will be presented at a ceremony in Stockholm on Dec. 9, the day before the Nobel Prize presentations. Other winners this year are Aarna Mer-Khamis, who founded the organization Care and Learning for Palestinian children; Sithembiso Nyoni, co-founder of the Organization of Rural Associations for Progress in Zimbabwe, and Vandana Shiva, an ecologist in India.

WESTERN ROUNDUP

Arizona BLM punishes 'bad bureaucrat'

It's been a tough year for Ben Lomeli.

Last April, the Bureau of Land Management hydrologist was told to pack his bags at the agency's lush San Pedro Riparian Area in southeastern Arizona and head to the desert in Kingman, Ariz.

Lomeli, 42, resisted and filed a complaint. He thought his bosses arranged the transfer because of his outspoken views about threats to the nation's first riparian national conservation area.

Lomeli was concerned about a 1991 study by the University of Arizona. It showed that groundwater pumping in the town of Sierra Vista, eight miles west of the riparian area, threatened the San Pedro River, the liquid heart of the conservation area. The study concluded that the booming town of 35,000 was using groundwater faster than rain and runoff could replace it, and if not curtailed, the pumping would soon draw water directly from the river.

Lomeli found the study alarming and publicly advocated stringent building restrictions to save the river and the more than 200 species of migratory birds that frequent the 56,000-acre preserve.

His bosses disagreed and placed him on administrative leave last June. Lomeli charges that local water companies and developers put pressure on the recently installed district manager to move him. BLM officials deny the charge.

"It was a political agenda," Lomeli says. "Everything I've done has been toward meeting the congressional mandate to protect the conservation area. ... But I'm not a good bureaucrat."

Just when Lomeli thought his days as a BLM employee at the riparian area were over, newly appointed BLM Director Jim Baca entered the picture. Baca had received a flood of letters supporting Lomeli from local environmentalists, politicians and even some developers. On a visit to Arizona June 21, he made a point of meeting privately with Lomeli. One week later, Lomeli says, Baca called him and told him he had his job back.

The story didn't end there. On his first day back, Lomeli found his computer missing. When it was returned days later, someone had erased all of the technical data from the hard drive. "They assumed I was on the way out," he says.

Then, he was given a series of new assignments around the state which have taken him away from the office for weeks at a time. "The weirdest thing is that I don't know what is going to show up in my in-box next," he says.

What showed up there Sept. 8 was a memo telling Lomeli that he was no

longer on the technical review committee for the San Pedro Basin, a county-led effort to address the water pumping issue. The memo from San Pedro Supervisor Greg Yuncovich said that Lomeli will be cited for insubordination if he attends committee meetings without authorization.

"They've been trying to make life as miserable for me as possible," says Lomeli. "I hear through the grapevine that the state office says it's 'going to beat Baca on this one.'"

Jeff DeBonis, the forester who directs the Washington, D.C.-based Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, says Lomeli has been subjected to "the typical sort of agency reprisal we see all the time."

His organization is calling on Baca to step in once again and restore Lomeli to the technical committee. "This is a good test for Baca," says DeBonis.

"Ben's made a good story here," counters Bill Civish, the BLM's Safford District director, who oversees the San Pedro office. "But it isn't true." He says limited resources have forced him to reshuffle his staff to better meet the agency's management needs on 14 million acres under BLM control.

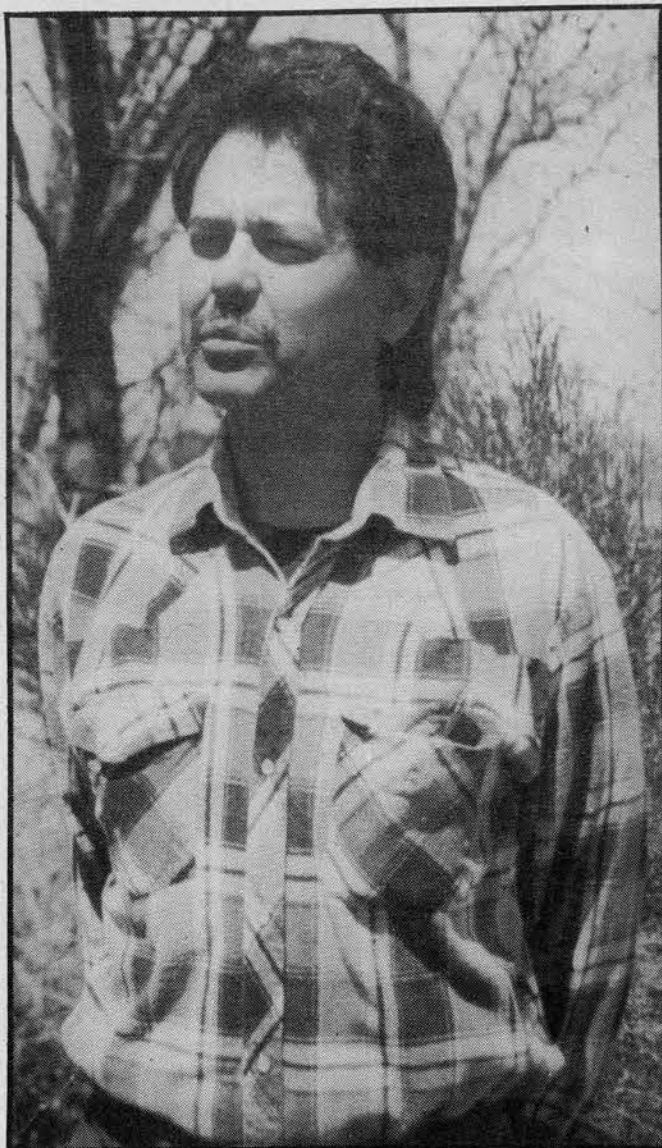
Civish, who last served the BLM in Washington, D.C., as the chief of cultural and recreational resources, says Baca's order directed him to work out his differences with Lomeli. But it "hasn't changed what my goal is one bit" for managing the San Pedro, he says.

Civish says he wants to implement the management plan for the San Pedro, which calls for an interpretive center, trails and campgrounds to accommodate the throngs of bird-watching tourists. They pump \$2.7 million annually into the local economy, according to a recent University of Arizona study.

Lomeli believes Civish's emphasis on recreation is misplaced: "He wants to build a multimillion dollar facility to view what — a bunch of dead trees? We want to make sure there is still water in the river."

Civish says he is committed to protecting BLM's San Pedro water right and will consider litigation, if it comes to that. But — BLM must consider the needs of the communities that rely on the watershed, he says. "It's not just BLM out there by itself."

Those who want to protect the last stretch of undammed river between the Rio Grande and the Mexican border say a federal lawsuit may be the only action that can save the San Pedro. Tom Mad-



BLM hydrologist Ben Lomeli

Elisbeth Atencio

dock, a University of Arizona hydrology professor, says Arizona's Byzantine water law has no teeth to stop groundwater pumping in the watershed above the river. Unless the Department of Interior steps into the fray, he predicts, the perennial San Pedro will become an intermittent arroyo within 10 years.

Others disagree. Sierra Vista's city engineer George Michael says, "It's not an immediate problem." Dennis Sundi of the Arizona Division of Water Resources adds, "It's a solvable problem. We just need time and cooperation."

But development in the area is proceeding at a torrid pace. Recent expansion at Fort Huachuca military base just outside of Sierra Vista generated \$8 million in building contracts alone. And as the fort grows, population grows. Sierra Vista's projected population increase of 5,000 by the end of the decade is a "conservative estimate," according to city manager Jim Whitlock. The most ambitious visions of development see a community 5-to-10 times the current size.

Of course, no one really knows how big a problem Sierra Vista is brewing, or how soon it could become a crisis for the San Pedro River and the city. But some residents worry that without Ben Lomeli, the public debate will get shortchanged.

"I'm no environmentalist," says local resident and private-well owner Jeremy Jordan, "but I don't know how we can get rid of a competent young guy who knows every aspect of the issue as well as Lomeli."

— Ernie Atencio, Paul Larmer

Ernie Atencio is a former HCN intern now living in Flagstaff, Ariz. Paul Larmer is HCN assistant editor.

HOTLINE

Water still flows toward money

For 100 years Colorado's heavily populated Front Range has been damming water on the Western Slope, then shipping it east through the mountains that divide the state. Ski resorts could change this pattern. Vail Associates, owners of Vail and Beaver Creek ski resorts, paid \$3 million for the right to pump water up 40 feet, from Climax Molybdenum Co.'s wells, to the top of the Continental Divide. From there the water will run west into Eagle Creek. The resorts then have the right to pump 500 acre-feet out of Eagle Creek up to the slopes for snow-making during dry winters, reports the *Vail Trail*. The diversion of 500 acre-feet into Eagle Creek is only a drop in the bucket compared to 34,000 acre-feet taken out of the Eagle River Basin each year. The sale results in pumping water simultaneously into and out of the Eagle River Basin.

Waste goes West

A Utah landfill is cashing in on Boston sludge. Massachusetts is paying East Carbon County \$1.25 million to reserve space in its 2,400-acre landfill even if no treated sewage ever gets shipped. If it does, the state will pay an additional \$80-\$95 per ton. The sludge generated by the Massachusetts sewage treatment plant, the second largest in the country, used to be dumped into Boston Harbor. In 1991, the company stopped polluting the bay and started converting the sludge into fertilizer pellets. The waste-cum-fertilizer is now being marketed to farmers in Florida, Georgia and Texas, but Massachusetts officials want the Utah landfill, 22 miles southeast of Price, as backup. "What we're all realizing," Paul DiNatale, spokesman for the landfill, told the *Salt Lake Tribune*, "is that while Utah may seem quite a distance from Massachusetts, the world gets smaller and smaller every day." Some East Carbon residents, however, wish it would keep its distance. "I'm hopeful Massachusetts gets its hat on straight," said local resident Phyllis Johnson, "and they keep their sewage sludge where it's sludged."

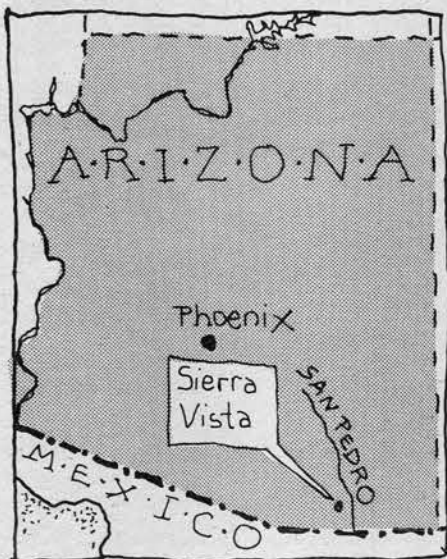
BARBS

No, what we've got is like pornography.

California Democratic Rep. George Miller told a group at the University of Colorado that he couldn't say what ecosystem management exactly was, but he wanted to bring it to the West. "You'll know it when you see it," he said. "It's like pornography."

Actually, we think they're kind of cute.

Sen. Alan Simpson, R-Wyo., wants the Clinton administration to admit why it wants to raise grazing fees. "People ought to ... just say we don't want cows on the public lands. They're ugly and they poop all over," said the senator in the *Casper Star-Tribune*.



HOTLINE

The next timber frontier

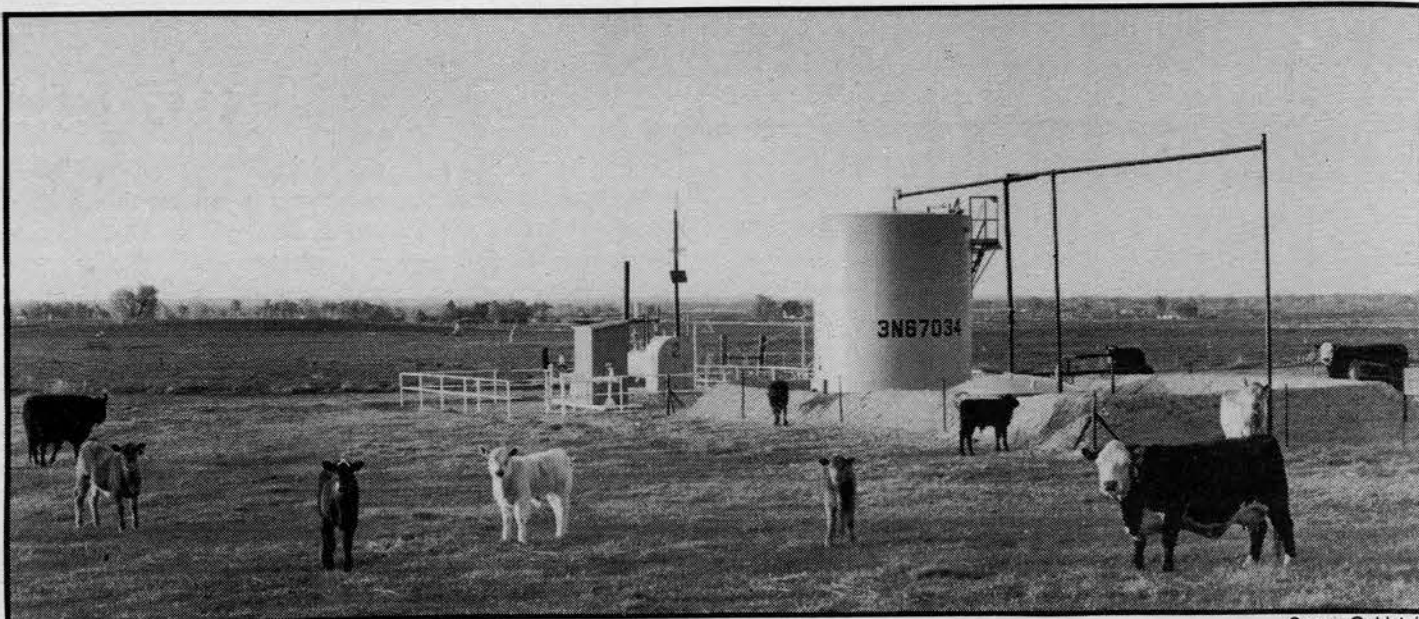
Timber barons are peeking over the horizon to Siberia. Ten mills in Oregon, Washington and California, aided by former Oregon Rep. Les AuCoin, D, want to import logs from the Siberian taiga — the arctic forest — which contains more than half the world's conifers and a quarter of the world's standing trees. "Siberian timber won't replace the volume lost" in the Northwest, says AuCoin. "But it helps." AuCoin is helping the mills negotiate with the Agriculture Department, which imposed a ban on Siberian logs three years ago because they contain pests such as the Asian gypsy moth. On July 20, the department forwarded a proposal that would lift the ban if timber cutters debark the trees and treat them with pesticides and fungicides. But critics, including Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., say that even with treatment there is risk of an epidemic. Of equal concern is Siberia's fragile ecosystem, which is home to the rare Siberian tiger, reindeer, brown bear, sable and salmon. Another concern is that Russia, desperate for economic opportunities, cares little for environmental constraints. "We're talking about self-regulation here," says Lisa Tracy of the Siberian Forest Protection Project in Sausalito, Calif. High transportation costs may be offset by cheap timber: the Siberian Forest Protection Project says the Russian government is willing to sell its trees at one-tenth the going world price.

