

High Country News

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A Paper for People who Care about the West

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Chief James Black Wolf

Northern Cheyenne bury their own/4



Civil disobedience in Oregon's Kalmiopsis roadless area

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The decline and fall of SALMON



A fisherman walks by a docked boat at the Port of Newport, Oregon

by Paul Koberstein

GOLD BEACH, Ore. — Scott Boley is one of a dying breed. He's a commercial salmon fisherman.

He has watched coastal fishing communities collapse over the last decade. Where the salmon-fishing fleet was once a vital part of local economies, it is now little more than the object of tourists' curiosity, he says.

"There are a few hundred families seriously fishing now," he says. "It's been so restricted and tightly regulated that there're no new people coming in."

Besides being a fisherman, Boley is a member of the government's Pacific Fishery Management Council, an agency that sets seasons and quotas. Every year, the council sets tighter and tighter rules. This past summer, the commercial coho season was called off.

Yet the runs continue to decline. Boley is among a growing number of experts who think the answer isn't keeping boats off the ocean. Rather, he says, it's keeping loggers out of the mountains where the salmon spawn.

A few miles up the coast at Port Orford, Jim Britell has watched the log trucks roll by his home on the southern

Oregon coast. Every half-hour they come, full of stout Douglas-fir logs.

He's seen clearcuts grow on the hillsides near his home town of Port Orford. And he's noticed another intrusion: dirt, once held fast by roots, washing down the bare canyon walls, then carried away in the swift currents of streams fed by the rain-soaked coastal mountains. This

Four salmon already qualify for protection under the Endangered Species Act; the West Coast coho may be next. The culprit isn't a gauntlet of dams this time but logging and a host of other assaults. And as another species lurches toward extinction, so do small-town economies based on ocean fishing.

dirt can be deadly to salmon and trout. Baby salmon smother when silt covers the gravel in which they are born. After they emerge, silt robs them of deep holes they need for feeding and hiding from predators.

Britell, an officer with the local Audubon Society chapter, noticed one more thing: salmon runs were disappearing everywhere on the West Coast, undermining a cornerstone of the

region's culture and ravaging local economies.

The coho salmon, a smaller sibling of the chinook, has been particularly devastated in Oregon. Its demise has cost fishing communities well over \$100 million a year.

"Our local fishermen have simply been wiped out," Britell said. He and other environmentalists contend state and federal authorities have done little to prevent or reverse this damage. Until the last two or three years, state and federal agencies denied any connection between timber operations and the coho's decline. The government's solution has been to reduce ocean harvests, which has put people out of work without bringing back the fish.

Recently, environmentalists filed petitions seeking protection for these fish under the Endangered Species Act. Some fishermen's groups fear the petitions could end commercial salmon fishing and timber harvests, not only in coastal Oregon, but also in California and Washington. Many fishermen concede that the end of the industry is coming anyway because stocks continue to decline.

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Dear friends,

The weather is changing

Cold nights are coming on quicker, but the cranberry-colored sunsets almost make this short fall welcome. Visitors stopping by include Hal and Irene Coyle from Acton, Mass. She works in a bank and he is senior writer at the Center for Astrophysics in Cambridge.

Photo researcher Valery Moore came from Aspen to look for property, and Carl Arnold, from Brooklyn, N.Y., stopped in with a Phoenix, Ariz., friend on the same quest. Fresh from a trip to Navajo Moun-

tain came Gail Denton of Boulder, Colo., who talked to us about story ideas, including the topic of better management in the backcountry of "feminine trash." We also met devoted Edward Abbey fan Phyllis Leonardo of Omaha, Neb., who visited us during her Southwestern tour.

Corrections, emendations

The Montana Wilderness Association says it did not back Rep. Pat Williams' wilderness bill in 1992, as Paul Larmer reported in our coverage of this year's

HOTLINE

Did grizzlies fleece rancher?

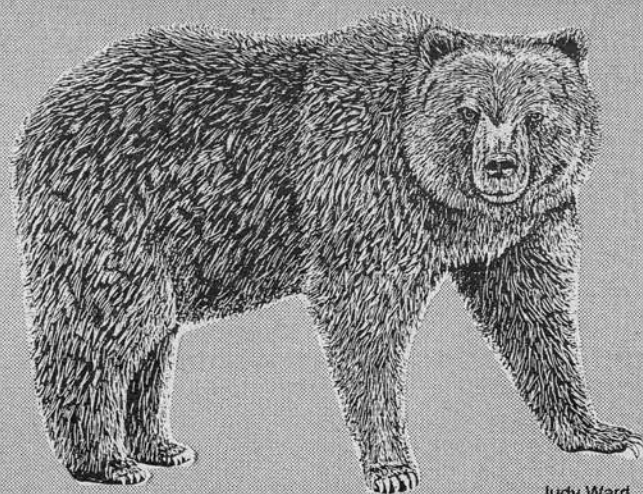
When Wyoming rancher Dave Grabbert failed to find 500 sheep on his grazing allotment on the Shoshone National Forest last month, he blamed hungry grizzly bears. He finally located 200 sheep, but insists grizzlies killed the rest, including 133 dead animals found at the base of a cliff. State game warden Jerry Longobardi questions Grabbert's stampede theory, reports the *Billings Gazette*. "There are many other things including other predators and lightning that could have frightened the sheep," he says, although he agrees that grizzlies probably killed some. For his missing sheep, Grabbert wants the state to reimburse him close to \$30,000. Wyoming officials are evaluating his claim, but a key factor could be Grabbert's neglect of the herd for a week after his herder quit. Carla Neasel of the Predator Pro-

ject says, "He had no business leaving those sheep on the range for even a day, let alone an entire week."

Robertson out, Unger in, Thomas in limbo

After weeks of public jockeying, the Clinton administration removed Forest Service Chief F. Dale Robertson and Associate Chief George Leonard Oct. 28. Both were assigned Agriculture Department jobs. The long-anticipated move drew praise from environmentalists and criticism from Republican lawmakers and timber officials. Sen. Mark Hatfield, R-Ore., said the Clinton administration was using Robertson, who became chief in 1987, as a scapegoat for problems in the national forests created by Congress and past and present administrations. "Chief Robertson has served this country with honor, distinction, integrity and ingenuity and is unworthy of the treatment he has received at the hands of this

administration," Hatfield said on the Senate floor. Biologist Jack Ward Thomas, who was instrumental in developing Clinton's plan to protect Northwest forests, remains the leading candidate to replace Robertson. But pressure from Republican senators and senior Forest Service officials, who view Thomas as a political candidate favored by environmentalists, has put his appointment on



Judy Ward

wilderness debate Nov. 1. Vice President Mike Grayson says the group "explicitly refused to endorse that bill because it failed to meet our area-by-area goals." And Larry Mehlhaff, regional director of the Sierra Club, says the Montana chapter of the club decided "to work to improve the legislation" but did not endorse Rep. Williams' wilderness bill introduced this year.

The telephone number for the ecosystem management conference at Colorado State University Nov. 15-16 is 303/491-7501.

— Betsy Marston for the staff

hold. The administration named David Unger, a veteran of the Forest Service and Soil Conservation Service, as acting chief, provoking criticism from environmentalists, reports AP. Said Brock Evans of the National Audubon Society, "Unger is a nice guy, but he is a long-term career person in the agency that helped oversee the most destructive era in national forest history."

Wilderness is ransomed

As expected, Regional Forester Elizabeth Estill approved a controversial land exchange Nov. 2 with Colorado developer Tom Chapman. The deal gives Chapman's West Elk Development Corp. 107 acres of Forest Service land near the Telluride Ski Area where comparable land sells for millions of dollars. In return, Chapman will give up his 240-acre inholding in the West Elk Wilderness and tear down the beginnings of a luxury log cabin (*HCN*, 10/18/93). "This has not been an easy decision to make," said Estill. "(This) alternative represents the least public harm." The proposal must now go to the House Agriculture Committee for final oversight. In the meantime, the public has 45 days, until Dec. 20, to appeal the decision to the chief of the Forest Service. At least one environmental group, Telluride's Sheep Mountain Alliance, says it will appeal the exchange. Copies of the environmental assessment on the exchange are available from Forest Supervisor, 2250 Highway 50, Delta, CO 81416 (303/874-7691). Appeals must be sent to Chief, Forest Service, 14th and Independence, S.W., Washington, DC 20090-6090.

Clinton's forest plan draws 83,000 responses

As might have been predicted, President Clinton's forest plan is coming under attack from all sides. When formal comments on the plan were made public in late October, groups made clear they will attack it early and often in court.

Clinton officials were overwhelmed when their forest plan, known as Option 9, drew 83,000 comments from the public, including 35,000 the last two weeks. The plan was released in June after Clinton held an unprecedented Forest Summit in April in an attempt to break the logjam in Northwest forests (*HCN*, 4/19/93).

The plan was drafted to meet the concerns of Federal Judge William Dwyer in Seattle, who in 1991 ordered a halt to logging on federal land west of the Cascade Range in Washington, Oregon and California. Dwyer's injunction will remain in effect until the government produces a science-based plan to protect the northern spotted owl and other rare

species that live in old-growth forests.

The administration had agreed to submit a final environmental impact statement on its plan by the end of November and formally adopt it on Dec. 31. Now the administration is saying it needs at least three more months to complete the document.

Many of the groups commenting on the plan claim it falls short of obeying the laws that Dwyer said were being violated by the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. Those laws include the Endangered Species Act of 1973 and the 1976 National Forest Management Act.

For example, the Oregon Natural Resources Council, the lead plaintiff in the case on which Dwyer had ruled, gave the Clinton plan a "D" grade, saying the only reason it didn't fail was because it was "graded on the curve."

Environmental groups said the plan offers too little protection for the northern spotted owl, threatens the extinction of

some 400 species and sets aside too little old growth as exempt from logging.

Industry groups, meanwhile, claim the plan would reduce logging by 75 percent from levels seen in the mid-1980s. Three of these groups have already filed court challenges based on their contention that the plan was created behind closed doors.

"This process does nothing to end the gridlock facing timber-producing communities in the Pacific Northwest," said James Geisinger, president of the Northwest Forestry Association in Portland. "The president promised to get timber flowing to the mills immediately," Geisinger said. "New timber sales will be years away as the plan works its way through the agencies and the courtroom. While we wait, mills close, jobs are lost, businesses board up and local governments go bankrupt."

— Paul Koberstein

The writer lives in Portland, Oregon.

WESTERN ROUNDUP

Senate dukes it out with Babbitt

Western senators and ranchers are making a desperate stand in the U.S. Senate to kill a grazing-reform package and retain control of the West's public lands. The outcome may determine the fate of other public land reforms, including mining and Northwest forests.