From rocks to pot

A couple employed by the Bureau of Land Management to maintain an oil shale site in Utah was arrested recently for allegedly growing 2,843 marijuana plants worth several million dollars. Ken and Shirley Hutchings, both 44, had worked for the BLM for seven years at the White River oil shale site near Vernal. The BLM said the couple's job was to preserve the site for future oil shale development.

Is eight enough?

Eight Salmon River sockeye salmon, six males and two females, made the 900-mile migration to their spawning ground at Redfish Lake in Idaho this summer. The migratory sockeye, which returned to the lake by the thousands before dams obstructed their route, are on the brink of extinction (*HCN*, 5/31/93). Last year only one salmon, nicknamed "Lonely Larry," reached the lake. Idaho Fish and Game officials will place this year's eight salmon in spawning pools at the Sawtooth fish hatchery along with those collected in previous years to try to enlarge the species' genetic diversity. The eight salmon were the only returning members of a school of 3,500 released from the hatchery in Redfish Lake in 1991. Says biologist Keith Johnson, "It's still a dismal number."



Susan Goldstein

Oil rigs dot the pastures of Weld County, Colorado

Colorado gets tougher on oil firms

A Colorado commission that both regulates and promotes oil and gas drilling has passed stricter drilling rules for one part of the state and is considering wider reforms.

"I think its time for the commission to catch up with the reality of the '90s," says Ken Salazar, director of the state Department of Natural Resources, which oversees the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission.

The commission tightened standards for about 45 square miles of farmland centered in eastern Colorado's Weld County, where farmers have had little control over oil companies with subsurface rights (*HCN* 6/14/93). As of Sept. 30, oil and gas companies must consult with landowners, give them at least 30 days notice before drilling, minimize damages at drilling sites, and meet standards to reclaim the land.

Some farmers say these reforms fall short. "We find them to be of little use to solve the untold millions of dollars in lost property value and income," says Dennis Hoshiko, secretary of the Front Range Land and Mineral Owners Association. Hoshiko says his 1,200-person group wants compensation and mitigation for all provable damages, a longer notification period and a streamlined mediation policy.

In addition to passing new rules, Salazar convened a task force in September made up of representatives from the oil and gas industry, local and county governments, environmental groups and farming organizations to reform the commission. Salazar asked the 20-member group to expand the composition of the oil and gas commission to include farmers and environmentalists and spell out its regulatory power to protect the environment and property. He also asked them to devise legislation to compensate farmers for property damages from oil and gas drilling.

Hoshiko, who refused to join the task force, says the reforms

are a sham. He also criticizes the selection of task force chairman Jeff Welborn, a Denver attorney who has represented oil and gas operators and served for 10 years as a state oil and gas commissioner.

"We gave up on meaningful regulation of the oil and gas industry through the state government," he says. Last spring Hoshiko's group and other local farmers fought for state legislation to strike more of a balance in land rights. He says the oil and gas industry gutted the bill.

Hoshiko says strengthening the commission will result in a more powerful group that is still dominated by the oil and gas industry. Its regulations are a "paper tiger," he says, which "lead people to believe that the oil and gas industry is being regulated, when it couldn't be farther from the truth."

Some members of the agricultural community disagree. "I think they're making a good faith effort after all these years," says Ray Christensen, who represents the Colorado Farm Bureau on the

task force. "I share (Hoshiko's) frustration with all of this, but there's a time when you should participate and get involved." Christensen says he is worried that the strong presence of oil and gas representatives is drowning out the voices of farmers on the committee.

Meanwhile, Hoshiko's group and other local organizations continue to work on a ballot initiative for 1994. It would amend Colorado's constitution to require oil companies to compensate landowners for property damage and mitigate any damage to the environment.

For more information, contact Dennis Hoshiko, secretary of the Front Range Land and Mineral Owners Association (303/527-8780); Susan McCannon, acting director of the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (303/894-2100); Ken Salazar, director of the Department of Natural Resources (303/866-3311).

— David Frey

David Frey is an *HCN* intern.



Susan Goldstein

Dennis Hoshiko, right, with his father, Paul Hoshiko Jr., grows onions in Weld County, Colorado

Inquiry into activist's death continues

TSAILLE, Ariz. — Beneath one of the 90-foot "grandfather" pines that Navajo environmentalist Leroy Jackson fought so passionately to protect from logging, friends and family gathered last week to bury him, pay tribute and talk of conspiracy.

Jackson was one of the nation's most prominent Native American environmentalists and had led a growing movement to stop rapacious logging operations on the Navajo Reservation. His decomposed body was found Oct. 9 under a heavy blanket inside his locked Dodge van at a roadside turnout on U.S. Hwy. 64, some 80 miles north of Santa Fe near the town of Tierra Amarilla. The 47-year-old activist, who had lived on the reservation with his wife and three children, had told associates of receiving several death threats over the last few years.

State Police Sgt. Joe Mascarenas said blood was found on one of the outer door handles of Jackson's van, but that there were no signs of a robbery or bodily injury to Jackson. Preliminary autopsy results have ruled out stroke, heart attack and carbon monoxide poisoning as causes of death, according to police. The exact cause may not be known until toxicology tests are completed.

New Mexico Congressman Bill Richardson has requested that the FBI investigate Jackson's death, citing his interstate environmental work and the "strong possibility that a major crime was committed."

The case has quickly taken on elements of a Tony Hillerman Navajo murder mystery. Some of Jackson's co-workers in the Navajo environmental movement suggest he was killed by "large business interests," while others pursue clues from a cast including rug dealers, spiritual healers and burned-out hippies. Jackson's wife, Adella Begaye, a nursing supervisor with the Indian Health Service, says she has consulted crystals to learn how her husband died — "Anglos won't understand this," she offers — and does not dismiss the power of Navajo witchcraft to bring about vengeance.

Jackson's death came just a few days before he had planned to fly to Washington to meet with Bureau of Indian Affairs officials to protest continued logging in the Chuska Mountains. Specifically, he opposed the BIA's attempts to exempt reservation logging operations from the restrictions that limit logging in areas that harbor the Mexican spotted owl, a federally designated threatened species.

With unemployment on the West Virginia-size reservation at roughly 35 percent, Jackson's activism not only angered tribal leaders and timber industry officials, but also many of the 400 Navajos who work at a nearby sawmill. In the summer of 1992, at a rally where activists protested a large timber sale, loggers hung Jackson in effigy from their rigs, according to witnesses.

Jackson's environmental awakening began about three years ago, friends say, when he went up into the Chuska Mountains to his family hogan, a place of meditation in the Navajo culture, and saw that

some of the massive ponderosa pines towering above had been marked for cutting. His epiphany came several months later when he returned to the hogan with his wife and saw that logging had left a nearly denuded hillside. He was especially concerned that such operations would endanger sacred mountain springs and Navajo religious sites.

He began investigating the logging practices of the Navajo Forest Products Industry, a tribal-owned logging company,

As he grew more involved, friends say, the mood of the introspective man often fluctuated between vibrant activism and despondency.

"He carried the burdens of the world," said Sam Hitt of Forest Guardians, a Santa Fe-based conservation group. "We talked about it constantly. He was made to be the scapegoat, and it greatly affected him."

"There were times when he acted like he was going to give it (his activism) all up," recalled Taos photographer Richard Spas, a friend of some dozen years. "But he was always able to back off, go to the mountains and get his balance back."

Co-workers say Jackson neither smoked nor drank and frequently ran long distances at high elevation, often to relieve migraine headaches. Dr. David Lang, an internist with the Indian Health Service in Tsaille and Jackson's physician, said Jackson had been prescribed Tylenol III, which contains codeine, and Valium for his migraines, but that at the time of his death his supply of medicine had run out.

"The guy was incredibly healthy," said Lang, who also said no abnormalities were found when Jackson was given a brain imaging scan as part of tests to determine the source of the headaches.

Jackson, who traded in Navajo textiles and antiques throughout the Southwest, was apparently last seen in Taos on Friday, Oct. 1. That morning Richard Spas, the Taos photographer, says he and Jackson went to a local bank, where he wrote Jackson a \$1,200 check for a century-old Navajo weaving. Jackson cashed the check, said goodbye to Spas around 11:45 a.m. and, according to other published reports, went to pay another Taos merchant \$800 for a rug Jackson had received earlier. That is the last reported sighting of Jackson. The remaining \$400 from this transaction closely matches the \$406 police say they found in Jackson's van.

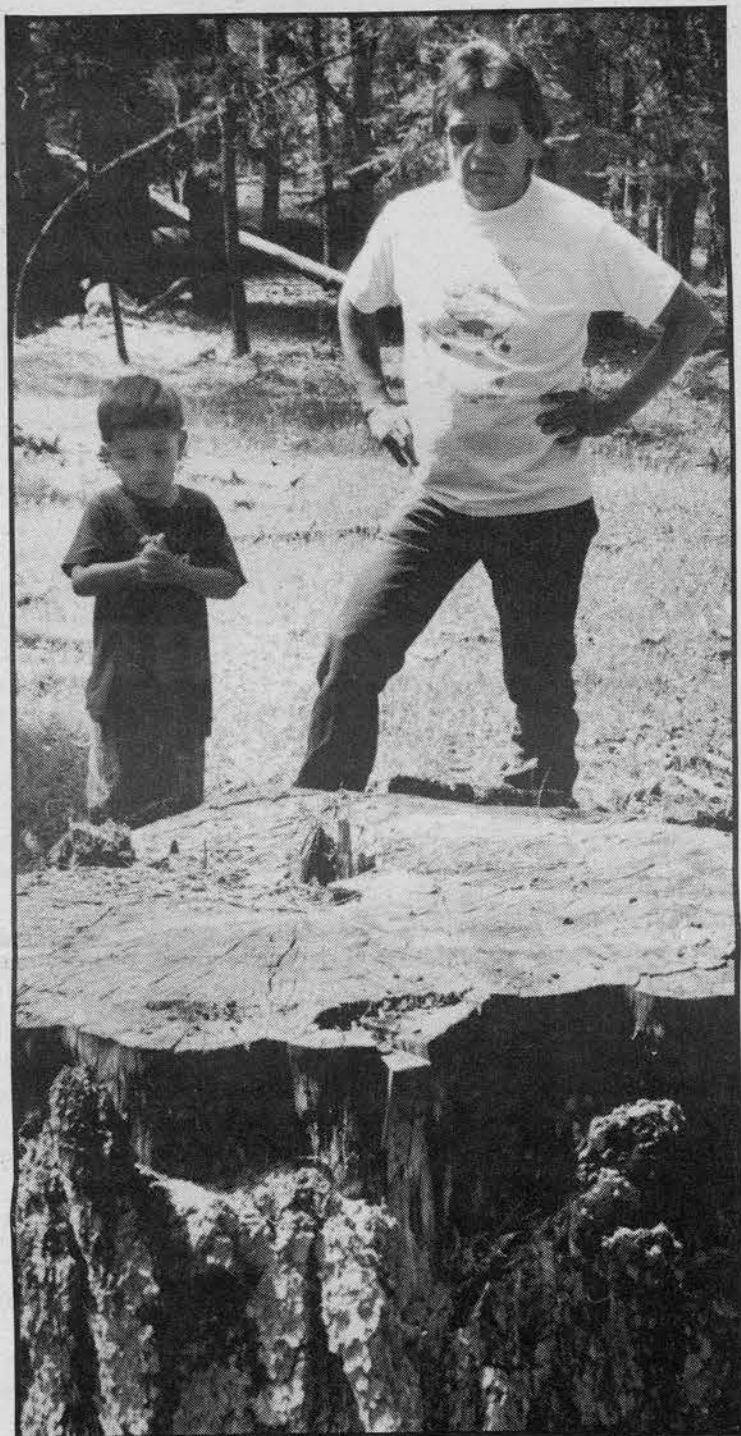
There were unconfirmed reports that police had a witness who said Jackson's van had been parked at the roadside rest stop for several days, yet Lang, who was part of a search team looking for Jackson, said he visually searched the rest stop three days before the van was found and saw no sign of it. Lang and others who say they believe Jackson was murdered believe he was perhaps killed elsewhere and later driven to the rest stop.

At last week's funeral Navajo elders stood quietly alongside Jackson's Anglo friends and young militant Navajos in sunglasses. Through their tears they promised each other to continue his work. Dine CARE member John Redhouse said in his eulogy:

"Leroy sacrificed his life and future to protect this land. I feel he gave us an excellent example of how to live our lives and take our work seriously."

— Bruce Selcraig

The writer lives in Austin, Texas.



Paul Natonabah

In a recent photo, Leroy Jackson and his son, Eli, look over the stump of a 300-year-old yellow ponderosa tree that was cut down about 20 years ago by Navajo Forest Products Industry.

and then in 1990 co-founded a group called Dine (di-NEH) Citizens Against Ruining our Environment. (Dine means "the people," which is how Navajos refer to themselves.)

Developing quickly as a persuasive speaker and organizer, Jackson was generally seen as a moderate who would often urge that some smaller timber sales not be fought in the courts in order to save Navajo jobs and gain leverage for winning bigger battles.

Most recently Jackson and Dine CARE had been fighting to reduce the size of a timber cutting operation called the Tohmitse sale on the eastern flank of the Chuska Mountains, which rise out of the high desert along the upper stretches of the Arizona-New Mexico border. Under pressure from Jackson and others, Navajo Forestry Department officials reduced the amount of timber to be harvested by some 10 million board feet. That reduction has already contributed to the announced layoff of 85 workers at the end of this month, which deeply troubled Jackson.

HOTLINE

China breaks brief nuclear silence

An atomic blast beneath China's western desert Oct. 5 signaled the end of a de facto worldwide moratorium on nuclear weapons testing. It lasted just over one year. The explosion also opened the door for resumption of underground nuclear testing in Nevada. A U.S. moratorium on nuclear testing is contingent on other countries refraining from exploding their bombs. The White House directed the Department of Energy "to take such actions as are needed to put the United States in a position to be able to conduct nuclear tests next year." Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., told the *Reno Gazette-Journal* that he welcomes the opportunity to resume nuclear testing in Nevada. But a spokesman at the Nevada Test Site said that the announcement doesn't go that far. The president directed the Department of Energy to "maintain readiness to resume testing," said Department of Energy staffer Darwin Morgan, "not to start preparations" for a test. The president's goal is still to get a comprehensive test ban, Morgan said. "That would be a highlight of this administration. And he's still working toward that." The president's decision on testing nuclear bombs will depend on progress in worldwide negotiations, according to a White House statement. The administration also must win approval from Congress before exploding a nuclear bomb. A letter circulated by Sen. Mark Hatfield, R-Ore., one of the sponsors of the moratorium law, and signed by 24 senators, urges the administration "not to resume testing" in the wake of China's explosion.

Western politics heat up

More than a year before elections, political races in Idaho and Wyoming are already heating up. In Idaho, a swarm of contenders is vying to replace retiring Gov. Cecil Andrus, D. Idaho state Attorney General Larry EchoHawk, a Native American, recently entered the race for the Democratic nomination to challenge state Sens. John Peavey and Ron Beitelspacher and former state Sen. Mike Burkett. An issue that sets EchoHawk apart is his opposition to abortion. "That may prove to be the fatal flaw of his election," says Mike Medbury of the Idaho Conservation League. Republican candidates include Phil Batt, former state legislator, and Lt. Gov. Larry Eastland, who has worked in the Ford and Reagan administrations. In Wyoming, the decision of Sen. Malcolm Wallop, R, not to seek re-election sent politicians scrambling for bids for governor, senator and representative. Prospective Republican candidates for all three positions include former Defense Secretary Dick Cheney, former Interior Secretary James Watt, and Rep. Craig Thomas. Democratic contenders include Gov. Mike Sullivan and Secretary of State Kathy Karpan.



Battle for Montana wilderness enters its 16th round

The Montana wilderness debate is once again in session.

The state's lone representative in the House, Democrat Pat Williams, introduced a bill earlier in the year that would designate 1.5 million acres as wilderness in Montana. With tongue in cheek, he titled the bill, "Round 16 of the Montana Wilderness Act, 1993."

For 15 years, Montanans watched futilely as bills crafted to protect the state's dwindling roadless areas went down in defeat.

Some environmentalists say the weight of past failures, coupled with a new administration, make this the breakthrough year for a wilderness bill. Others predict that while a bill will likely sail through the House of Representatives, it will stall again in the Senate. There, Montana's two senators, Democrat Max Baucus and Republican Conrad Burns, still wield enough clout to kill or water it down.

Hanging over this year's legislative deliberations is a rift in the environmental community that became acrimonious last year. The Alliance for the Wild Rockies and other groups wanted a bold, 16 million-acre five-state wilderness bill that includes all of Montana's remaining roadless areas. They vehemently opposed a House-passed bill backed by the Montana Wilderness Association, The Wilderness Society, Sierra Club and others. Burns and a handful of Republican senators eventually shot the bill down, but not before communication between the environmental factions degenerated to public name-calling (HCN, 12/14/92).

There are signs that last year's tempers have cooled. The Alliance, which opposes the Williams bill, is not publicly chastising so-called "mainstream" organizations for selling out Montana wilderness to gain political capital with members of Congress. And the mainstream groups, which believe the five-state plan, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act, is unrealistic politically, are commending the scientifically based approach to ecosystem protection embodied in that bill.

But there are indications the emotional debate could bubble up again, perhaps when the Williams bill moves through the House to the Senate, as it is expected to do before the end of the year.

A split in the Montana Sierra Club highlights the tension. A Bozeman faction of the club, the Headwaters Group, has joined the Alliance in a national campaign to push NREPA, even though the state chapter endorsed Rep. Williams' bill. The group is going door-to-door, placing ads condemning the Williams bill in publications like *The New York Times*, writing letters to Congress and sending lobbyists to Washington on donations collected from penny jars.

Earlier this fall, James Conner, acting on behalf of the Sierra Club chapter, said he might seek to oust the Headwaters Group because it has broken ranks.

"I feel as if I'm part of a civil war and shooting at my own countrymen," said Conner, who formally threatened to "discredit" the group. "They have crossed the line. The question is, have they crossed the line from dissent to rebellion?"

The action by Conner placed the national offices of the Sierra Club in a difficult position that will be addressed at a meeting Nov. 19 in San Francisco. So far, the national Sierra Club has remained non-committal on either wilderness plan, though it is supporting the process started by the Williams bill. Until a decision is made, Sierra Club's national president Michele Perrault has tried to keep the

internal split out of the press by ordering Conner and the Headwaters Group to remain silent. Conner recently stepped down as president of the Montana Chapter.

In an interview before the gag order, Brooks Martin of the Headwaters Group criticized the Williams bill. "How can you call a bill that protects only 1.5 million out of 6 million acres a wilderness bill?" he asked. "What Williams does is deliver rocks and ice to environmentalists while releasing 4.5 million acres of trees and prime wildlife habitat to industry."

Not so, responds Larry Mehlhaff of the Sierra Club's Northern Plains Office in Sheridan, Wyo. Although the Williams bill is too small, he says, it does include some low- and mid-level-elevation forests. As for the release language in the bill, which is the biggest bone of contention between environmentalists, he says the critics are "absolutely wrong."

The Williams proposal is really a 2.5 million acre bill, Mehlhaff says, because in addition to the 1.5 million acres of wilderness, it includes 300,000 acres of wilderness study areas and leaves untouched 700,000 acres already designated by Congress as wilderness study areas. He says the current release language in the bill would return the remaining 3 million acres of unprotected lands to multiple-use management by the Forest Service, which is exactly how the agency manages them now.

More troublesome, he admits, is language that deems the Forest Service's existing wilderness recommendations legally sufficient until the plans are overhauled five years from now. Although this prevents citi-

zens from suing the agency over its wilderness recommendations, it does not prevent them from appealing or suing over individual timber sales. But he fears legislators could change the language to read that forest plans, including timber harvest levels, are unchallengeable.

"The Sierra Club believes the days of release language should be over," he says. "Any release is usually just a way for industry to get more."

The Alliance's Steve Kelly says he is glad to hear the mainstream groups talking tough on release language. But he worries that a last-minute political deal will leave his group without its greatest weapons against timber sales: the administrative appeal and the lawsuit. "The closer we get (to marking up the Williams bill), the more nervous we get," he says.

The mistrust between environmentalists over release language is heightened by the stance of Sen. Conrad Burns, R-Mont., who has promised to push for "hard" release language if the bill makes it to the Senate. That would mean all lands not protected as wilderness would be permanently available to industry and motorized recreation.

The state's timber industry, facing possible elimination of below-cost timber sales, tougher enforcement of the Endangered Species Act and a continual barrage of environmental appeals, hopes Burns will help resolve the wilderness debate once-and-for-all.

"The problem with the Williams bill is that it doesn't keep the wilderness battle from occurring again in two, three or five years," says Doug Crandall, a vice president of the American Forest and Paper Association based in Washington, D.C. What the industry wants, he says, is a guarantee that much of the roadless lands will be available for the next 10 years.

For Montana environmentalists, political strategy is the key issue. Most supporters of the Williams bill say wilderness can best be saved incrementally, state-by-state.

"Congress has established a record of not passing legislation if the state's own

The Sierra Club's Larry Mehlhaff says his organization already treats state wilderness bills as national battles. "We went national last year in Montana," he says. "We mailed to our members in other states and did phone banks. But the number one issue is to get support locally to protect a particular area. We'll never outlive a time when 10 guys writing letters out of Butte, Mont., is less important than anything else," he says.

If the Williams bill fails this congressional session, and the wilderness impasse remains in neighboring Idaho, where 9 million acres of national forest roadless areas are still in limbo, some environmentalists say they may have to adopt the multistate tactics of the Alliance.

"Although a multistate approach doesn't work this year, that doesn't mean it won't work in two years," says Craig Gehrke, Idaho state director of The Wilderness Society. "I can't blame people for going outside the delegation for help."

In fact, the groundwork for such a change in approach is already being laid.

Bart Koehler, a staffer with the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, says his group has proposed wilderness designation for 3.6 million acres of national forest lands in the three states surrounding Yellowstone. That proposal, which has not yet been introduced by Congress, meshes well with NREPA, he says, though it seeks somewhat more acreage. Mehlhaff says the Sierra Club is very interested in the proposal.

Koehler, a 20-year wilderness veteran, says he is also working on a larger wilderness proposal for the entire Rocky Mountains, including Forest Service and other federal lands in Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona. He hopes the Big Ten and groups like the Alliance for the Wild Rockies will back this proposal or perhaps an even larger national bill.

"I think we're not trying big enough," he says. "We need a bill that will captivate the imagination and support of the national groups. That would change political reality."

Whether the Alliance and the mainstream groups could ever agree on a multi-state bill is unclear. When Steve Kelly received a copy last January of a memo from Koehler outlining his plans, he told the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*, "Duplication in a business that has limited resources is not productive. Let's respond to what exists rather than going back and re-inventing the wheel."

Kelly says he has yet to see a real proposal from Koehler, and that the national groups would do better to improve NREPA.

"NREPA is not a bad idea. All we need is more horsepower," he says. "But if the major horses are still in the barn talking, how's that helping the land?"

While the battle over tactics rages, roads continue to be cut into Montana's remaining roadless areas. Larry Mehlhaff says over 1 million acres of potential wilderness have been lost over the last decade, primarily to road-building for logging. The Forest Service plans on roading another million acres in the decade to come, he says.

As the Williams bill heads toward its first markup in the House Natural Resources Committee, many environmentalists hope that this year's battle won't leave as many bruises as last.

"Wilderness and religion are a lot alike," says Bart Koehler. "There's a lot of disagreement among the true believers on how to get to heaven."

— Paul Larmer, HCN assistant editor



James Conner

Clearcuts in Montana

senators and congressmen are against the bill," says Michael Scott, Northern Rockies representative of The Wilderness Society. "That is the case with NREPA."

But NREPA supporters say a national strategy is the only way around the region's wilderness impasse. "Our politicians have the worst environmental voting records in the country," says the Alliance's Steve Kelly. "We don't have the power to overcome the politics. We're a third-world nation where politicians look at the forests as a resource supply for multinational corporations. If we're going to move beyond that, we need to make a case that protecting these lands is in the national interest."

The national strategy is beginning to pay some dividends. Despite the loss of the bill's chief sponsor, Peter Kostmayer, D-Pa., to last year's election, NREPA has garnered the support of 34 members of the House and some notable citizens, including former President Jimmy Carter, consumer advocate Ralph Nader and former Sierra Club leader David Brower.

Brower, 81, is particularly outspoken in support of the bill, chastising the Sierra Club for seeking to silence the members of the Headwaters Group who support the plan. He says the tone of the wilderness debate would be transformed overnight if each of the so-called Gang of Ten — the largest conservation groups in the country, including the Sierra Club — dispatched a mailing to millions of their members asking them to support NREPA.

Study says Elwha River is reclaimable

The once-mighty salmon runs of the Olympic Peninsula's largest river system can be coaxed back to life only if two dams are removed, according to a Department of Interior study released Sept. 30.

The *Elwha Study* is the first step in Congress' 1992 bill authorizing the secretary of Interior to acquire and remove the two small hydroelectric dams on the Elwha River near Port Angeles, Wash., in order to restore the salmon fisheries.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt has extolled the Elwha River as "an enormous opportunity" for what would be a precedent-setting effort to bring back legendary fish runs choked off six decades ago.

The Elwha is pristine for miles as it flows out of the heart of the 916,000-acre Olympic National Park. Because of the downstream Elwha and Glines Canyon dams, however, only 4.9 miles of river are available for salmon spawning. If the dams are taken out, according to the Interior study, more than 70 miles of spawning and rearing habitat will reopen for native salmon.

The report says it would be technically feasible and relatively cheap at \$66 million to \$80 million to remove the Elwha River dams. Other costs, such as buying out the Daishowa America Corp., which owns the dams, protecting Port Angeles' water supply from sediments released when the dams are removed, and restoring the river corridor would push the price to \$154 million to \$209 million over 20 years.

Removal would add more economic benefits than just fish and tourism. A sand spit that protects Port Angeles harbor is rapidly eroding into the sea. Interior says the spit, Ediz Hook, would be replenished by a free-flowing Elwha River.

The 210-foot-high Glines Canyon Dam and smaller Elwha Dam were built without fish ladders. Construction on the downstream Elwha Dam started in 1910, and by the time Glines Canyon was finished in 1927, salmon runs had dropped 75 percent.

Although the dams were built in violation of a Washington law that required

The report says it would be technically feasible and relatively cheap to remove the Elwha River dams.

fish ladders, the state never enforced the law. It later relinquished all claims in exchange for funding of a fish hatchery.

The hatchery went out of business within five years.

Biologists estimate that the Elwha could again produce 250,000 harvestable salmon, and that runs would help revive populations of at least 22 other bird and animal species that feed off salmon carcasses.

That prospect has fisheries experts excited. "The salmon native to the Elwha were exceptionally big," said Bruce Brown, whose book *Mountain in the Clouds* chronicled the destruction of the Elwha salmon.

The Park Service and National Marine Fisheries Service say re-establishment of unimpeded fish passage to the

middle and upper Elwha in Olympic National Park would take time, but result in full recovery of all stocks of chinook salmon, which could again reach sizes up to 100 pounds.

The *Wall Street Journal*, however, editorially attacked the project as "enviropork" and conservative Idaho Sen. Larry Craig, R, derides the dams' removal as outrageously expensive.

The Northwest Power Planning Council reports that loss of the two dams' 18.5 megawatts of power would have little effect on regional electricity supplies. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission says that replacing the lost power from the dams with alternative sources would be no more costly than relicensing the dams and refitting them with fish ladders.

A crucial decision is expected later this year when Babbitt either includes or fails to include money to begin removal of the dams in Interior's budget for the 1995 fiscal year.

"If this project is in the president's budget next year, it has a fighting chance," Rep. Norm Dicks, D-Wash., said. "If it's not it doesn't have a prayer." Dicks, a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee, added that the project "would create a substantial number of jobs."