The grazing fight started in mid-October, after Sen Harry Reid, D-Nev., and Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., reached a compromise with Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt. The deal would increase the fees ranchers pay to graze a cow and her calf on federal lands to \$3.45 a month (down from \$4.28 proposed by Babbitt) and institute other rangeland reforms on 260 million acres of land in 16 Western states.

The House approved the compromise by a 317-106 vote. But in the Senate, a bipartisan coalition of 15 Western senators, calling Reid a "liar" and "backstabber," has, as of press time, refused to let the bill come to a vote on the Senate floor.

Led by Republican Pete Domenici of New Mexico and Democrats Max Baucus of Montana and Ben Nighthorse Campbell of Colorado, the Westerners filibustered to block the 1994 Interior Appropriations bill, and with it the Reid amendment.

"This proposal threatens a rural way of life," Domenici said. "If we lose we'll go down with every rule in this Senate to protect our people."

Western senators have defeated grazing-reform bills from the House six times since 1990, and last March forced President Clinton to abandon efforts to raise grazing fees in his budget package. Then, after Babbitt attempted to implement grazing reform administratively in August, the Senate passed a bill that would have put a one-year moratorium on Interior's reforms.

This time the Senate's traditional brand of power politics backfired. The House stood firm, forcing Reid and other senators in the House-Senate Conference Committee to abandon the Senate-approved moratorium and agree to compromise.

"Grazing has become symbolic of the House's frustration with the abuse of the filibuster and the domination of special interests in the Senate," said John Lawrence, staff director of the House Natural Resources Committee. "(This bill) is now perceived as an issue of integrity for the House."

The administration has also held fast. When the third attempt to break the Senate filibuster failed Oct. 28, Babbitt proceeded administratively with his original and more expensive reform proposals (HCN, 8/23/93).

As the standoff deepens, sides are forming in what is likely to be a much larger struggle to control the West. Grazing is just the first of a wave of Babbitt-initiated reform proposals to hit Congress. Behind it are reform of the 1872 Mining Law, ending wool-growing subsidies, President Clinton's ancient forest proposal, replacement of Forest Service Chief F.

Dale Robertson, re-authorization of the Endangered Species Act and formation of the National Biological Survey.

"This is simply a war on the West," declared Sen. Alan Simpson, R-Wyo., echoing vows by other senators and most of the Western governors not to let the "Clinton-Babbitt" agenda be forced on the people of the West.

"The war that will be lost," threatened Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, D-Colo., at an impromptu press conference two weeks into the filibuster, "will be the next presidential election."

Despite the rhetoric, the West may not be able to hold off Babbitt's reforms or sabotage Clinton's presidency as it did Jimmy Carter's in the late 1970s.

Carter's "hit-list" attempt to kill 10

and land-use reforms will drive ranch families off the land, Reid says the vast majority of ranchers will be unaffected.

The compromise bill would raise grazing fees over the next three years from \$1.86 to \$3.45 per animal unit month (AUM). That is barely a third of the average fee on private land in the West and below state fees in all but Arizona.

Small ranchers will be least affected. According to the Bureau of Land Management, 42 percent of all ranchers who use BLM land have permits for 100 AUMs or less. For them, the grazing fee increase will cost at most a total of \$53 the first year, \$106 the second and \$159 thereafter.

The Reid bill includes most of the reforms outlined in Babbitt's Rangeland Reform proposal released in August. The

new rules would replace the BLM's rancher-dominated grazing advisory boards with resource advisory councils; retain federal ownership of water rights, wells, fences and other improvements; set national standards and guidelines for "ecosystem management"; give BLM field officers more authority; reward good stewardship and penalize ranchers who degrade the land.

The bulk of the new rules, said Lawrence of the House Natural Resources Committee, simply return BLM regulations to what they were before the Reagan-Watt era, or bring BLM regulations into line with existing Forest Service practices. "Most of these are moderate, baseline management reforms that any one of these ranchers would use if it was their own land," says Lawrence.

Most ranchers say the rules are unreasonable. "It gives so much arbitrary authority to the on-the-ground agent," said Reeves Brown, director of the Colorado Cattlemen's Association. "If your allotment doesn't meet their 'desired condition' they can stop you from going on. All it takes is an attitude."

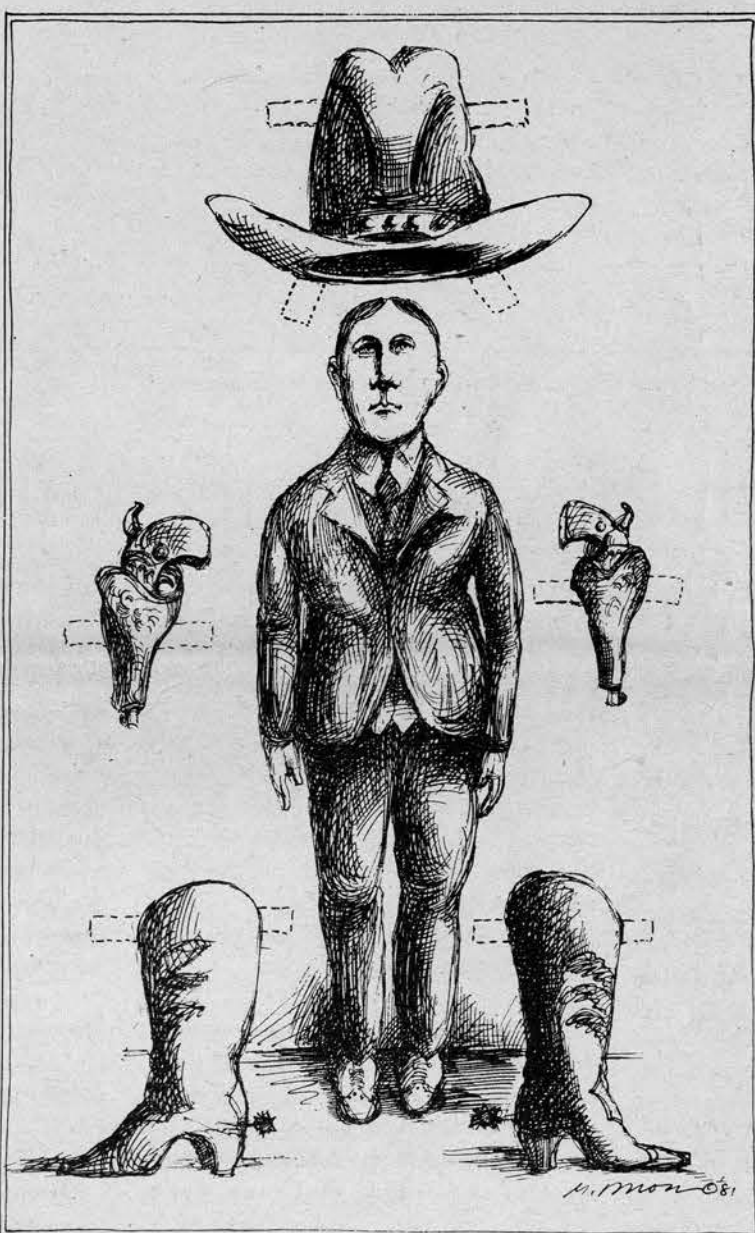
Brown adds that despite a lower grazing fee, most ranchers consider the Reid bill far worse than Babbitt's threat of implementing reform by administrative order. An administrative decision can be stopped or delayed for years in the courts.

"If the Babbitt proposal gets codified into law we're screwed," said Brown. "The whole industry will be down the river."

While the ranchers originally hoped to stop Babbitt's grazing reform through the Senate moratorium, their best hope now is to keep Congress from passing anything. And hoping to do just that, reform opponents are now raising the specter of federal water rights, which in the past held up wilderness bills in some states for a decade.

Babbitt calls the claim a deliberate "red herring." Fears of a federal land or water grab, however, seem to be working with the public. Public comments received by the Interior Department are running 70 percent against reform.

—Steve Hinchman, HCN staff reporter



Geoffrey Moss

Western water projects and reform the Bureau of Reclamation was a shock because no one had been talking about it, says Lawrence, who worked in the House Interior Committee at the time. "Now everyone has been talking about these changes for a decade, except for the (Reagan-Bush) Interior and the Western senators."

Also, the once-intimidating bloc of Western votes is now split, with Nevada Sen. Reid, leading the push for compromise. Backing Reid are Richard Bryan, D-Nev., Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz., Patty Murray, D-Wash., and California Democrats Barbara Boxer and Diane Feinstein.

"It is in the ranchers' best interest to settle the grazing issue," said Reid, who comes from an old Nevada mining and ranching community but who recently won a landslide re-election with the Las Vegas and Reno vote. "I ask (this Senate) to reject the demagoguery that comes from those who represent a West that no longer exists."

While national and state livestock associations claim that the fee increase

HOTLINE

Metadone helped kill Leroy Jackson

New Mexico medical examiners determined that Navajo environmental activist Leroy Jackson died from a reaction to methadone, which is used to wean addicts off heroin. But Jackson's friends and wife said he was not a drug user, and they suspect foul play. "It's ridiculous to think he would use heroin or methadone," said Adella Begaye, Jackson's wife of 18 years. "He was in perfect health. We would like to see the New Mexico state police continue the investigation." Jackson's decomposed body was found Oct. 9 inside his locked Dodge van at a roadside turnout on U.S. Hwy 64 some 80 miles north of Santa Fe (HCN, 11/1/93). New Mexico police officer Frank Taylor said the state investigation turned up no evidence that Jackson had been taking any drugs, reports AP. "The medical examiner said that there was not enough methadone to have killed Mr. Jackson by itself, but that apparently he had an overreaction," Taylor said. Lori Goodman, a close friend and spokeswoman for Dine Citizens Against Ruining Our Environment, which Jackson co-founded, said the whole story is still unknown. "We need to find out how the methadone got into his system," she said. "We don't know the day of his death or how the van got to the rest area. There was blood in the van which could mean there was a struggle."

Recall defeated in Utah

By margins as wide as two-to-one, six members of Grand County, Utah's, seven-member council beat back a recall vote Nov. 2. The challenge was engineered by the three-member commission ousted last year in an election which some said marked the end of the county's good ol' boy political era (HCN, 2/8/93). It failed despite a "well-financed campaign of misinformation," says council member Bill Hedden, who was on the recall ballot. Hedden says, among other things, recall leaders charged the council with squandering taxpayer money by purchasing scenic land along the Colorado River, even though the money came from a federal grant program. "They threw everything at us, but the voters kept their eye on the ball," he says. One item on the council's agenda is toughening the county recall policy. Now, a petition signed by just 15 percent of the voters from the last gubernatorial election triggers a recall vote. In other election returns, Colorado voters rejected a tourism tax that has raised more than \$11 million annually for the last 10 years for the promotion of tourism in the state. The measure went to a public vote because of last year's approval of Amendment 1, which requires voter authorization of new taxes. "Tourism has become the victim of its own success," Mike Smedley, spokesman for Purgatory/Durango Ski Resort, told *The Denver Post*.