Interior Secretary Babbitt will submit a final draft to Congress by Jan. 31, 1994. Copies of *The Elwha Study* are available from Brian Winter, Olympic National Park, 600 E. Park Ave., Port Angeles, WA 98362 (206/452-4501). The deadline for public comment is Nov. 8.

— Joel Connelly

Joel Connelly writes for the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.

1872 Mining Law comes calling on Sun Valley

KETCHUM, Idaho — "This is a high-profile example of what is happening all over the West," says Mike Medberry, staffer with the Idaho Conservation League. The example is BioMyne Inc., a California-based minerals exploration firm that has been exploring an area just outside the resort towns of Ketchum and Sun Valley for four years. If enough gold is found and an open-pit mine opens, it would be a striking contrast to the alpine views skiers enjoy at Sun Valley, one of the oldest ski areas in the West.

Company officials have yet to say they've hit the big strike, but drills probe 1,500 feet into the mountainside seven days a week.

Medberry says he expects a strong fight if a mining operation is proposed. "They (BioMyne officials) have got to know now that this community would come ... unglued," agrees the Forest Service's Alan Pinkerton. "That's simply an observation based on comments received to this point."

Pinkerton is Ketchum district ranger for the Sawtooth National Forest. He administers both Sun Valley Co.'s ski permit on Bald Mountain and BioMyne's mining activity.

It is Pinkerton's job to see that both interests get to use Forest Service land and resources.

"Mining activity is a right as identified by the 1872 Mining Act," Pinkerton says. "Sun Valley's operation on Bald Mountain is a privilege, not a right. If I were to say 'no mining,' I'd be in conflict with the forest plan and the 1872 Mining Act. Basically, I'd go down in flames."

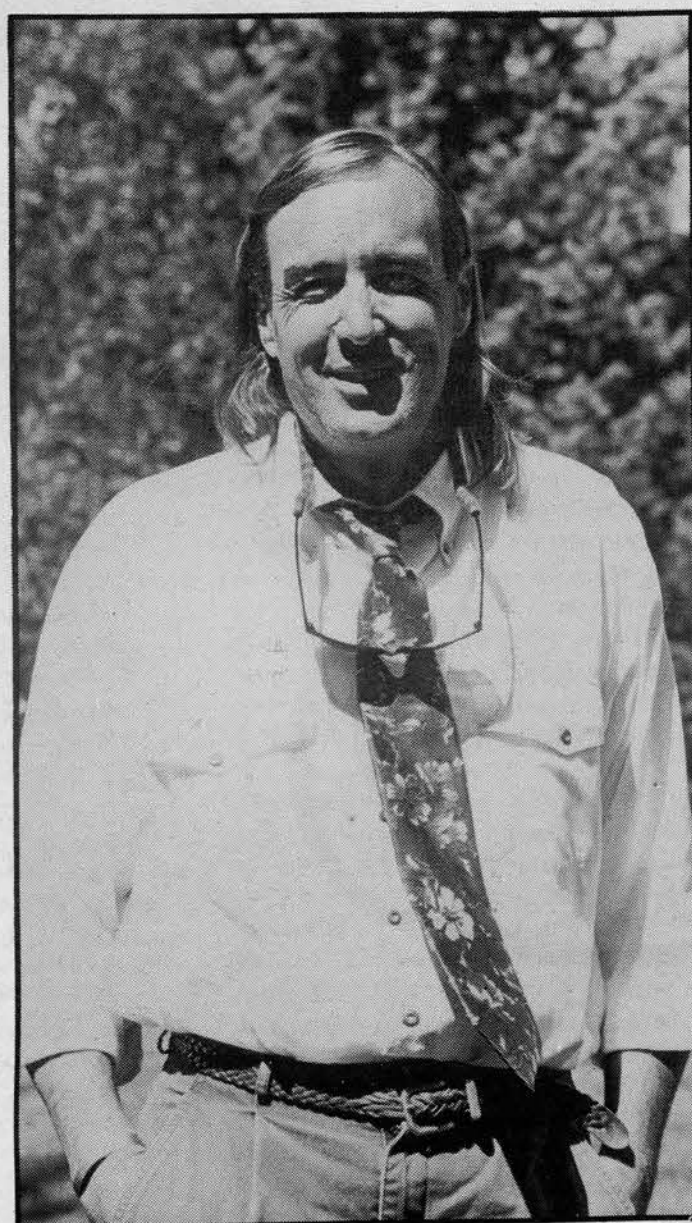
But that is not to say that Pinkerton doesn't have an opinion on the matter.

"I don't think that we as a society are aware of the long-term ramifications of a producing gold mine," he says. "These are things that this community needs to be thinking about, that society needs to be thinking about."

For more information on BioMyne's current and future plans in the Sun Valley area, contact the Sawtooth National Forest, 2647 Kimberly Road East, Twin Falls, ID 83301 (208/737-3200).

— Dan Egan

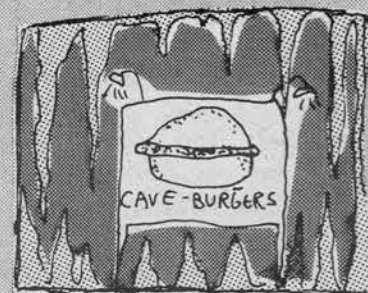
Dan Egan reports for the *Mountain Express* weekly in Ketchum.



Ketchum District Ranger Alan Pinkerton

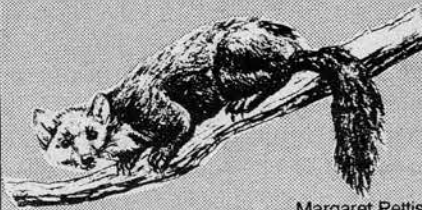
William Cook

HOTLINE



Subterranean snacks no more?

Visitors to Carlsbad Caverns in Carlsbad, N.M., may no longer experience the novelty of eating a burger and fries 750 feet underground. The National Park Service says the cafeteria is neither needed nor appropriate, and wants to remove it. Carlsbad Mayor Bob Forrest says deep dining is an attraction that should stay. "There's no reason to take it out, other than some guy in Santa Fe who dreams up these screwball ideas," Forrest says. When the cafeteria was built 60 years ago, tours of the caverns took several hours. But with above-ground food now just a 57-second elevator ride away, the agency says the cafeteria should give way to interpretive displays. The National Parks and Conservation Association agrees. In a letter to the *Albuquerque Journal*, NPCA staffer David Stone asks, "Where else in the national park system is there a concession smack in the middle of a three-mile hike through the prime park resource?" The controversy has sparked the interest of New Mexico's senators, both of whom oppose closing the cafeteria. Park Superintendent Frank Deckert concedes political pressure could force the agency to strike a compromise — like downsizing the cafeteria to a juice and snack bar.



Margaret Pettis

Pine marten loses protection

A decision to open the counties of Duchesne and Summit in northeastern Utah to unlimited pine marten trapping has drawn protests from environmentalists. A member of the weasel family, the pine marten lives in old-growth forests and is considered an indicator of their health. Because so much of its habitat has been clearcut, the state imposed a moratorium on trapping three years ago and began studying the animal. According to Gary Macfarlane, conservation director of the Utah Wilderness Association, the study found a 50 percent reduction in the marten's population density over the last 40 years. He says that means trapping should be banned since pine martens are already stressed by logging. However, Utah wildlife agent Steve Cranney says trapping isn't a problem. "In the two seasons before the moratorium no pine marten were taken, and in the years before that, no more than 15," he says. Responds Macfarlane, "Just because we can kill a few doesn't mean we have to. There should be some species out there that we're not trapping."

The Blue

LAST TRAFFIC LIGHT

He takes me climbing on steadfast granite up
the Ophir Wall. On the way home he tells me,
Never live anywhere that isn't beautiful.

Jeri McAndrews
Crestone, Colorado

CHILKOOT

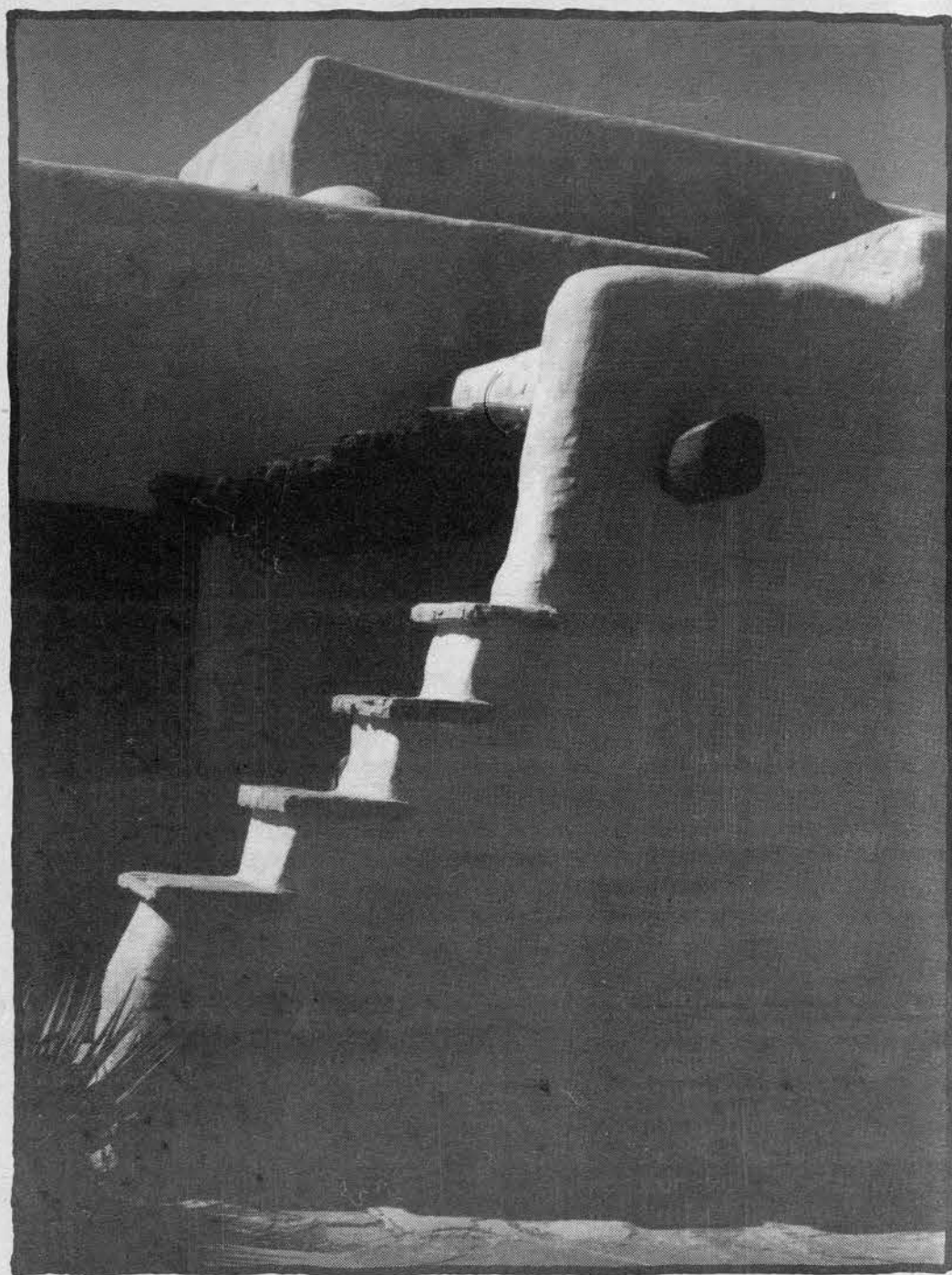
In these woods
if you shout *I'm lost*
the echo returns
through mammoth spruce
like a friend
trying to find you.

Salmonberries glow
yellow, orange
or soft red
depending on time of day
and just where
light meets them.

Miles from the historic pass
rest miners' cabins
not on any map,
Through crickety doors
and unlatched windows

the sun and rain,
kept out for years,
have gotten in
and swept the boards clean.

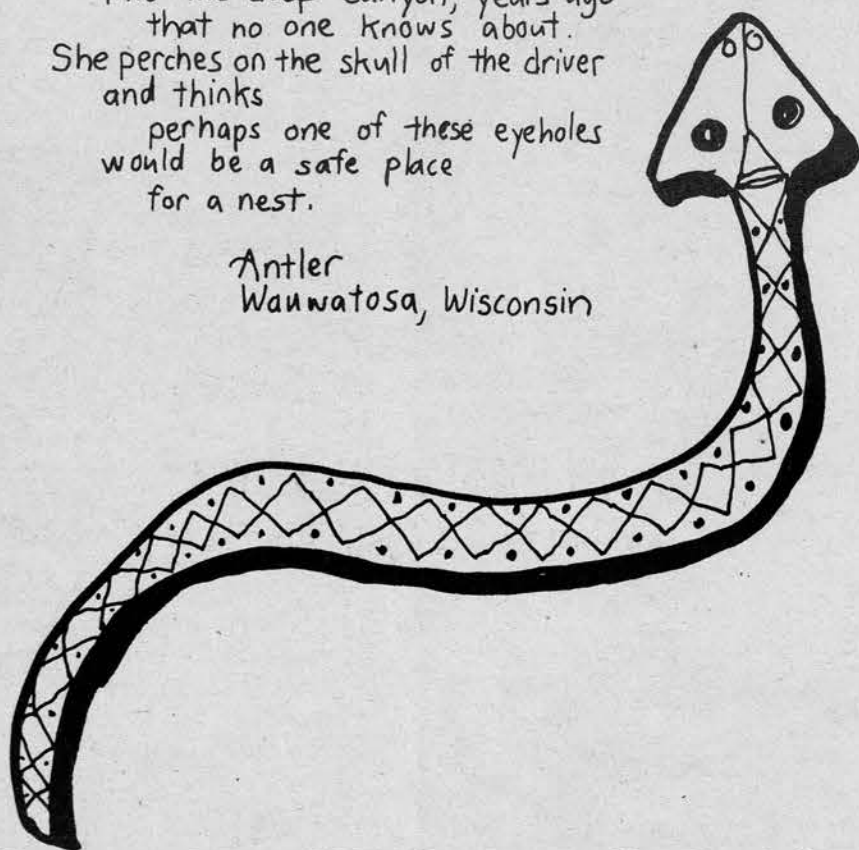
Scott Starbuck
Depoe Bay, Oregon



MOTHER HUMMINGBIRD THOUGHT

The hummingbird hovers momentarily
in the rusty hulk of a car
that plunged off the highway
into the deep canyon, years ago
that no one knows about.
She perches on the skull of the driver
and thinks
perhaps one of these eyeholes
would be a safe place
for a nest.