HOTLINE

A Cherokee charade?

A man claiming to know secret Cherokee spiritual and sexual techniques has distressed Native American leaders. Harley "Swift Deer" Reagan says he is a half-Cherokee reincarnation of Billy the Kid and an elder in the Twisted Hair Society, which takes parts of various religions and twists them into a new "braid of knowledge," reports the *Arizona Republic*. Reagan's center in Scottsdale, Ariz., holds \$1,000 sexual training workshops which Reagan says are based on Cherokee techniques. Cherokee Nation spokeswoman Lynn Howard disagrees. "His actions are culturally depraved," she says. The nation denies his claim to ancestry and says he damages the Cherokee reputation. "Sacred traditions of all tribes were given to us by our creator," adds Vernon Foster, of the American Indian Movement. "We can't allow them to be desecrated by phony imitations." Reagan's seminars, however, don't break the law. "That's true," concedes Howard. "There is nothing illegal in being in atrociously bad taste."

I'll take that

Faced down by a large grizzly bear in Wyoming, hunter Terry Poulsen decided to abandon the first bull elk he had shot in 15 years. The encounter occurred just as Poulsen and fellow hunter Jim Baker began dressing the freshly killed animal, reports the *Cody Enterprise*. Without warning, the bear was bearing down on Poulsen and Baker. "He never made a single, stinkin' noise," reports Baker. Poulsen says he checked the bear's charge with a scream, then the hunters backed their way up a hill to their horses and weapons. The bear followed and left only after Baker fired his gun into the hillside. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department reports that bears usually steal only 1 or 2 percent of elk taken in hunting season. But Gary Brown, state game supervisor for the Cody area, says grizzly bears may be learning to associate rifle shots with food.

Don't drink the water

The \$3.8 billion Central Arizona Project, intended to provide affordable water to farms and cities, continues to be plagued by problems. Some farmers have already turned up their noses at the water which is diverted from the Colorado River through hundreds of miles of concrete canals. They say they can irrigate more cheaply by pumping groundwater (*HCN*, 5/17/93). Now, municipal users of CAP water are complaining. Residents of Tucson say red, brown and yellow water flows from their taps, corrodes metal on small appliances, and kills trees and goldfish. "I've drunk a lot of rotgut moonshine," says Emmitt Gentry, 66, "and I don't think it was as bad for me as this water." The Central Arizona Water Conservancy District has spent \$600,000 trying to decrease the mineral content, but not very successfully, reports *The Arizona Republic*. An attempt to flush the entire system with an anti-rust agent failed. Tucson citizens are now told to let taps run for 15 minutes before using the water.



James Black Wolf leads the Northern Cheyenne burial party in Montana

Bob Zellar

The return of Cheyenne skulls brings a bloody Western story to a close

"If you are really going to send your soldiers after me, I wish that you would first let me get a little distance away from this agency. Then, if you want to fight, I will fight you, and we can make the ground bloody at that place."

— Northern Cheyenne Chief Little Wolf, to Indian Agent John Miles, September 1878

Reporter's Notebook
by Andrew L. Giarelli

BUSBY, Mont. — A bloody battle did take place, and almost 115 years later, some of Little Wolf's people came home to rest. They came here in 18 boxes containing their skulls, released after long negotiation by museums such as the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

The Northern Cheyennes helped the Sioux defeat General Custer at the battle of Little Big Horn, then surrendered in 1877, after soldiers destroyed the village of Chief Dull Knife. Although Dull Knife and Chief Little Wolf were promised a reservation between the Black Hills and the Big Horn Mountains, they and 1,000 others were shipped south to live with the Southern Cheyennes, already several years into hard reservation life. There, in what is now Oklahoma, they found little food, sparse game and a cold reception from their strapped hosts.

Measles and malaria found them. In

the winter of 1877-78, 58 died.

That miserable season spurred the two chiefs to try to lead 282 people, including 60 mature fighting men and 30 old men and boys, 1,000 miles back to what tribal members called "our beloved north country."

The Western press, hungry for Custer's payback, smelled blood.

"I have heard it said they killed some white people, not soldiers. If they did, it must have been white people who started the fight ..."

"We dodged the soldiers during most of the way ... But they were

always near us and trying to catch us. Our young men fought them off in seven different battles. At each fight, some of our people were killed, women or children the same as men. I do not know how many of our grown-up people were killed. But I know that more than 60 of our children were gone when we got to the Dakota country."

— Iron Teeth Woman in *Thomas B. Marquis' Reminiscences of Four Cheyennes and a Sioux* (Stockton: Pacific Center for Western Historical Studies, 1973)

Iron Teeth Woman, 95 when inter-



Andrew Giarelli

A burial plate recently erected by the Northern Cheyennes after the tribe brought home century-old remains from museums

viewed in 1929, fudged the truth. In north-west Kansas, where whites had killed and mutilated 20 Cheyenne women and children in 1875, young warriors killed 19 male sodbusters in front of their families. Then they raped the women and girls, but did not kill them.

The Cheyennes continued their flight, then split into two groups as winter approached. About half followed Little Wolf towards Montana. Dull Knife and his followers surrendered, hoping to live with Sioux friends. Instead, Dull Knife's people went to Fort Robinson, Neb., where they were locked into a guardhouse after rejecting new orders from Washington to return south.

Trying to force their compliance, Captain Henry Wessells cut off food and fuel to the Cheyennes on Jan. 3, 1879. He cut off water Jan. 8, but still they refused. "We will not go," Dull Knife told Wessells. "Tell the Great Father that if he tries to send us back we will butcher each other with our own knives."

Secretly, the Cheyennes reassembled the few weapons they'd taken apart and hidden in the women's and children's clothing. They broke out of the guardhouse on the moonlit, freezing night of Jan. 9, chased by troopers who gunned down many before they reached nearby White River. At the river, more were killed when they stopped to drink.

For 13 days, soldiers and civilians hunted the Cheyennes. Old Sitting Man, his leg broken, sang his death song in the snow until a soldier blew out his brains. White Antelope and some women were trapped by soldiers; he placed his baby in his wife's arms and charged with a knife. His wife hurried to him, and she too was shot down. Then the soldiers advanced into the other women, shooting them point-blank as they lay too exhausted to run. Elsewhere women were killed as they charged troops alone with knives. Gathering His Medicine, son of Iron Teeth Woman, hid his little sister under some brush and fought until he was killed. The girl survived.

Finally, 32 were trapped in a washout at Antelope Creek, 35 miles from Fort Robinson. Troopers fired into the pit for three-quarters of an hour. Then they charged, firing their weapons, withdrawing and reloading and charging until the death songs were silent. Suddenly three bleeding young men leaped from the pit with knives and empty guns, and they were killed, too. One mortally wounded woman who'd slit her daughter's throat to keep her from being captured was still alive when a lieutenant reached down to comfort her. She spat in his face.

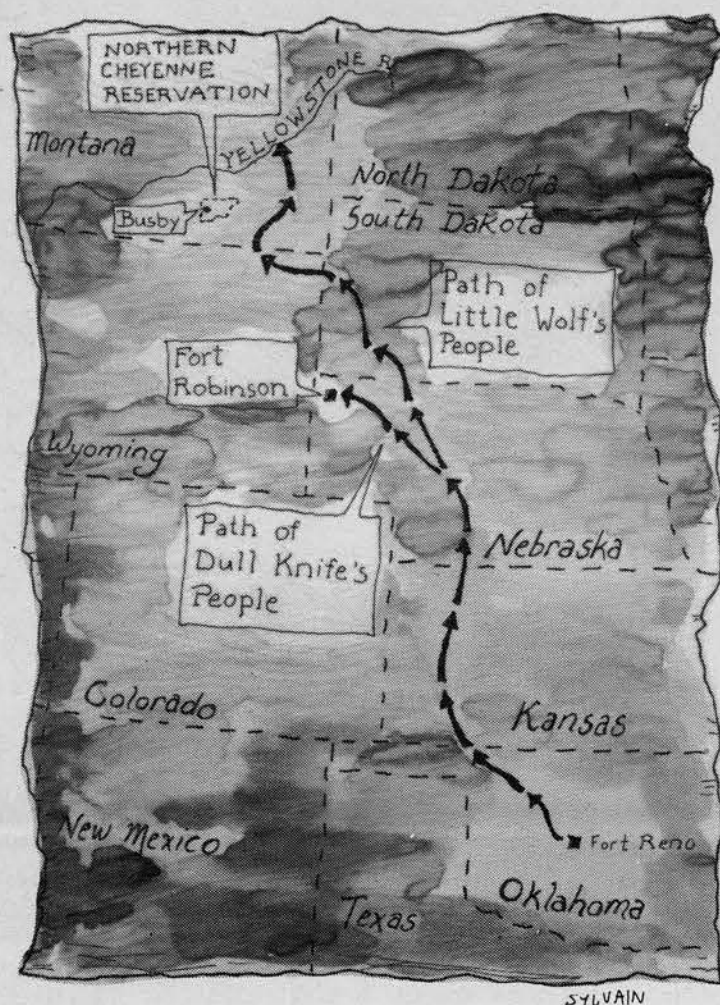
After what became known as the "Fort Robinson outbreak," public sympathy turned in favor of the surviving Northern Cheyennes. President Chester Alan Arthur granted them a reservation along Montana's Tongue River by executive order in 1884. But those killed in Nebraska remained in a mass grave, some of their skulls removed by army surgeons and sent East for study.

On Oct. 8, 1993, a Northern Cheyenne delegation received 17 of those skeletal remains at

the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. James Black Wolf, Keeper of the Sacred Hat bundle that has been handed down within the tribe for nearly two centuries, prayed and two Sun Dance priests blew whistles during the ceremony.

"These were atrocities," said Steve Brady, the tribe's repatriation officer, who drove the bones home. "Just yesterday the United States was ready to go into Somalia to get remains. And this took 115 years?"

The Smithsonian has returned about 1,500 of 16,000 human remains, following the spirit of the 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, even though it does not fall under



the law, explained Tom Killion, the museum's repatriation director. "Our priority is to return those parts of the collection that would be considered sensitive stuff," he said.

Since the Indian wars, Montana has sent three times more men into combat than the national average, and its tribes have set the pace. Tonight, in Busby, Mont., the Crazy Dog society warriors — all army or marine veterans — find their patriotism complicated.

"We felt that it was not right to fly the flag or have a color guard, since these people were, uh, killed by American military," said Verlin Foote, a Crazy Dog man.

Other complications undermine this healing. Three Northern Cheyennes, one a direct descendant of Dull Knife, filed suit in U.S. District Court in Billings to stop the weekend burial because they wanted private burials of their ancestors. "These were grass-roots people," tribal chairman Llevando "Cowboy" Fisher said during a midnight feast of dried deer-meat stew and fry bread. "They weren't governed by today's laws."

There were other fears. "Some people say they shouldn't bury the skulls here when the bodies are in a mass grave at Fort Robinson," one Northern Cheyenne said Friday night. "They're worried about those spirits."

Saturday, Oct. 16, started cold and rainy, but the rising sun burned through clouds and damp as about 200 people gathered for the 10 a.m. burial. A

Billings TV reporter in black miniskirt and heels approached a Cheyenne woman in polyester pants and sneakers. "This is very emotional, very traditional, isn't it?" she asked.

"I want to add something," one Cheyenne man said angrily. "Those are two 50-caliber bullet holes in that little girl's head in there. Put that in the newspaper." In fact, the skull of a 3- to 5-year-old person of undetermined sex bore just one point-blank bullet hole, but nobody argued with him. Someone had placed a pair of pink beaded earrings on another box housing remains of a 9- to 11-year-old girl.

Steve Littlebird, camp crier, called out men from each warrior society to bring the boxes into the sunlight: the Crazy Dogs, the Elkhorn Scrapers, the Kit Foxes, the Bowstrings. Elkhorn Scraper Chief Gilbert White Dirt led a song, his voice quavering and soaring as two young women supporting an old woman started trilling to make the men's hearts strong. Then the crowd walked with the boxes across U.S. Highway 212 to the burial hill at the monument to Two Moons, another Cheyenne chief.

"Think of this little girl here," Steve Littlebird called, pointing to the box with the earrings. "No doubt she was crying. Maybe she was cold, hungry." More Cheyennes were crying now. "Those white people had no right to put us on display, they have no right to study us. We're human beings, just like them."

Two middle-aged women sobbed loudly, embracing. As the final song started, the trilling picked up and a Crazy Dog society man unpacked a rifle, firing into the air. Then it was time to bury the boxes, people throwing handfuls of dirt over them as they circled and shook hands with the society men until Steve Littlebird climbed onto a backhoe and finished the job.

"Lots of times, as I sit here alone on the floor with my blanket wrapped about me, I lean forward and close my eyes and think of him standing up out of the pit and fighting the soldiers, knowing that he would be killed, but doing this so that his little sister might get away into safety. Don't you think he was a brave young man?"

—Iron Teeth Woman, 1929

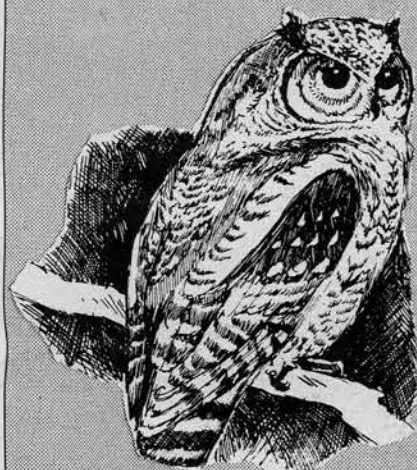
"A lot of good things came out of this," Steve Brady said late Friday, inside the tepee. "We took the same route back from southern Nebraska as they did. We had a pipe ceremony at Fort Robinson, and right at dawn an old lady started crying there. It was just day-break and I heard crying and our two Sun Dance priests who were there heard crying and at the end of the prayer she said 'Thank you' in Cheyenne." ■

Andrew Giarelli, a writer based in Logan, Utah, just returned from a Fulbright journalism and American studies professorship in Malta. He did folklore fieldwork on the Northern Cheyenne reservation from 1981-83.

HOTLINE

Death in Grand Canyon

A man who fell 360 feet to his death last summer became the third visitor to die at the Grand Canyon during a four-day period. Described by a sheriff's deputy as a transient who lived in the woods nearby, James Merriman apparently climbed over a safety rail at Mather Point Aug. 8, then fell while scaling a ledge onto which visitors often threw coins. A day before, Lori Newcomb, from Houston, lost her balance on a ledge near Cape Royal on the North Rim and plummeted 125 feet to her death. Two days before that, German tourist Andraes Zimmermann fell 400 feet from the same area, and in April, Donna Spangler, of Durango, Colo., fell 200 feet while moving back to pose for a picture. Park officials say they don't know why the cluster of deaths occurred. According to Park Service spokeswoman Maureen Oltrogge, "rangers mention the danger in all their interpretive programs ... and we even have signs with pictures warning people of falls."



Hannah Hinchman

Interior settles refuge lawsuit

The Department of Interior says it will weed out cattle grazing, motorboating and other "secondary" uses on the country's 491 national wildlife refuges. The announcement is the result of a lawsuit brought by environmental groups over incompatible "secondary" uses on nine refuges, including seven in the West (HCN, 12/28/93). Under the settlement, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has a year to modify, eliminate or justify all secondary uses that harm wildlife, as identified by the agency in a 1990 survey. "The vast majority of activities on refuges are non-controversial and don't harm the refuge or the wildlife," said Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt. "But where we do have problems, we will do what we can to eliminate them." Environmentalists hailed the agreement, but said it does not guarantee that the agency will put wildlife ahead of human use. "This is a huge first step," said Pamela Eaton of The Wilderness Society, one of the plaintiffs. "It sets up a process, but it is not at all clear what will come out of it." Eaton said environmentalists will continue to push legislation now before Congress — and supported by the Clinton administration — that would give refuge managers more authority to stop incompatible uses.

A timely solution for the Hells Canyon river war

HELLS CANYON — Peter Stahl, a Minnesota cabinet salesman, was fishing from the front of a whitewater raft when a jet boat screamed by in the recreation waters that border Oregon and Idaho.

The experience left Stahl fuming. "Here we are in one of the most remote canyons in the country, and they allow those god-damned things to buzz around in here. It's ridiculous."

Stahl isn't alone. A number of kayakers, rafters and driftboaters don't enjoy having their quietude shattered by noisy jet boats.

Floater have been known to moon jet boats, pitch rocks at them or give them the finger.

But jet boaters don't see why both groups can't get along. Some floaters, after all, hire power boats for "jet-backs" to the launch site.

"Some people are trying to depict a situation where it's a war zone: Disneyland and Bosnia in Hells Canyon," said Sandra Mitchell, executive director of the Northwest Power Boat Association. "But it's not. We can get along and we have been for years."

Since the 650,000-acre Hells Canyon National Recreation Area was created by Congress in the early 1970s, jet boats have enjoyed free rein here in the deepest canyon in North America.

In the early 1980s, a management plan set a quota of five launches per day for float craft, but put no restriction on jet boats. At the time, it was a political fix: When jet boaters appealed a plan restricting them, Assistant Agriculture Secretary John Crowell ordered the Forest Service to back off.

Now the Forest Service is revisiting the issue, trying to strike a balance that will satisfy jet boaters and float boaters. The agency's preferred alternative would set up a system of exclusive use for jet boats and float boats on an alternative week basis.

The plan has not been well-received by either group. "It's like the sword of Solomon. The Forest Service decided to cut the baby in half and see who screams the loudest," says Wendy Wilson, head of Idaho Rivers United, a river conservation group.

The Forest Service plan would work like this: During the May-September control season, each user group would have



Steve Bly

Rafters shoot through a rapid in Hells Canyon as a jet boat awaits its turn

the upper river to itself Thursday through Wednesday every other week.

However, in the upper "wild" section below Hells Canyon Dam, powerboats would get more launches, 20 per day, compared to seven for floaters. And jet boaters could stay at one campsite for four nights in the wild reach, while floaters would be limited to two nights at one camp.

Downstream, in the river's "scenic" section below Pittsburg Landing, the ratio favors jet boaters even more. "On a Sunday, you could see as many as 72 jet boats during high season," said Ric Bailey, executive director of Hells Canyon Preservation Council and a guide for Northwest Dories. "That allocates the whole river from Pittsburg on down to jet boats."

In public meetings, floaters have cried foul, saying that discrimination has prevailed too long in Hells Canyon. Jet boaters have complained that the Forest Service plan is too restrictive.

Woody Fine, assistant area ranger for Hells Canyon NRA, said the Forest Service has tried to strike a balance.

"It depends on how you measure equity, but we think we're making a lot of progress on improving the equity over the current situation and improving the care for the resource," Fine said.

Mitchell said that powerboaters will accept some restrictions, but do not like exclusive use on alternating weeks.

"It's based on the premise that the two uses can't get along, and the fact is, it's not true," she said. "This is a national recreation area, and we think it should be available for everyone to enjoy."

Responds Bailey, "Cigarette smokers are always happy to share a room with non-smokers. The fact is, they're not compatible."

But the Forest Service does not have the discretion to eliminate jet boats from Hells Canyon, Fine said. "Our marching orders from Congress are absolutely clear.

The use of jet boats will continue in the canyon; it's a question of how much."

Bailey said jet boats represent a "serious" safety problem for floaters. He witnessed one incident last summer in which a jet boat came within 10 feet of an inflatable kayak. The floater got pitched out into dangerous swift current, and then sucked under the water for 20 seconds in a turbulent whirlpool.

"It's like being a pedestrian in a freeway," Bailey said.

Others believe jet boats provide a safety outlet in emergencies. The U.S. Forest Service patrols the river by jet boat, and in medical emergencies or search and rescue operations, powerboats provide a quick way out of the canyon.

Jet boating is also big business. In nearby Lewiston, Idaho, 10 businesses manufacture power boats, selling each one for \$15,000 to \$30,000. Lewiston is known as "the jet boat capital of the world."

Several powerboat outfitters operate out of Lewiston and Riggins, Idaho, offering rare sturgeon fishing trips as well as steelhead fishing and upland game hunting, beyond the canyon experience itself.

Mitchell says it's appropriate to retain jet boats in Hells Canyon because powerboats are banned from 31 federally designated wild and scenic rivers in the Northwest.

"We're working hard to promote safety and we're trying to educate users about reducing our environmental impact," she said. "The solution is not to exclude one use or the other. It'd be like taking slow-moving campers and booting them off the highway."

The Hells Canyon National Recreation Area has prepared a draft environmental impact statement on the jet boat-float boat issue. Send comments by Nov. 22 to: Hells Canyon National Recreation Area, P.O. Box 699, Clarkston, WA 99403. For more information, call Woody Fine (509/758-0616) or Kurt Wiedenmann, planning-team leader for Wallowa-Whitman National Forest (503/523-6391).