Antler
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin



WILDERNESS CREEK

The day I walked the creek,
the wind was whispering fertility,
a taffeta-skirt sound, sensuous along the roots,
a rasping voice in grass and weeds,
almost words, but none I understood.

Archaeology mires down in this landscape,
yields no Pompeii: all bone splinters
are recent and honed by violence.
Clues hang like feathers snagged on bushes,
or lurk in calligraphies of mud
where webfooted plunderers plow the creek with teeth.

I discovered inhabitants thriving
in this world of the sixth sense, having nothing
but the moment, treating it like eternity,
using water like wild crystal
with no past.

Pondering a hank of rabbit fur
a coyote left for the wind,
I wondered if old age and madness
are infections. It is too late for me.
I have been exposed to both.

Joanna Sampson
Boulder, Colorado

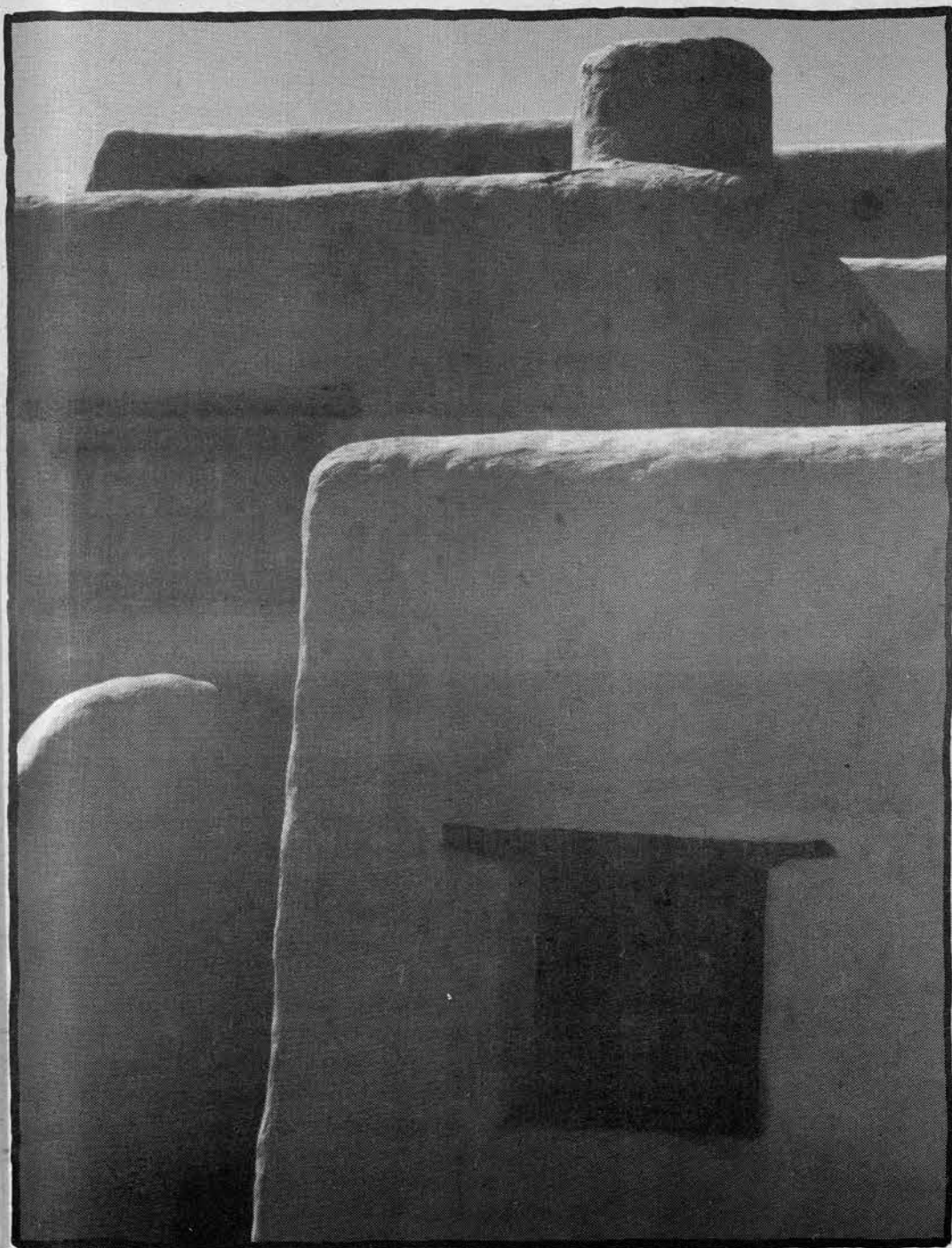
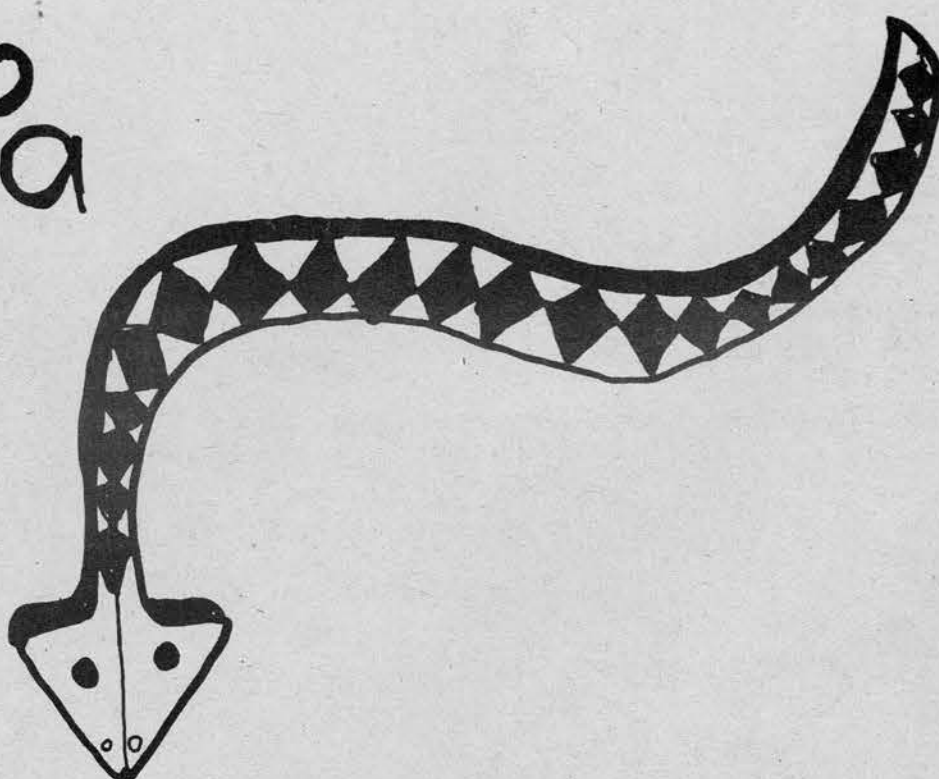
Margarita

STARVATION

you throw your skin
across the back of the chair,
take your place amongst the dying,
as you watch her reach for the coffee,
petroglyphs in smoke,
tomorrow's money

already spent.

Charlie Mehrhoff
Boulder, Colorado



THE BLUE MARGARITA

We sat at a circular table with an umbrella
In the spring wind, on the roof of La Fonda
And you ordered a blue margarita.

I didn't know how Willa Cather and the Archbishop
Would feel about that, what with the squat, square
Stone towers of the cathedral staring right over
Our shoulders, so to speak.

But, turning to look at wall upon wall
Of ersatz adobe, and gallery upon gallery
From here to Taos, of erotic, electric, acrylic
Howling coyotes,

Seeing the soul of Santa Fe spread on a blanket
For sale by a blank-eyed Navajo, swathed
In turquoise and a velvet dress,
Under the portico of the Palace of the Governors,

I knew you were right, and ordered
A blue margarita, too.

Jim Ruch
Flagstaff, Arizona

SONG OF TELLURIDE

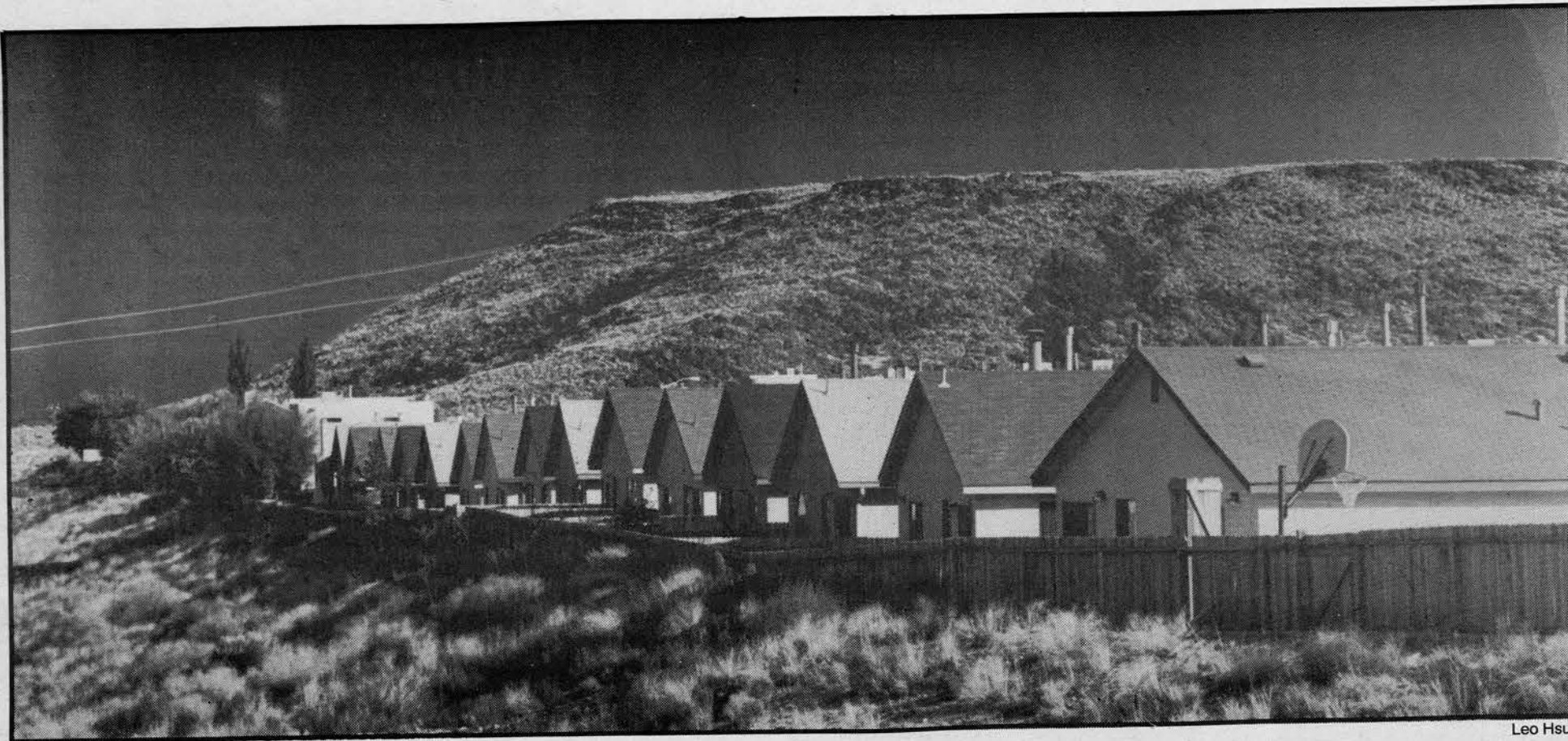
Cows and condos,
Airports, bongos,
How can we have it all?
This is a maybe-we-can't chant.

Jeri McAndrews
Crestone, Colorado

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"Last Traffic Light" and
"Song of Telluride" are from
"The Museum of Outside Art,"
Unicorn Press, 1990.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
DALE SCHICKETANZ



Leo Hsu

A subdivision called Sante Fe Village lies south of Petroglyph National Monument

Sunbelt confrontation ...

continued from page 1

barons, the ranch still runs about 250 cows on 6,700 acres of Indian rice grass and saltbush. But its owners dream of turning it into a suburb.

This would be one of many self-sufficient, planned communities west of the monument's five volcanoes. They would be places where bicycle trails would be on equal footing with cars and where large tracts of open space would lie cheek by jowl with homes and office parks. The Paseo del Norte road would make this dream possible by running along the ranch's southern boundary and offering an easy link to the city.

Still farther out, 17 miles west of the city limits, lies the Rio Puerco Valley, where developers have talked of building another swath of suburbs on what is now grassland.

In the past 30 years, a series of economic booms has doubled Albuquerque's metropolitan population. With the real estate bust of the savings and loan era slowly fading, and with computer-chip giant Intel Corp. adding 1,000 employees to its plant in neighboring Rio Rancho, houses now sell faster than they can be built.

Local planners predict another 200,000 people will be living in the Albuquerque area by 2015.

The city's dreams of moving west

depend in part on building a road that Lauriano, his fellow Sandians, the National Park Service and environmentalists around the country contend would be a disaster.

But the road's supporters don't see a problem. They say it would, at most,

His companion that day, activist Ike Eastvold, president of Friends of the Albuquerque Petroglyphs, compared the petroglyph area to a diamond set on black velvet.

"If you put in the road, rip out the velvet setting, you take away the beau-

During public hearings, the planning commissioners tossed softball questions at road supporters, but grilled opponents.



wipe out only a handful of rocks containing petroglyphs.



For Lauriano and the Indians, this place is more than a monument. It's a temple rooted in long use. Lauriano said he and his great-grandfather found prayer sticks and feathers when they drove to the area in a Model T Ford.

"This is where we have the nerve center of Pueblo culture, religion and tradition," Lauriano said. "The petroglyphs and our religion go together. When they start bulldozing over them or near them, they emasculate our religion, like cutting the testicles off a bull."

ty," Eastvold said. "It's like taking a stained glass window out of a church and putting it in a garage." But the Albuquerque city council does not see the same clash of values. Three years ago, it had supported creation of the monument. In June of this year, it voted 5-4 to build Paseo through the monument.