— Steve Stuebner



Steve Bly

Jet boats and rafts pull up at Kirkwood Creek in Hells Canyon

Miners drop 480,000 claims to avoid fees

A reform designed by Congress to remove inactive or illegitimate claims from public land is doing just that. Miners abandoned more than 50 percent of their claims Aug. 31 when the Bureau of Land Management began charging a \$100 annual fee. Before Congress acted, the agency required no rent, although claim holders had to show \$100 worth of improvement or exploration on each claim each year.

Nationally, holdings dropped from over 1 million to 520,000 as the Aug. 31 renewal deadline passed. In Nevada, the U.S.'s largest hard-rock producer, the reform trimmed 270,000 claims to 130,000. In Oregon and Washington, holdings plummeted 62 percent, from 37,000 to 14,000, and in Idaho, miners dropped over 26,000 of their 57,000 claims. The reform raised \$52 million, well short of the \$97 million anticipated.

The reform drew angry criticism from miners, praise from environmentalists and a stoic, "we don't have an opinion on it, we just enforce it" from BLM officials. Mining proponents say the reform limits exploration and dispossesses the small miner.

"As a result, we may see serious mineral shortages in the future," says Bill Mote, executive director of the Northwest Mining Association.

Patricia Holmberg, president of the Independent Miners' Association says "the reform is a disaster for small miners." Although the reform exempts miners holding fewer than 10 claims, Holmberg says most small miners hold more than that. "We need to keep every penny of operating capital we can," says Holmberg. "We're talking about whether a family is going to have food on the table."

Claims vary in size. A lode claim can

be no larger than 20 acres; placer claims can be about twice that size. Corporate mining operations usually hold hundreds of claims.

Holmberg says the reform's intent — removal of claim abusers from public land — is "a joke," since the BLM can remove claim abusers easily by investigating suspicious claims. She says the change is part of a broader political agenda.

"I believe deep in my heart," says Holmberg, "that the reform is intended to get people off the land because if (Congress) doesn't get them off this way, they'll have to buy them out to conform with the endangered species law."

Environmentalists say the fee is a good first step. "The reform is the best thing that has happened in public land management in years," says Glenn Miller, professor of environmental and resource sciences at University of Nevada. "Miners have always had an unbeliev-

able free ride: free administration, free land, free minerals. If the land is worth anything to them, they should be willing to pay the fee."

Miller disagrees with miners who argue the reform will have no positive environmental effect. He says people take better care of land they pay for, and fewer claims mean fewer environmental disturbances.

One official suggests that the number of closed claims may be misleading. Bob Lawton, state director for the Montana BLM, says miners may be dropping, then re-opening claims to avoid the renewal fee and the number of claims could rebound when new claim figures are tallied.

—Todd Hinnen

Todd Hinnen is an HCN intern.



Pegasus gold mine in eastern Montana

Rob Badger

HOTLINE

Office bombed in Nevada

Just after midnight on the morning before Halloween, a crude bomb exploded on the roof of the BLM state office in Reno, Nev. No one was injured in the early Sunday blast which tore a three-foot hole in the ceiling and caused more than \$100,000 worth of damage to the engineering section where eight of the office's 200 employees work. Bureau of Land Management spokeswoman Michelle Barrett said an explosive device was apparently tossed onto the roof of the building. Witnesses reported a black, four-door Honda with an American flag attached to the back and a gray Mitsubishi pickup speeding from the scene immediately after the blast, according to the *Reno Gazette-Journal*. Barrett said there were no suspects, no one had claimed responsibility, and that she knew of no threats to the Bureau of Land Management in Nevada before the bombing. "No one knows what to think," she said. BLM officials asked anyone with information about the bombing to call the Secret Witness line at 702/322-4900.

More talk about wolves

Flooded by public comment, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service extended its deadline to Nov. 26 on a plan for restoring wolves to Yellowstone National Park. The original 90-day comment period on the project, which would return 30 wolves to the park by 1994, drew close to 10,000 letters. Ballots distributed by wolf advocates in Yellowstone elicited almost 95,000 responses, with 70,000 supporting reintroduction and 25,000 opposed. Agency officials said an increase in letters near the end of the period showed that many people still wished to be heard, AP reports. Wolf advocates attributed the extension to pressure from ranching interests, but project leader Ed Bangs said the delay was insignificant. "If you think about it, wolves were exterminated 70 years ago, ecologists first called for wolves to be put back in the park 30 years ago, they've been listed (as endangered) for 20 years, so I think giving people an extra month to comment on the draft EIS isn't going to delay the process that much." Send comments to Ed Bangs, Gray Wolf EIS Project Leader, P.O. Box 8017, Helena, MT 59601 (406/449-5202).

—David Frey

The writer works as an HCN intern.

Two 'miners' may be seeking shaft into U.S. Treasury

Taking advantage of an administrative lapse at the Department of Interior, a speculator staked a mining claim last spring on the North Spit of Oregon's Coos Bay. Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., says the claim is a scam to extort money from the federal government and should be rescinded.

A federal order had placed the bay-side dunes off limits to mining while the BLM's Coos Bay District office prepared a land management plan. The agency requested protection of the area for another two years beginning in early March, but Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt did not put the order into effect until April 29.

In the intervening period, James Aubert of Portland, Ore., filed a 1,370-acre mining claim. He said he could extract silica from the sand dunes to make glass.

Under the Mining Law of 1872, a claim holder can "patent" or convert federal land to private property for as little as \$2.50 an acre if it can be proved that a "prudent man" could mine the land and make a profit. The North Spit of Coos Bay is heavily used by off-road vehicle owners, hikers and fishermen, and it is home to a threatened bird, the snowy plover.

James Aubert and his partner in the silica mine, Jerry Steele, met in an Idaho

prison, the *Oregonian* reports. Aubert served over 14 months for grand theft, and Steele was jailed for more than two and a half years for writing a bad check.

DeFazio has appealed both to Babbitt and to BLM director Jim Baca to rescind the claim, but neither has taken action. Calling the situation "Sand Scam II," DeFazio says he sees parallels to a 1989 claim by Coosand Corp., which patented 780 acres of Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area (*HCN*, 6/4/90). Coosand is now negotiating to sell the land back to the federal government.

Although he says his agency has no plan to reject the claim, BLM district

manager Mel Chase says it will investigate to see if Aubert's property contains valid minerals for silica mining. It may also study the impact of mining on the snowy plover. However, Chase doubts that the bird's presence would block the mining claim.

For information, contact Rep. Peter DeFazio, 1233 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515-3704 (202/225-6416), or Mel Chase, BLM District Manager (503/756-0100).