A few months earlier, the city's planning commission — two architects, an engineer, four real estate and construction officials, a retired IBM executive and a neighborhood activist — had recommended the road unanimously after 17 hours of testimony.

Five hearings had been held about the road, each testier than the one before.

At one, Sandia Pueblo members warned that only the undisturbed petroglyphs ward off natural forces of evil such as tornadoes. At another, 300 residents of neighboring suburb Paradise Hills rode buses to city hall to plead that the route go through the monument and not their community.

At the last hearing, before the city council, Native Americans in the audience displayed four flags, colored black, yellow, white and blue, to represent the Navajos four directions of the universe. Spectators wore T-shirts saying "Bikes, not cars" and "The brown cloud is choking us." After the vote, an angry road opponent walked up to a road supporter on the city council

and gave him the finger.

Now the fight has become a game of chicken. The city's attorneys have told the council that workers can't legally turn a spadeful of dirt for a freeway without the Park Service's or congressional approval. The American Indian Religious Freedom Coalition and two national environmental groups have put the monument on their lists of most endangered places.

The city council's June motion supporting Paseo said the road construction wouldn't start until all "credible legal barriers" were overcome, and there appear to be plenty.

In early August, National Park Service director Roger Kennedy wrote New Mexico Sen. Pete Domenici that he saw no prospect of the Park Service approving the road. Domenici, R, normally pro-development, has warned that it will be difficult to persuade Congress to approve a road through a national park.

Albuquerque, however, shows little sign of backing off. From the start, city officials made it clear that Paseo del Norte was their choice. During public hearings, the planning commissioners tossed softball questions at road supporters, but grilled opponents. The city's environmental impact statement on the project took only a cursory look at an alternative route that the Park Service proposes to run two miles north of Paseo. The statement concluded that the route would cost a fortune and cause big environmental problems. The city did more studies later, but the Park Service contends they are also inadequate.

Recently, the city government killed any hope of building that alternative by allowing homebuilders to clear land for new subdivisions in the route's path. In early September, the bulldozers were out in force in that area. Once the home foundations go in, that route is "pretty well shot," said Stephen Whitesell, the monument's superintendent.

City council members who support Paseo say that the route was on their street plans before anyone talked seriously of creating a national monument. They say Congress intended for the monument to become an urban park, complete with traffic and noise, although the law authorizing the monument never used that phrase. The councilors also



Leo Hsu

Real estate development continues near the monument

said they have chosen the cheapest, most direct route, since the Park Service alternative would cost \$12 million to \$40 million more.

"I'm not against the Indians or the park, I think they can all accommodate each other," said Councilor Ruth Adams, a road supporter. "Whether we like sprawl or we don't like sprawl, people are already over there, and they need some place to drive."

"If we didn't want Albuquerque to grow, we should have stopped it a long time ago. Like it or not, our city will grow all the way to the Rio Puerco," said Councilor Alan Armijo, who represents the west side area the road would serve.

Controversy is hardly new. Petroglyph National Monument survived seven years of debate and debates. In February 1986, shortly after archaeologists had walked the length of the escarpment and counted 15,000 to 17,000 petroglyphs, petroglyph-lovers were ready to nominate the site for the National Register of Historic Places. Then a city public works crew drilling a water line undermined an 80-foot-wide escarpment and caused a cave-in.

In the years following, environmentalists, developers, city officials, Indians and Hispanics fought over every detail of how the monument would work, even after Congress passed a bill creating the monument in 1990.

There were disputes over whether to build a resort hotel within the monument and a rock-pop music amphitheater outside it. Both efforts lost, but a push to build a four-lane road alongside the monument won, despite an environmental lawsuit. In another fight, a developer, frustrated that the city wouldn't approve his project amidst the rocks, picked up one of the boulders with a crane and hauled it to city hall in protest.

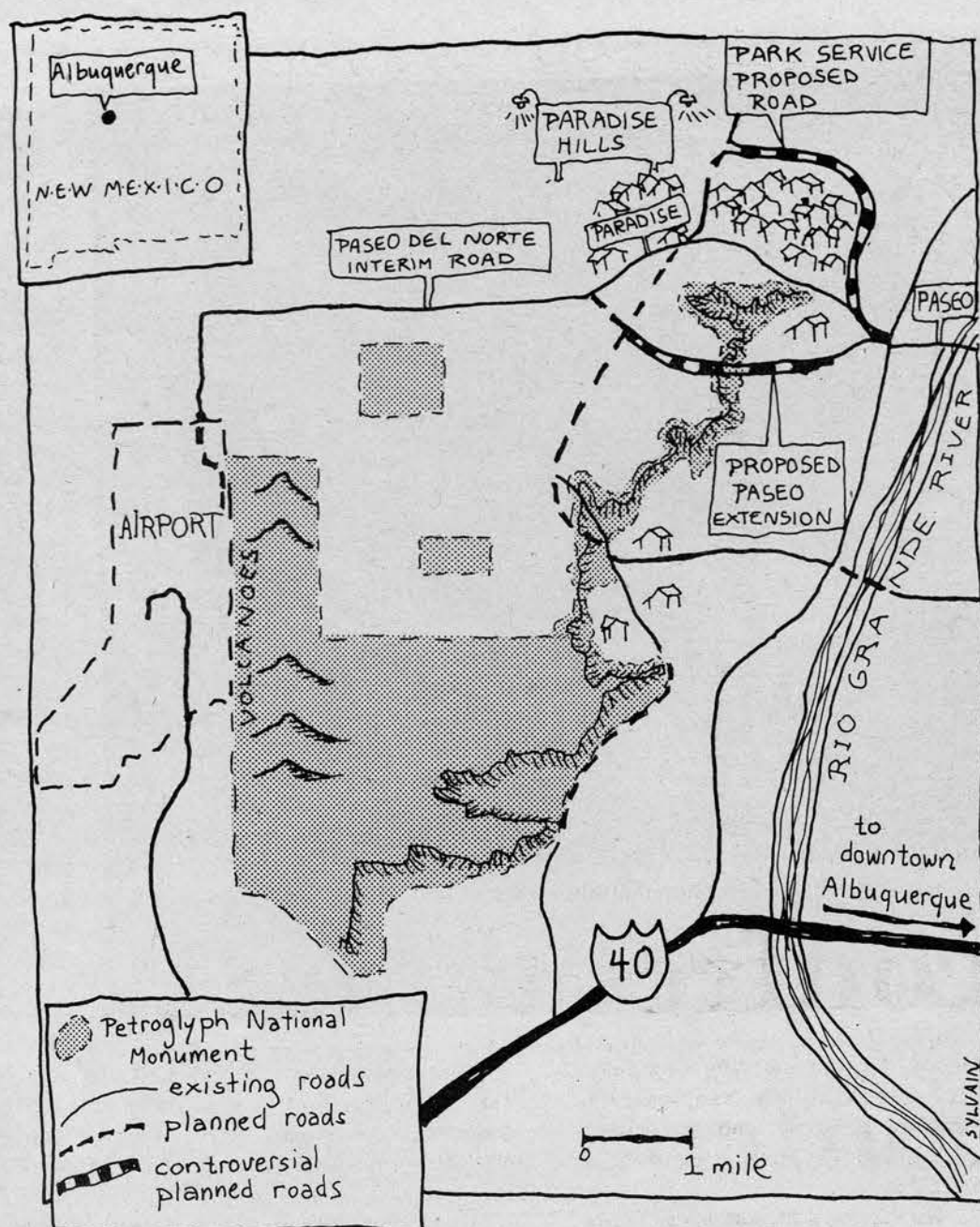
In 1991, the city started pushing to turn a small airport just west of the monument into a major hub for commercial and recreational airplanes. Environmentalists and Indians objected that the planes would disrupt the serenity of the monument. That fight isn't over. Neither is another over whether the Park Service's management plan for the monument should allow yet another road, add hiking and horse trails for tourists, or leave the area as undeveloped as possible.

Ironically, the effort to save the petroglyphs has taken on the mantle of motherhood and apple pie. Developers and bankers benefited because the monument raised neighboring property values, and city and federal officials poured nearly \$10 million into their pocketbooks to acquire private land during a real estate depression. Tourism interests were happy because the monument was expected to draw 200,000 to 400,000 visitors a year once a visitors' center opened.

A 1992 Albuquerque Journal poll found that 63 percent of respondents agreed that the rocks should be protected "without exception." A local subdivision advertised itself as lying in the "Petroglyph Foothills." And the newest school to rise on the city's west side calls itself Petroglyph Elementary.



Thanks to the Paseo road fight, consensus has turned to dust. Road supporters and opponents have refused to shake hands in public.



"You have one side saying protect the petroglyphs, the other side saying, this is the American dream, and kids need homes and jobs," Councilor Armijo said. "Where are the new homes? On the west side, near the rocks."

The fight has a tangled history.

"The environmentalists weren't concerned about the impact on the community," charged a Paradise Hills neighborhood leader.



Paseo through the escarpment first appeared on the city's long-range street plans in 1981. In 1989, the city council passed a resolution that implied support of the road, and the Park Service and environmental groups endorsed it. The road appeared on a boundary map that Congress approved for the monument in 1990.

By 1991 and 1992, opposition began to surface just as the city's plans for the road firmed up. Critics were appalled by the 189-foot-wide cut the road would create on its 2,000-foot-long ramped path across the monument.

The situation came to a head in spring 1992, when the city's environmental impact statement said the alternative to Paseo would be to widen a two-lane road to six lanes through the suburb of Paradise Hills. That would wipe out dozens of homes in an area that people had moved to in hopes of escaping urban pressures. Residents of the upper-middle-class suburb, where huge pitched-roof houses alternate with flat-roofed, pueblo-style houses, said their homes must not be touched.

Painting the issue as people versus rocks, hundreds of residents supported a monument road and blasted environmentalists at hearings. Environmentalists charged that the city had stage-managed the affair to make Paseo seem more palatable. They had asked the city to

study the Paradise Hills road, but as a four-lane, rather than six-lane, route.

"They didn't need six lanes on that road for the next 25 years," environmentalist Ike Eastvold said. "A four-lane design, if done sensitively, could have been an asset to Paradise Hills."

Residents weren't mollified, even though the Park Service proposed an alternative route looping north of Paradise Hills and the petroglyphs and eventually cutting west toward the volcanoes.

"They suggested that route only as an afterthought. They didn't really care

about us," said Ben Gutierrez, a Paradise Hills neighborhood leader whose house would sit across the street from the proposed six-lane road. "The environmentalists weren't concerned about the impact on the community. They were only concerned if people from New York City who moved here in the year 2000 thought the freeway disturbed the ambience of the park."

By 1993 the public had turned against the Paseo road. Local newspaper polls found that up to 63 percent were opposed. The 11 mayoral candidates in this fall's city election split almost evenly on the issue.

"We go around with our heads stuck in the sand," said Doug Reynolds, a veteran developer who is involved with several projects that would benefit from the Paseo route. "We let environmentalists rule our lives."

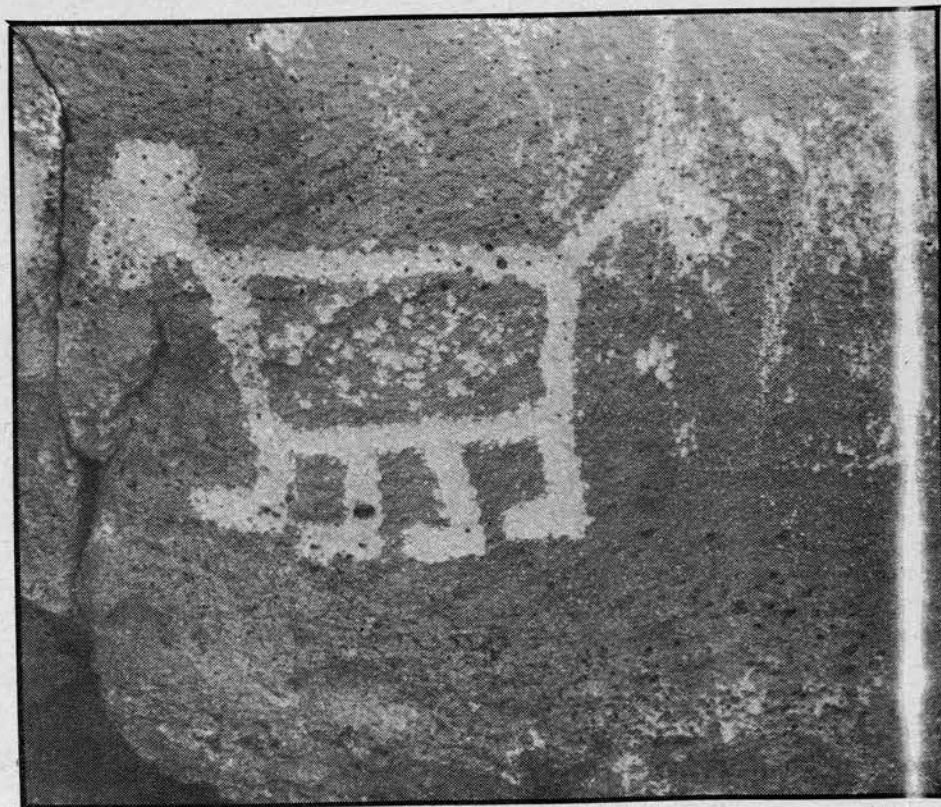
For developers and other road supporters, Eastvold, a man of religious intensity about the petroglyphs, is the villain. Balding, bearded, dedicated and at times prickly, the 52-year-old Eastvold is the quintessential activist. He works eight-to-10 hours a day and up to seven days a week for his cause. About 500 households pay dues to his group. But Eastvold finds himself shouldering much of the lobbying grunt work, including endless phone calls and office visits to city and federal bureaucrats. He lives solely on his family's savings and his wife's income as an elementary school speech therapist.

He came to Albuquerque from the Riverside, Calif., area eight years ago. Within months, he had visited and photographed the petroglyphs and thrown himself head-first into the battle to save them. Without him in the fight, it was clear to every bureaucrat and congressional aide involved in the issue that the petroglyphs would have been plowed under years ago. But these days, Eastvold finds himself accused of bad faith and broken promises.