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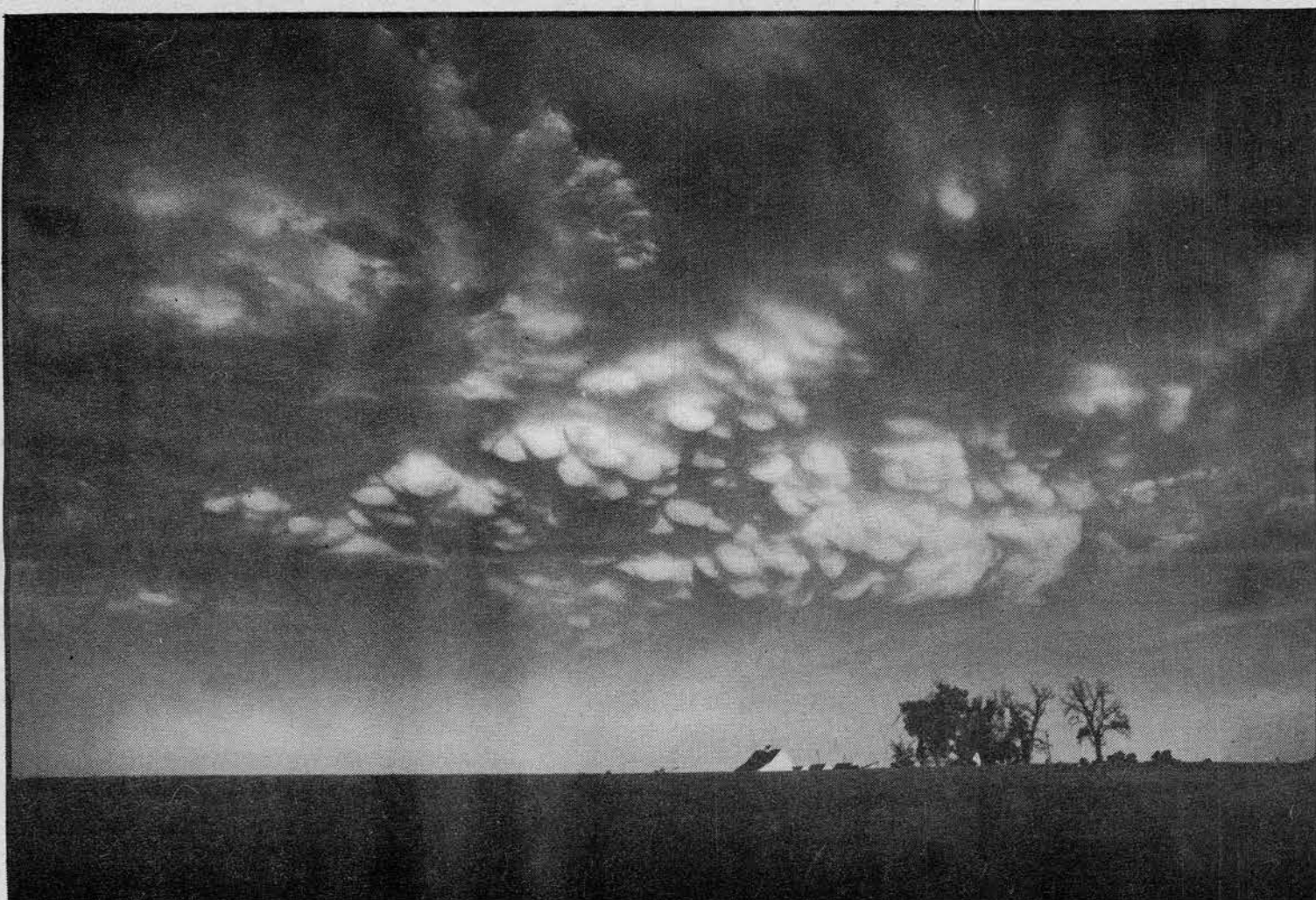
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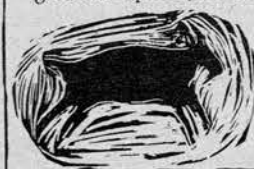
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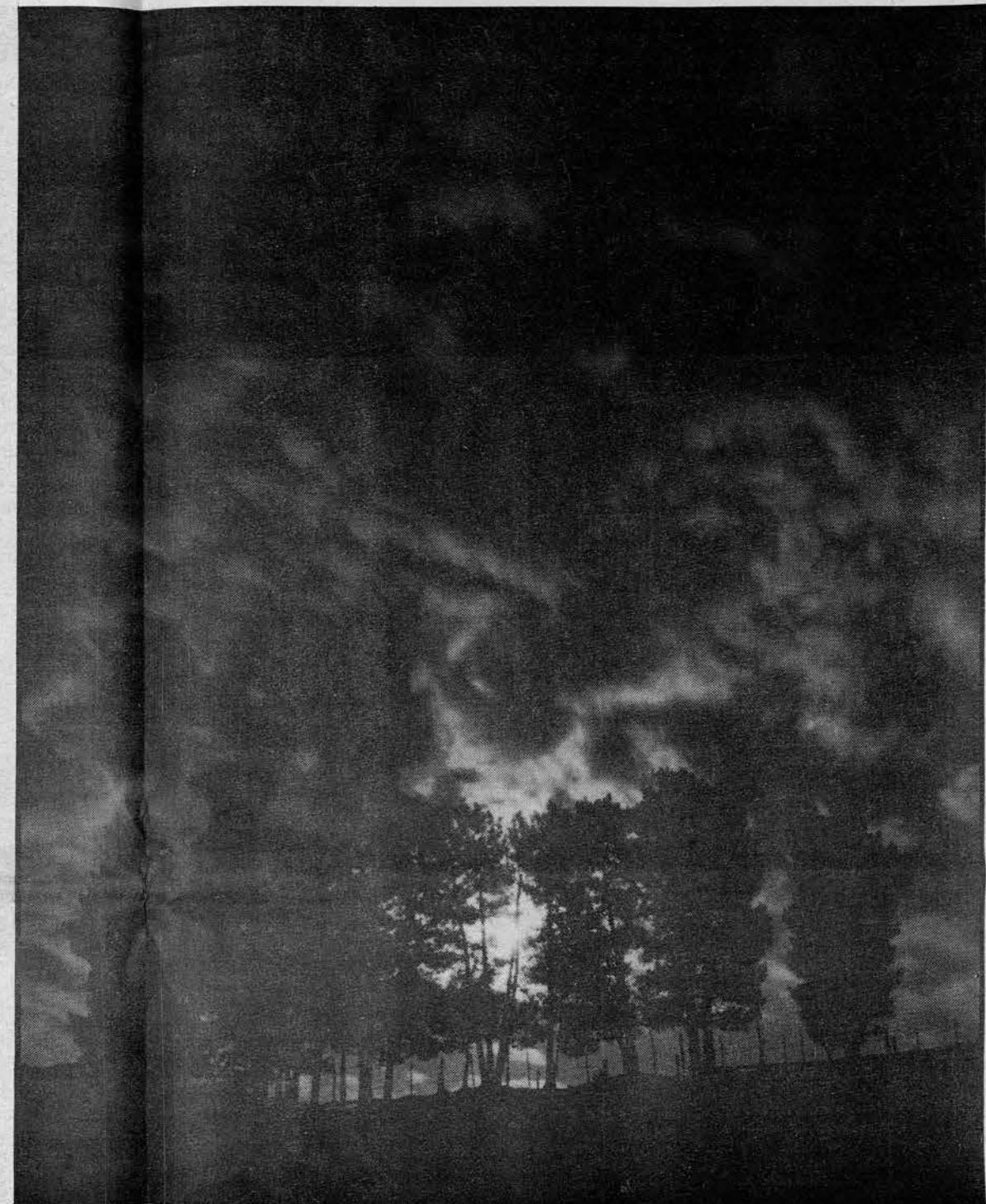
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The decline and fall of salmon ...

continued from page 1

In October, the Pacific Rivers Council, a Eugene-based group, filed petitions under the act to protect all coho salmon runs in the three states. It was joined by the Oregon Natural Resources Council, The Wilderness Society and about 20 other groups. These groups want the government to repair and protect spawning habitat.

A commercial fishing organization, the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Association, was invited to join, but did not. The fishing community is deeply divided, with many fearing that the petition will only cause further cut-backs in the harvest. Others believe that such a petition is the only way to get at the habitat destruction caused by logging.

An earlier set of petitions was filed in July by Oregon Trout, a Portland group, on behalf of 40 separate stocks in Oregon alone. It was joined by the Portland Audubon Society and the Siskiyou Regional Education Project. These groups also asked for a moratorium on fishing and improvements in hatchery practices.

Although the groups take somewhat different approaches, all wild runs of coho salmon south of Canada would receive special protection if the government agrees with their arguments.

The various petitions test the nation's resolve to protect a valuable natural resource that otherwise seems destined to waste away. The economic cost could be high; so, eventually, could the returns.

The petitions could also cause a backlash against the Endangered Species Act in Congress, where House Speaker Tom Foley, D-Wash., and others propose to trim the law's sails.

"We're definitely concerned about that," says Valerie Kitchen, director of The Wilderness Society's wild-fish program in Portland. "On the other hand, why have the law if you are not going to use it? It's been our best tool for species protection."

But Tom Robinson, director of the Oregon Salmon Commission, contends the Endangered Species Act will harm people who fish for a living. "If their petition were successful, we'd see the end of all commercial fishing, not only for coho but chinook as well," he says.

Others worry about nature's back-



Robert Kaiser

A purse seiner in upper Puget Sound, Washington

lash if the species are not listed. The story of the Northwest's fisheries so far is one of decline or extinction. If the petitions seeking emergency listing of the coho as threatened or endangered are granted, the coho would become the fifth member of the Pacific Northwest salmon family listed under the act.

For commercial fisherman Richard Allard of Newport, who works off the central Oregon coast, 1992 was a total loss. Finally he sold his 36-foot troller. "That's what I think of the future," he says. Now he's a high school teacher.

This summer, Dave Schlip of Tillamook put the tarp on his troller for the last time. Schlip is also a logger, and fears his chainsaw's days are similarly numbered. Hundreds of others are in the same boat.

Only a short season directed at a Columbia River hatchery run is now permitted by the Department of Commerce agency that regulates seasons off the coast of the Western states. When the limit of 30,000 coho is caught, the season will close. That is a far cry from the 300,000 coho typically caught in past years. In California, there hasn't been a commercial season on coho for five years.

These restrictions were set because coho salmon are already extinct in more than half their range in the United States,

and they are in peril throughout the southern two-thirds of the range. Coho are rarely seen south of San Francisco; they no longer travel inland up the Columbia River to Idaho, as they once did in great numbers.

In 1991, the American Fisheries Society said 214 stocks of salmon, steelhead and sea-run cutthroat trout in the West were at risk of extinction. Nine of these stocks are now listed, representing four species. About 170 of those spawn in national forests.

The fisheries study said nearly all wild runs of coho salmon in Washington, Oregon and northern California were ebbing toward extinction. Healthy runs of this tasty silver fish can be found only in the upper northwest corner of Washington, in Canada and Alaska.

In its petition, the Pacific Rivers Council offers the following state-by-state overview of the coho's critical condition. Estimates are based on wild fish that return to rivers and spawn, and do not take into account those bred in hatcheries.

In Oregon, for example, 22 hatcheries annually release nearly 35 million

tiny coho. These fish do not qualify for endangered species protection, and excessive hatchery production can weaken wild runs by encouraging overfishing or diluting the gene pool.

California: Historic population of coho ranged between 200,000 and 500,000 in the 1940s. Today, 1,500 to 5,000 adult fish return, less than 1 percent of their number during World War II.

Oregon coast: Wild coho runs exceeded 1.3 million fish a century ago, and were perhaps much higher before white settlers arrived in the mid-19th



Robert Kaiser

Richard and Diane Allard, with daughter Arielle, were forced to sell their boat

Groups blast recovery plan for four salmon runs

A government proposal to save Snake River salmon all but discards the idea of creating swifter rivers as a key measure to revive four threatened and endangered runs.

Instead, it suggests that putting baby salmon in barges and sending them down the Snake and Columbia rivers is the best way to help restore the dwindling runs of chinook salmon to sustainable levels. The fish are protected by the Endangered Species Act.

The plan has been denounced as "gutless" by environmental groups, including the Sierra Club, American Rivers and the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Bill Arthur, Northwest director of the Sierra Club, called the plan "obsolete on arrival. The recommendations

are a protection plan for the hydrosystem, not a recovery plan for salmon."

The scientists who wrote the plan say improving the salmon's chances will be difficult and expensive at best. The proposal by the Snake River Chinook Recovery Team goes to the National Marine Fisheries Service, which will make a final ruling sometime next year.

The recovery team rejected the so-called "drawdown" option as too expensive and speculative. That option, championed by Idaho Gov. Cecil Andrus, calls for lowering reservoir levels during the spring and summer migration season. This would create a swifter current, reducing the salmon's travel time to the Pacific Ocean and therefore its exposure to the hazards of

dams, predators and pollution (HCN, 5/31/93).

The recovery team found that drawdowns would require expensive changes to dams and impair river commerce and hydroelectric production. Instead, the team called for a two- or three-year test of drawdowns behind Lower Granite Dam near Lewiston, Idaho.

"There is no way you can get back to a natural system," said Don Began, a retired fisheries professor at the University of Washington who served as chairman of the salmon scientific team. "Trying to improve in-river survival may take a very long time and be very, very expensive, and right now we can't guarantee that fixing the dams will work."

The team was appointed in 1991 to

draw up a recovery plan for the four stocks of salmon as required by the Endangered Species Act. They are sockeye salmon, an endangered species that has dwindled to one or two fish in recent years; and spring, summer and fall chinook.

Although there are tens of thousands of each run, most are raised in hatcheries. The act protects only wild, native runs, which have suffered huge losses due to dams, irrigation withdrawals, fishing and other activities.

For more information on the proposed recovery plan, or to make comments through Dec. 8, write Merritt Tuttle, director, National Marine Fisheries Service, 911 N.E. 11th Ave., Portland, OR 97232.

—P.K.

century. Today, wild coho runs on the northern Oregon coast may be as low as 10,000 fish, and are almost extinct in southern coastal streams such as the Pistol.

Columbia River: Annual commercial catches of coho peaked in the 1890s, but by then the coho's habitat had already been greatly disturbed by mining, grazing, homesteading and dams. The historic run may have exceeded 1.2 million fish. By 1940, landings of coho declined to nearly 10 percent of the 1890 peak. Today, the wild coho may be extinct in the Columbia. All that remain, according to a recent ruling by the National Marine Fisheries Service, are coho of hatchery origin.

Washington coast and Puget Sound: The incidence of local extinction is significant, possibly higher than that of coastal Oregon. In Puget Sound, the average annual catch declined by 43 percent from the turn of the century to the mid-1970s. Among 54 coho stocks outside the Columbia basin, the state of Washington lists 17 as critical or depressed.

The Pacific coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) is most vulnerable at the beginning and end of its life. It typically spends its first year or two in freshwater, then another two years at sea. Having grown to about 7-to-10 pounds, the coho returns to its native rivers to spawn.

The cause of its decline is controversial, even among environmental groups. Factors cited include damage to its headwaters, intense ocean fishing, interaction with hatchery fish, and the introduction of exotic species. As Oregon Trout points out, there is no gauntlet of dams to kill them. Only in a few coastal areas do dams cross their paths.

"Coho habitat has been nibbled away one bite at a time by a huge number of factors," says David Bayles of the Pacific Rivers Council.

According to studies cited by the council, sedimentation, debris flows, and increases in stream temperature often result from disturbances in headwater areas caused by logging and logging roads.

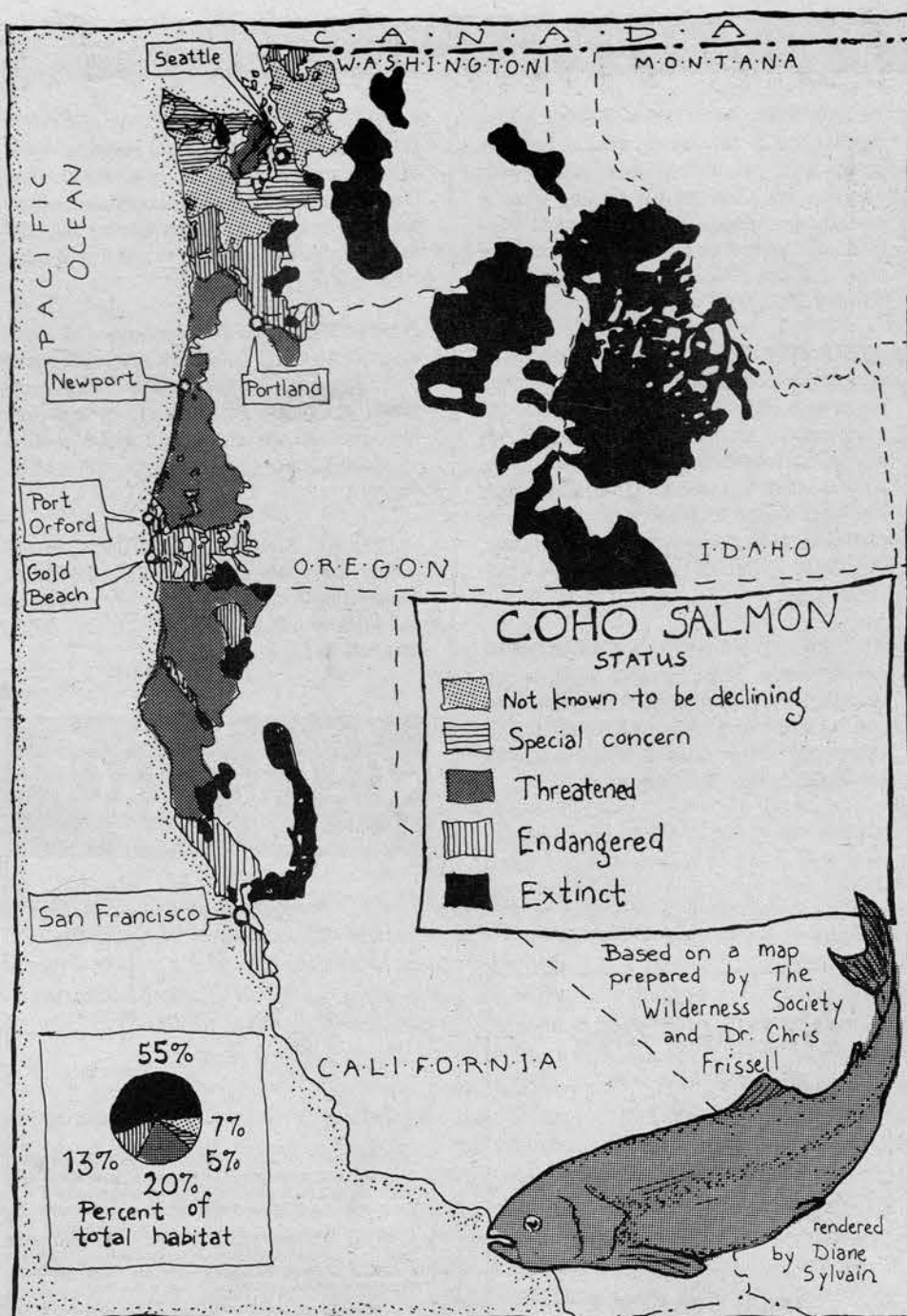
"These impacts alone may be sufficient to damage or destroy coho populations even where riparian buffers zones are left along fish-bearing streams," according to a council report written by Oregon State University ecologist Chris Frissell.

Coho habitat is also lost when large woody debris is removed from streams, and the stable, complex channels and wetlands associated with floodplain forests are damaged and destroyed by logging, grazing, farming and urbanization.

Last summer, the Clinton administration proposed stiffer logging restrictions in salmon-bearing watersheds and called for a program to repair past damage. But environmental groups contend these measures aren't enough, apply only to federal lands and don't take into account other land-use activities.

"Unless the timber industry makes major changes soon, these petitions could potentially close down the timber industry in every salmon watershed west of the Cascades," says Glen Spain, a spokesman for the largest commercial fishing organization on the West Coast, the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations.

"These petitions will force the timber industry to change its short-sighted practices. As it is now, jobs created in the timber industry just bankrupt more



commercial fishermen, run more salmon stocks toward extinction and devastate the same communities. What kind of sense is that?"

The industry claims its practices have improved. It admits that past practices, such as the removal of woody debris from streams, did damage the runs. However, the industry removed woody debris at the request of state fishery agencies, who thought the debris posed difficult obstacles for the fish. Around 1972, after studies demonstrated the need for debris in streams, that practice was halted. Still, loggers can and do cut trees down to the streambed on private lands, causing streams to load up with sediment and water temperatures to rise.

No one monitors the cumulative effects of logging, agriculture, mining and development on fish populations. In 1991, a measure to do so was killed by the Oregon Legislature. Then in 1993, the Legislature barely beat back attempts by the timber industry to cripple the fish and wildlife protection laws now on the books.

But land-use activities alone do not explain the full extent of human-caused damage to these runs.

In its petitions, Oregon Trout targets hatcheries and overfishing. Minimum state and federal guidelines for coho returns have not been set in seven years, yet the group says 135,000 coho must be spared the fishing nets to keep the runs alive. Recent estimates show fewer than 40,000 coho have been returning to spawn.

Pat Higgins, a fishery biologist in Arcata, Calif., says ocean trawlers catch eight out of every 10 wild adult coho. Even if onshore habitat were in good condition, he claims they might not be able to survive even a catch rate of six out of 10.

"But with the river conditions as they are, we shouldn't be catching any of

these fish," he says.

As Jim Middaugh of the Oregon Natural Resources Council says, "If all we do is stop fishing, these fish are going to go extinct anyway."

Solutions to the coho crisis will not come easily. Perhaps, as suggests Rep. Gerry Studds, D-Mass., chairman of the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, there ought to be a salmon czar to make things happen. As things stand, fish managers have no control over habitat. Habitat is in the hands of the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and state boards of forestry — groups that see their main job as cutting the trees down.

President Clinton's plan for the Northwest forests prescribes strong pro-

tection for watersheds, but the rules would apply only on federal land. This could backfire by encouraging increased logging on state and private lands where the rules are relatively lax.

Ocean fishing is regulated by the 1976 Magnuson Act, which makes it illegal to fish endangered runs down to the bone. But fishery managers are under great pressure from commercial fishing groups to let it happen anyway. Even so, managers' attempts to tighten harvests over the past several years to protect wild stocks have not worked. The Endangered Species Act could change everything.

Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown will ultimately decide whether to list the coho.

But there is, in effect, a salmon czar, Rollie Schmiten, the Northwest regional director of the National Marine Fisheries Service, an agency within the Commerce Department.

Schmiten is a Republican whose cautious approach has displeased some environmentalists. He is promoting a formula for protecting salmon runs that tends to overlook localized problems so long as stocks are healthy in a broader area. Runs it defines as "evolutionary significant units" are the only ones to qualify for protection. The term is not found in the language of the Endangered Species Act, and faces a test in court.

Schmiten is evaluating not only coho runs for the endangered species list, but all steelhead runs in the West and chinook runs in the mid-Columbia.

"I have been a fisheries manager for nearly a decade and a half," he recently told Studds' panel during a hearing in Portland. "And in my experience, I believe there has never been full consideration of fish needs in land-use decision making."

Anyone who goes to the supermarket may wonder why all the fuss. After all, the trays in the meat section are often brimming with salmon among the ling cod and red snapper. Where are these salmon from? Farms in Scandinavia, says Robinson of Oregon Salmon. ■

Paul Koberstein writes in Portland, Oregon.

The Pacific Rivers Council has prepared a 29-page briefing book, *The Decline of Coho Salmon and the Need for Protection Under the Endangered Species Act*, which is available for \$10 from Pacific Rivers Council Inc., Box 309, Eugene, OR 97440 (503/355-0119).

Western governors want help

Four Western governors recently urged President Clinton to design a regional strategy to restore declining salmon runs and avoid federal action under the Endangered Species Act.

The governors, Cecil Andrus of Idaho, Mike Lowry of Washington, Pete Wilson of California, and Barbara Roberts of Oregon, said the loss of salmon and dependent fisheries, together with recovery actions already initiated under the act, "strain the economic, social and cultural fabric of our states and result in conflicts costing millions of dollars."

The governors wrote that the fate of salmon represents the most significant natural resources challenge facing the Northwest, reports *The Oregonian*.

The National Marine Fisheries Service is now deciding whether to grant the request by the Pacific Rivers

Council for an emergency listing for coho salmon under the act.

An emergency listing would bypass the agency's usual two-year process and trigger immediate moves to recover the species. The agency is currently reviewing three different 1993 petitions to list coho salmon in the Northwest as threatened or endangered under the act.