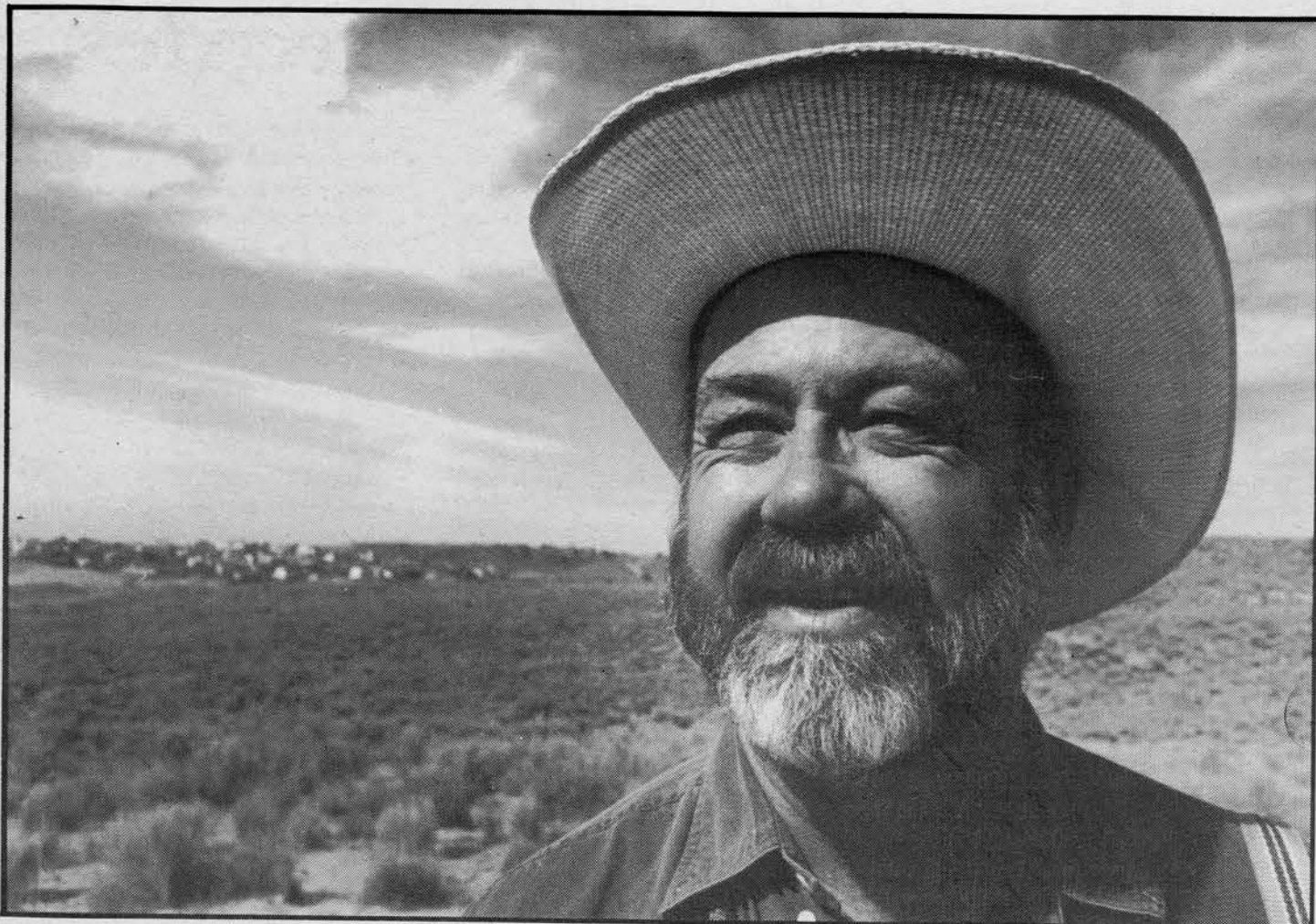
In 1987, he walked the Paseo route with officials of a big development firm. The developers said he signed off on plans to run the road through the rocks. In 1990, Eastvold promised Paradise Hills residents in writing that he would support Paseo, and work for "the highest standards of design review and environmental mitigation possible." Now, in 1993, the activist has become a vanguard for the opposition.

"The Friends of the Petroglyphs

continued on next page



Lee Hsu



Ike Eastvold of Friends of the Albuquerque Petroglyphs stands near a subdivision that extends to the West Mesa Escarpment. Leo Hsu

Sunbelt confrontation ...

continued from previous page

decided to change the equation to suit themselves," said Lawrence Weaver, a board member of the Paradise Hills Civic Association.

The Indians, too, draw their share of barbs. Road supporters say they've lived in the area for years, yet have never seen Indians praying in or near the monument.

"If the truth were known, I'll wager the greater percent of them don't know or care where (the petroglyphs) are," said Charles Hoffman, in a letter to city hall.

Another letter-writer, Clarence Owens of Paradise Hills, wrote, "Now, all of a sudden this land becomes 'sacred ground.' I ask myself, 'Could it be a question of money? Is this what they see the chance of getting?'"

Last summer, as Eastvold and Lauriano trudged through the petroglyphs, the two men shook their heads and sighed when they spoke of their adver-

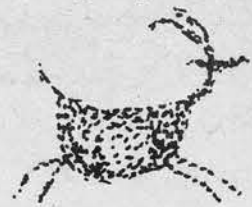
saries. They don't understand, Lauriano said, that nobody has seen Indians pray in the monument because the Indians don't want to be seen.

Since Spanish conquistadors roamed through what is now New Mexico in the 16th century, using whips to force Indians into Catholic churches, Pueblo leaders say they've taken their religion

to the petroglyph."

Eastvold sees this fight as a cultural clash, pitting the dominant Anglo culture that worships growth for growth's sake against the Pueblos' traditional spirituality.

"Things haven't changed a lot in New Mexico since the 16th century," Eastvold said. "Today, you have the



Pueblo leaders say they've taken their religion underground.

underground. They pray in secret and tell no one where or when they pray.

"You're not going to see great numbers of our people up there," said Malcolm Montoya, the Sandia pueblo's governor. "It was the same situation with the Ten Commandments. Only one guy went up there on the mountain to get that thing. Now, only one guy goes out there

descendants of conquistadors wearing three-piece suits."

As for his change of heart on the road, Eastvold says his adversaries don't understand that either. He said he had no choice but to acquiesce in the petroglyph route at the start because nobody was offering an alternative. Now the Park Service's alternative route is in the picture. So are the Pueblos, who stayed silent on the project until this decade.

The turning point for Eastvold, he said, came when he toured the Paseo site in 1991, with two groups of Indians. The first time, an 85-year-old Pueblo woman sprinted up the cliffs to a petroglyph, then sat quietly, raised her arms and proclaimed, "What a beautiful place this is." On the second visit, as a rock wren sang, the Pueblo people threw out corn meal as an offering. Then, they started breath prayers, in which Indians inhale and exhale as they pray through their hands.

"I saw the living root of their spiritual connection with this land," Eastvold said. "I was humbled to be there with them."

Paradise Hills residents were skeptical of Eastvold's story, because the Puebloans have said over and over that nobody sees them pray. If what Eastvold says is true, "I'd compare it to blasphemy," Paradise Hills' Gutierrez said.

But Christine Otero, a Pueblo educational official, verified Eastvold's

account. The prayers the Puebloans do in secret are far more complex than what they performed in front of the activist, she said.

"It's really hard to get non-Indians to understand the significance of this area to us," Otero said. "At public hearings, we hear people say, why can't you move the rocks? If you wanted to build a six-lane road in Rome, would you move the Vatican?"



So far, every effort at compromise has failed and the polarization intensifies by the week. For a while, the city's push to build the road was seemingly stifled by its own legal opinion saying it needed outside approval. But recently that opinion has changed.

In late September, Mayor Louis Saavedra wrote the Park Service, threatening to sue if it didn't back down on its opposition. Saavedra wrote that the agency and environmentalists had acquiesced to the road by allowing it on the boundary map that Congress approved back in 1990.

"The issue at hand is whether the Park Service will keep its part of the bargain, respect the urban nature of the park and honor its commitments," Saavedra said.

The Park Service refuses to budge. It has argued that federal law doesn't give it the authority to approve a road that doesn't serve a park purpose. It says that the only reason it put Paseo on the monument map was to allow it to be studied, and that city officials who wish to build the road now are grasping at straws.

"When the city and the development interests finish this last death rattle effort, there will be not much for them to do but quit," environmentalist Eastvold said.

Just this month, however, Sen. Pete Domenici made a last-ditch effort to keep the dispute out of court. He rammed through Congress a \$400,000 appropriation for an independent study of Paseo and the Park Service alternative, with one caveat. If, after 75 days, the city and Park Service can't agree on the terms of the study — who will do it and what its results will mean — the study will not be done and the two sides will have to duke it out again. ■

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

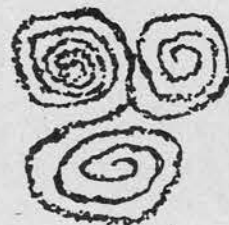
For further information or to voice an opinion about Petroglyph National Monument, write or call:

- Stephen Whitesell, monument superintendent, c/o The National Park Service, 123 Fourth St. SW., Room 101, Albuquerque, NM 87102 (505/766-8375);

- The Albuquerque City Council, P.O. Box 1293, Albuquerque, NM 87103 (505/768-3100);

- Ike Eastvold, president of Friends of the Albuquerque Petroglyphs, 2920 Carlisle Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110 (505/889-3779);

- New Mexico Sen. Pete Domenici, 427 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510 (202/224-6621).



Leo Hsu

Petroglyphs have drawn fire for decades



With or without a road through it, Petroglyph National Monument is hardly pristine.

Its 7,000 acres of grassland, as barren as anywhere in arid New Mexico, allow visitors to retreat into isolation even as rush-hour traffic cruises nearby. But signs of humanity are everywhere.

There are the old mattresses and concrete rubble that people have dumped. Volunteers recently hauled 160 tons of trash out of one of the monument's canyons, although the dumping has dropped off in recent years.

The monument has begun to draw urban crime. A Denver man was shot near the volcanoes last summer, allegedly by an Albuquerque teen-age girl who lured the man to the area under the pretext of unearthing buried marijuana.

Last February, an Albuquerque man was assaulted near the West Mesa volcanic escarpment late one night, reportedly by people whom he'd met at a local bar. Last June, someone broke into cars parked next to the monument, and police have cited youths there for drinking.

"As you see more attention to the monument, you get more visitors, and a lot of the cars come from out of state," said Steve Thomas, chief ranger for the city's open space division. "With more visitors you are going to attract more of the criminal element to prey on visitors."

There were also cult ceremonial sites that Thomas said appeared on the monument-to-be during the late 1980s. His pictures from that era show rings of rocks with crosses inside, sticks in the grasslands connected in patterns and concentric circles of rocks.

More recent cases involve graffiti artists who have left behind names, initials, a few satanic symbols, obscenities and gang tags. A new study recently found 50 graffiti sites scattered around the monument. The Park Service says it

will take at least two years to clean it all off.

The monument has an urban ecologist-gang expert, its only black staffer, to help understand what's driving the graffiti artists. She is environmental education specialist Robin White, who says much of the graffiti comes from "taggers," middle-class types who want to be noticed. Other sources include street gangs, who use spray-paint cans to practice moving quickly for future drive-by shootings, she said.

"No place is immune to it. There are street gangs everywhere," White said. "None of us are not touched."

Target shooters have also frequented the area for decades. They shot at cans on the rocks, did skeet shooting, blasted doves and pigeons, and left behind countless rocks pockmarked with bullet holes.

Some attacks on the monument were sanctioned by the military. In 1919, the National Guard used part of the area for target practice for close to a

year. It left behind a seven-foot-tall bunker, made of stone, concrete and dirt, that landowners tore down a year ago so a subdivision could rise in its place.

"The shooting did a lot of damage, tremendous damage to the rocks," said Diane Souder, a National Park Service official in Albuquerque. "The whole patina, the desert varnish coating on some of the rocks, has been shot off. If there were petroglyphs on those rocks there aren't any more."

In 1991, National Park Service researchers found four huge concentric circles near a volcano that had been a World War II-era Air Force bombing target. About 100 feet east of the target's center, the researcher found some sheet metal in the shape of a bomb. Nearby, he found 13 reinforced concrete bomb cores in the ground, each about 2-1/2 feet long, and dozens of inch-thick disks that had been bomb components.

Today, target shooting has dropped off sharply, thanks to increased ranger

patrols and public awareness. The Park Service is also slowly fencing the monument, which should keep out some of the troublemakers.

The growth that threatened the petroglyphs for years has also helped, in a way. With subdivisions lying next to the monument, plenty of people can watch for suspicious activity. Monument officials and rangers agree that for the most part it's in no danger of becoming a hotbed of crime.

But Indian Pueblo leader Bill Weahkee couldn't help being scared after his visit to the monument on a sunny, warm spring morning was curtailed by a hailstorm of bullets. Walking through a deep canyon, Weahkee and his wife heard about 10 shots ricocheting from the top of the escarpment above them onto the rocks below.

"They couldn't see us and we couldn't see them," recalled Weahkee, director of an Indian Pueblo social services agency. "We didn't wait around to find out who they were."

—T.D.



Leo Hsu

Urban crime has risen at Petroglyph National Monument as Albuquerque draws nearer

LETTERS

EDITORIAL WENT TOO FAR

Dear HCN,

My husband and I have subscribed to the *High Country News* for several years. As with many other newspapers, your articles have usually been one-sided, but that side represented a valuable perspective from a preservationist school of thought. As employees of the Forest Service, we are accustomed to being portrayed in a bad light.

Your editorial in the Sept. 20 issue went too far. As an employee of this organization, I have learned to respect and listen to many opinions, often expressed in derogatory terms. I regularly answer phone calls and respond to letters that call into question my integrity, knowledge and genuine concern for the natural resource that I manage. Unlike any other agency of which I am aware, we regularly involve the public in our decisions. We send out calendars of our prospective projects, invite anyone who is interested to participate in developing a project, involve them in every step of the resource management process, and then send them letters asking if they would like to appeal our decisions. Of course all this calls for a lot of hard work, so most people elect to come to

one or two meetings, or just appeal the decision at the end.

Working for the Forest Service has been a maturing process for me. I began with the attitude that it was my mission to correct resource problems, and I had gained sufficient training to be able to do that. I have since learned that one professional, or even a team of them, cannot write a prescription for resource health and expect it to be fixed. There are others involved at various levels of expertise, education and experience, who must be listened to. They range from employees of the Department of Economic Security who have no training in resource management but have chosen to be involved through a moral obligation to protection of the resource, to ranchers who also have no formal training but have years of experience and accumulated observation, to other ranchers who are concerned only with maintaining a viable ranching operation on public lands. Humans are a part of every ecosystem in this world, and the hardest component, by far, to deal with.

You spoke in your article of various parts of the West, and projects going on there that would outrage you. It's true, we continually deal with controversy. I also subscribe to the *Western Livestock Journal*, and you will be happy to know that we regularly

outrage the livestock industry also. In fact, some days I figure that if no one is unhappy, maybe I'm not doing my job right.

Patti Fenner
Scottsdale, Arizona

THE GROUND MOVED

Dear HCN,

Jon Christensen's fine series of articles on mining reform efforts in Nevada (*HCN*, 10/4/93) illustrates both the need for reform and the hope for change in the ongoing battles to bring some sense of sanity to Western mining laws and policies. As Glenn Miller notes, modern mining is "destruction on a truly heroic scale." Without reform of the laws, the devastation will continue.

Fortunately, like Nevada, Colorado is trying to find this elusive common ground. Unfortunately, it took the massive Summitville disaster to bring people to the table. It is a sad commentary on Western politics when reform happens only after miles of stream are destroyed and the taxpayers are stuck with a bill of \$100 million in cleanup costs for a mine that should never have been permitted in the first place. With the legacy (actually, the stench) of Summitville hanging in the air, and after over three months of intense negotiations among the

state, mining industry representatives and environmentalists, this spring Colorado finally passed the first meaningful reform of its mining laws in over 15 years. As is often the case with legislation, though, many of the hard choices were put off.

That day has finally arrived. This month, negotiations among between the parties to develop new regulations to implement the revised law.

While hope springs eternal (like acid mine drainage), the outlook is not rosy. Sham reform proposals similar to the industry-sponsored Senate bill to reform the 1872 Mining Law will undoubtedly surface. As *HCN*'s articles point out, the industry still sticks to the old adage "we mine where the ore is." But that just will not cut it anymore with people living downstream from today's gargantuan mining projects. For while the ore might be there, so are drinking water, wildlife and the people themselves.

Roger Flynn
Boulder, Colorado

The writer has just formed a group, the Colorado Mining Action Project, to represent citizens on mining issues in Colorado and the West. CMAP is based at 1405 Arapahoe Ave., Boulder, CO 80302 (303/440-4901).

Unclassifieds

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR — The Grand Canyon Trust, a non-profit conservation organization headquartered in Flagstaff, Ariz., with offices in Utah and Washington, D.C., is seeking a director of development to work in our Flagstaff office. Applicants should have significant experience in all aspects of non-profit fundraising, including membership and marketing. References required. Compensation based on qualifications. Application deadline: Nov. 12, 1993. Send applications to Thomas C. Jensen, Executive Director, Grand Canyon Trust, Route 4, Box 718, Flagstaff, AZ 86001, attn: Personnel. 602/774-7488, FAX 602/774-7570.

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The recently passed Colorado Wilderness Bill, which protects 900,000 acres of pristine wilderness against motorized vehicles, is USELESS when the Colorado Air National Guard can fly over it at TREE TOP LEVEL AND DESTROY ITS SOLITUDE!

What is the effect of Military Operations Areas (M.O.A.) and Military Training Routes (M.T.R.) to Colorado?

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
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Environment	☐	
Social	☐	
Health	☐	
Animal Life	☐	
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It is very possible that by the year 1997, the Colorado Air National Guard could be phased out because we basically don't need it anymore. With the questionable future of the Colorado Air National Guard, they certainly don't need to spend \$2,000,000 of taxpayers' money to accomplish this ENVIRONMENTAL RAPE when our Colorado schools are underfunded.

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opinion by Karl Hess Jr. and Jerry L. Holechek

At the heart of Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt's rangeland reform package is the idea of sustainability — the belief that good rangeland reform is measured by landscapes where the richness of nature is not impaired by people, and where the fabric of human community coexists with nature's bounty.

Whatever one may think of his *Rangeland Reform '94* proposal, this much is certain: Babbitt has inherited a terrible mess. A century and a half of public-land grazing has done little to promote either sustainable land use or flexible, adaptable communities at peace with nature.

Numbers tell the story. Two-thirds of the Bureau of Land Management's public-grazing lands — well over 100 million acres — are in less than good condition; as many as 80 percent of the miles of riparian areas managed by the BLM are rated unsatisfactory; and ubiquitous erosion relentlessly carves living landscapes into dying badlands.

The economics are appalling. In 1992, the BLM spent \$89 million on range management and collected only \$22 million in grazing fees, \$11 million of which were returned to grazing districts for range improvement. Moreover, for every \$4 the BLM spent in 1992 managing rangelands, ranchers earned only \$3 in profits.

Like it or not, non-sustainable grazing policy has been the rule for the land and people of the West. The BLM's Vale Range Rehabilitation Program is a case in point. Prior to 1963, the Vale District in southeastern Oregon was severely overgrazed. BLM's solution was massive range reclamation at taxpayer expense. Between 1963 and 1985, \$18 million was spent spraying, plowing, seeding, fencing and developing water on 750,000 acres. Measured in 1992 dollars, \$304,348 was spent on each permittee. What did the taxpayers receive for their money?

Between 1963 and 1985, the BLM created 200,000 animal unit months of additional grazing per year at a cost 3.5 times the going market rate. Yet evidence to date indicates that Vale's Cadillac rangelands will not survive the 20th century. By 1986, sprayed areas had reverted to about the same level of productivity as untreated range; no clear benefits had accrued to wildlife; and the district's riparian areas remained largely stuck in unsatisfactory condition.

One option the BLM had not considered was to buy over-obligated grazing privileges at fair market price from willing permittees. This could have been done for 16 percent of the program's cost, and would have resulted in a better balance between the land's productivity and the number of livestock.

Instead, the BLM chose, with the blessing of Congress, to pump outrageous sums of money into the Vale landscape. Not only did this fail, but it kept ranchers from paying the price and learning the lessons of overgrazing; it robbed their communities of the will, the means, and the need to adapt to changing economic, social and political times; and it nurtured a mindset that today begs for extinction.

Federal subsidies lie at the heart of the West's marriage to unsustainable ranching and its dogged resistance to change. This is most evident in the USDA Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service emergency feed program, which pays ranchers for half

of the cost of feed they buy during drought. It encourages ranchers to stock their ranges at maximum levels, rather than to keep herds small enough to get through dry years. After all, why stock the range sustainably when the government will pay half the cost of the feed you need in poor years?

And thanks to the program, poor years come regularly. On average, Western ranchers qualify for this subsidy four out of every 10 years. In both 1989 and 1990, neither of which were drought years, medium-sized ranches in southwestern New Mexico received about \$3,600 annually from this subsidy.

Bruce Babbitt's proposed reform program should be fanatic in its opposition to policies and subsidies that encourage unsustainable ranching. Unfortunately, *Rangeland Reform '94* never questions subsidies. Babbitt leaves the basic structure of public-land grazing unchanged.

For example, the proposed reform ignores the most obvious defect of public-land grazing: the fact that most grazing allotments are too small to be viable. Eighty-three percent of all BLM permits are for less than 83 cows (grazed year-long). And when private lands are factored in

grasslands and wetland oases?

A sustainable future demands that ecologically and economically superior uses of the land be tried. But the possibility of innovation on America's public rangelands is proscribed by Interior's reluctance to challenge the status quo.

A litany of disincentives and unsustainable nonsense weighs down the plan. On the positive side, Babbitt envisions a new way — the ecosystem way — to micromanage grazing on federal lands. But do his 14 standards and guidelines, all based on solid ecological principles, guarantee sustainable grazing of America's public rangelands? We say no.

Even if the grazing fee is raised to \$3.45, the cost of intensive planning, monitoring and range reclamation will plunge the grazing program into an even deeper black hole for taxpayers. And that kind of federal extravagance, in this age of budget deficits, makes the program politically unsustainable over the time frame we need to restore the land.

Indeed, all the disincentives that have made the grazing program unsustainable in the past will flourish in the future. Ranchers and rural communities will

continue to respond to the cues that have made environmental mediocrity on the West's grasslands a way of life. Predictably, the only beneficiary will be a greatly enhanced BLM, a bureaucracy already gorged and fattened on the spoils of a long legacy of bad policy.

Keeping government in the full-time business of growing cows on landscapes that are more suited for wildlife and recreation is bad enough. Making that business the keystone of what Babbitt calls a "new American land ethic" is simply bad. A land ethic is sorely needed on America's public lands. But before a land ethic can find fertile soil, rangeland reform that is considerably more than cosmetic surgery is needed.

Babbitt would be well-advised to reconsider his plan for rangeland reform, which continues to allow subsidy to be piled on subsidy, and bureaucrat to be piled on bureaucrat. He might not be able to change the change overnight, but at least

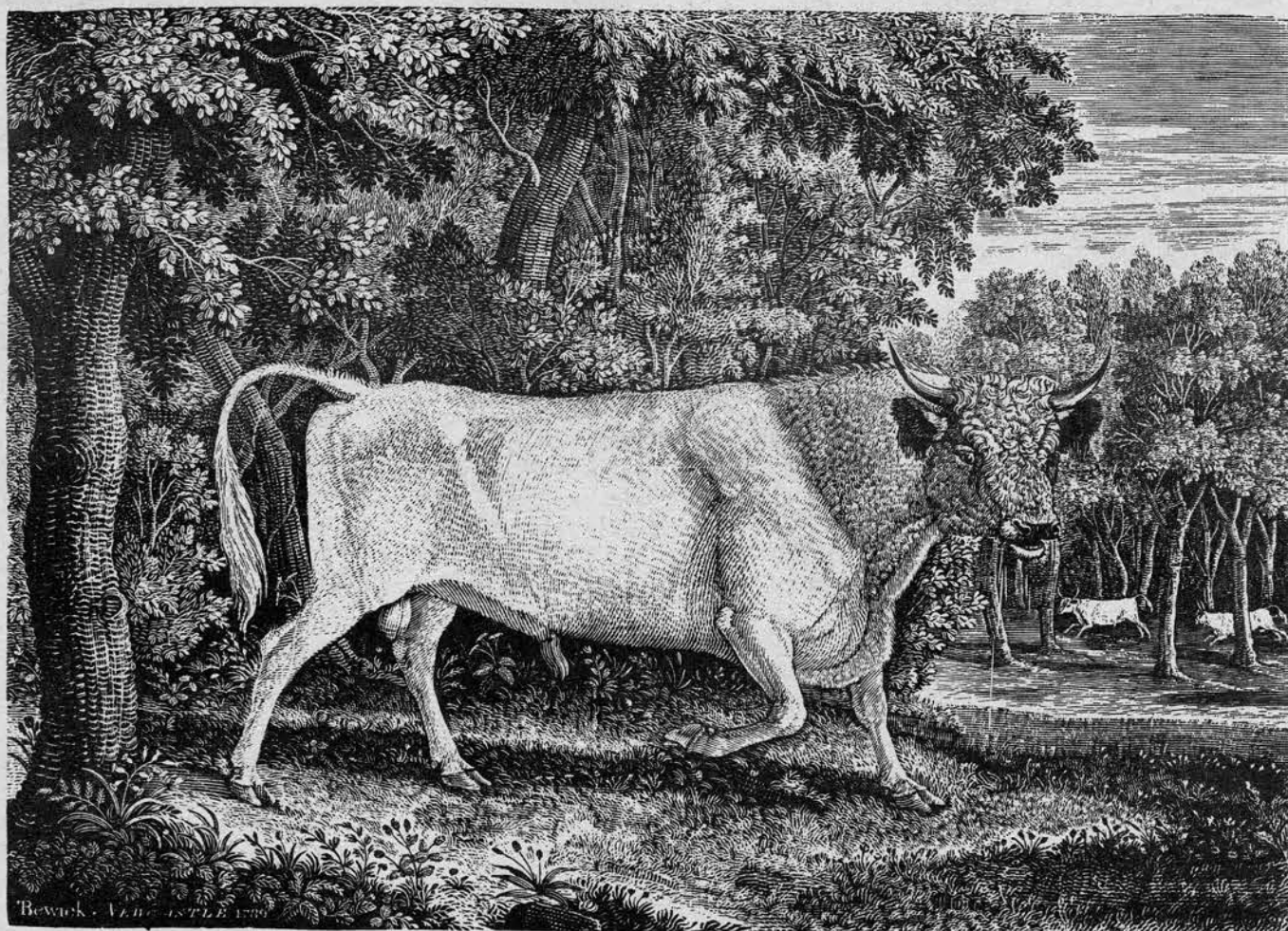
he could make his intentions clear and help set an agenda for the future.

And ranchers would be prudent to accept the fact that change is coming to America's public grazing lands. We can hope, however, that reasonable debate will prevail over the normal politics of seeking privilege from a government unable to say no.

But if reasonable people fail, if the past simply recapitulates the future, we must be ready to question the wisdom of grazing public rangelands. We must be willing to see the limits of human folly and be prepared, however reluctantly, to join the chorus of "cattle free by '93." We will join that chorus not because we are uncaring, but because we believe in the West; because we know people can and should care for nature without being wards of the state. And because we envision more to a new American land ethic than a fine-sounding phrase. ■

Karl Hess Jr. is senior associate with the Foundation for Research on Economics and the Environment (FREE) at Las Cruces, N.M., and the author of the book about ranching, *Visions Upon the Land: Man and Nature on the Western Range*. Jerry Holechek is professor of range science, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, and co-author of the textbook, *Range Management: Principles and Practices*.

Babbitt inherited a mess; his plan will make it worse



and operators with multiple permits accounted for, the majority of public-land ranches run fewer than 200 cows. Such small operations are not economically sustainable; their owners cannot afford to practice conservative stocking or to invest in stewardship. Not surprisingly, small allotments make up a disproportionate share of BLM lands in unsatisfactory condition.

Babbitt's reform agenda also fails to mention the ecological and social calamity of community grazing allotments, where the livestock of two or more ranchers graze the same land. Although some community allotments work well, most do not.

From the Rock Springs Allotment in southern Wyoming, where graziers race to turn into stubble the best grass first, to the Youngsville Allotment in northern New Mexico, where 20 ranchers cry in unison, "It's the other guy's responsibility," the social pathology of communal grazing festers. Too many cattle are grazed, too little stewardship is practiced, and no one cares.

There are other problems, too. The reform plan would extend the period of grazing non-use to 10 years for allotments in need of "resource protection or enhancement." This is in the right direction. But why should grazing be required at all? Or, for that matter, why should harvesting grass and trampling streams be the only lawful way to make one's living from desert