The first petition was filed by a group in Santa Cruz, Calif., on March 11. It requested listing for California coastal coho salmon. The second was filed by Oregon Trout on July 21, and the third, filed by Pacific Rivers Council and other groups on Oct. 20, urged listing coho in Oregon, California and Idaho. The federal fisheries agency plans to study all petitions at once and report to the public by July 1994.

— P.K., staff

Unclassifieds

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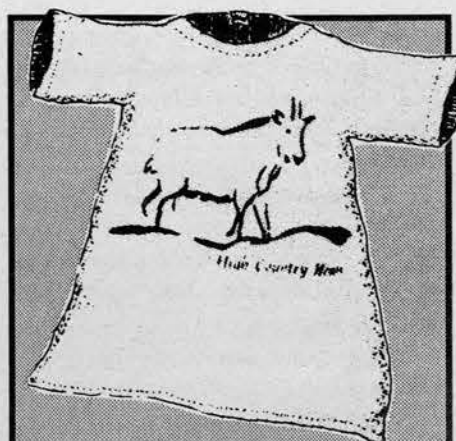
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Vol. 25 No. 21

Opinion by Ed Marston

Dale Robertson is gone, the first Forest Service Chief to be removed since Gifford Pinchot was fired by President William Howard Taft in 1910. That such a radical event occurred with so little controversy shows how weak the agency is today.

Attention now centers on his replacement. If Clinton had his druthers, he would already have appointed biologist Jack Ward Thomas. But Thomas has intense opposition from at least two regional foresters, from 70 out of 120 forest supervisors, and from Robertson's predecessor, Max Peterson. For the moment, Clinton has chosen to bide his time without abiding Robertson, and appointed an interim Chief.

The opposition to Thomas is based on his lack of Senior Executive Service status. Opponents say that makes Thomas — who is a career Forest Service employee and eminent wildlife scientist — a political appointee.

Thomas led several scientific panels over the past few years that showed how his agency created an ecological and economic trainwreck in the Northwest. Some who oppose Thomas helped design the disaster; their opposition may have more to do with Thomas's science than with his political status. Other officials can't believe that a scientist who has never supervised a ranger district or national forest would become Chief. It's a bit like, let's say, Clinton becoming commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

The opposition of the traditionalists is understandable. But it is based on the assumption that the Forest Service needs more professionalism and more up-from-the-ranks leadership.

Instead, the Forest Service needs to change the inbred, sheltered atmosphere that has gotten it into its present near-fatal mess. Robertson was up-from-the-ranks, and he may have destroyed the agency.

Warnings were everywhere

The Forest Service had ample warning that it was headed for trouble. Almost 30 years ago, Congress passed the Wilderness Act because the agency would not preserve wild lands. The act removed almost all Forest Service discretion over wilderness. Had the Forest Service been well led, it would have recognized the significance of the Wilderness Act and long ago begun to move into harmony with the public.

Instead, a series of Chiefs culminating with Robertson placed Forest Service values above public values, and used the agency's "professionalism" to justify adherence to its ideology. That ideology was handed down to the Forest Service by the Reverend Thomas Malthus, a 19th-century economist who predicted population would always outrun society's ability to feed and clothe itself. Like Malthus, the Forest Service expects the world to drown in an endlessly rising tide of human bodies with our only hope the all-out production of logs and other commodities.

The agency may be right. We may soon be living in caves, subsisting on roots and wishing we'd listened to the agency or to population-control advocates. Whatever the merits of its argument, the Forest Service does not have the right to oppose the national consensus. Its

The Forest Service clings to an outmoded ideology

job is to serve the values democracy forges. And the nation has forged new values; it has elected to move away from emphasizing commodities and toward an environmental ethic.

Markets, technology and trade

What other principles have taken commodity production's place? Within what broad context should the Forest Service be using its management and scientific skills?

First, society believes strongly in markets. That is especially hard on the socialistic West, with its top-down economy conceived in Washington and implemented by federal agencies cooperating with loggers, miners, ranchers and dam builders.

Accompanying our growing reliance on markets is belief in trade, technology and interchangeability of resources. We don't fear shortages because we think we can substitute one commodity for another: conservation for electric power production, metal studs for two-by-fours, recycled newsprint for wood pulp, and fiber optics for transportation. We also believe we can import what we choose not to produce.

Substitutions don't always lead to a better world. Production of metal studs may cause more damage than cutting trees. And importing logs from Siberia may export the Northwest's problems to Russia.

So this new approach, like the old approach, has problems. But society has made these decisions, and it's the Forest Service's job to implement them — not to resist and second-guess them.

The Forest Service has also failed to understand that when it comes to long-term natural resource decisions, the West's leader is not the Chief or the head of the BLM, or even the Western senators. The leader is Patricia Nelson Limerick at the University of Colorado. Because of the work she and her fellow Western historians have done, we no longer view Western history as the benign settling of an empty land. We see a very mixed story of progress and tragedy that includes the plundering of the earth and the slaughter of the West's earlier inhabitants.

Westerners will not engage in loud repudiation of

the region's past. But we will change. Twenty-first century "reclamation" will seek to restore the landscape and ecosystems that the last century damaged or destroyed. Westerners will also seek to make amends to the Indian nations.

The Forest Service leadership opposes this shift in values and perspective. With its top-down structure and twin shields of professionalism and past reputation, the agency has survived intact, a relic from an earlier age. It has continued to cut trees and damage landscapes and ecosystems in obedience to a Department of Agriculture production ethic the public no longer accepts. It is a Rip Van Winkle agency, reluctantly awakening to face its worst nightmare — the need to adhere to public values.

What a new Chief faces

Given the nature of the Forest Service culture, the new Chief may face an impossible task. The agency may not be salvageable. Of those willing to undertake this Mission Impossible, Jack Ward Thomas is the best in view. But even if he is appointed, there will be no miracles. Timber will oppose him from the start and some environmentalists will be suspicious of his support of Clinton's Option 9 on logging in the Northwest.

His easiest task will be replacing the agency's top leadership, including a bunch of forest supervisors. The harder job will be to convince the Forest Service as a whole to become society's servant rather than aspiring to be its master.

Will Thomas be able to overcome his scientific background and become enough of a generalist and politician to lead the agency onto ground it has never dreamt of treading? And given his long career with the agency, and the acculturation and loyalty that implies, will he be able to tell the truth about the Forest Service's dismal record, finally freeing the agency from its past and enabling it to move forward?

He has an excellent professional reputation. He has proven fearless in the fights over old growth. And he seems to have the personality for the job. Thomas is a west Texas farm boy who loves the public spotlight and has the charm and quickness to bring life and personality to an agency whose most "human" face until now belonged to a bear.

Confirmation hearings are no threat

At least four Republican Western senators have threatened to hold confirmation hearings if Clinton picks anyone but a good-old-boy out of the Senior Executive Service ranks. Their threat should be welcomed. At the present time, of course, the Western senators are busy filibustering, attempting to turn the clock on the public's grasslands back to the middle decades of the 19th century.

When the Senate takes care of that matter, it should turn its attention to the Forest Service. Let's hear the new Chief, whoever Clinton nominates, explain to the nation how he or she is going to do the job. Let's hear the new Chief's view of the agency's past and future.

Most of all, let's hear the Chief pledge allegiance to the people of the United States, and to our values, rather than to the Forest Service's present destructive, self-serving culture. ■

Ed Marston is publisher of *High Country News*.

LETTERS

DARE TO BE INCORRECT

Dear HCN,

Obviously some have wilder dreams than others. I'm referring to the exchange between David Hogan and HCN publisher Ed Marston in the Oct. 18 issue. Hogan is one of the finest and most effective ecologists in the Southwest and alluding to his viewpoint as simple is a grave injustice.

I hope Marston is right, that society will in time begin to see the world differently due to on-the-ground efforts to find a common denominator. How long will this take and to what degree will the world change? I know I'll be long dead and buried before it occurs, along with both once-intact ecosystems and those that failed to rehabilitate due to mediocre conservation practices.

Some can't wait around for the world to change and are listening to scientific data even if they put us in direct opposi-

tion to certain factions and we are called uncivil. So, Marston, you create an amorphous giggling humanity and meanwhile I'll use science as a tool for immediate preservation. You are misguided to think that both can occur simultaneously under the umbrella of social reform. I challenge you, the reader, to determine where your primary focus lies: Is it habitat and wildlife preservation or is it human social reform? Whichever, call it by name and go at it. It's that simple. Uncivil and not politically correct, but effective.

Faith Walker
Viola, Idaho

RANCHERS BELONG, TOO

Dear HCN,

Regarding the Oct. 18 story about the 77,000-acre Taylor Ranch in Costilla Coun-

ty, Colo., what's the difference between the Hispanics who historically used that ranch as a commons for livestock grazing, including sheep, from their small private farms, and the private ranchers who use public lands in other counties for the same purpose?

There was a definite note of sympathy for the "many families (whose) access to it meant the difference between having to leave and being able to stay in their community."

But I've detected no similar sympathy for current-day ranching communities that will be destroyed when public lands grazing is eventually shut down.

As to biodiversity activist David Hogan's letter berating *High Country News* for fence-straddling on eliminating sheep and cows, for which "there is no place ecologically," I was caused to wonder why he hasn't seen fit to remove himself to wherever his immigrant ancestors originated, because he is as

ecologically misplaced in the West as the sheep and cow.

Maxine Keesling
Woodinville, Washington

WHOSE LAND IS IT?

Dear HCN,

Re: "A Lost Land Grant" (HCN, 10/18/93), while I'm firmly on the side of the local people in this community-vs.-absentee-landlord conflict, I am compelled to play devil's advocate just a bit. When folks are discussing any of our numerous land-grant disputes, their historical perspective stops short by one important step.

What makes them think the land was the king's to divvy up in the first place?

Bob Clancy
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Logging protester slapped with SLAPP suit

An open letter to Judge William Dwyer:

I am a 37-year-old environmentalist who has been concerned about trees since Earth Day 1970, when I watched strip miners rip away the beautiful, forested Pennsylvania hillsides where I played as a youth. Since that first Earth Day, the abuse of our environment has only continued, but your 1991 injunction that stopped the clearcutting of ancient forests in the Pacific Northwest was a bright moment of hope. A dark and chill moment was this Aug. 19, when the Oregon State Supreme Court upheld a SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation) suit against me and five others for protesting logging in ancient forests.

Your court injunction halted all new timber sales in ancient forests, including the forest where our protest took place.

You cited a "systematic refusal by the Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife Service to comply with the laws protecting wildlife ..." You also stated your concern that "old-growth forests are lost for generations. No amount of money can replace the environmental loss."

In 1992, the Forest Service completed a plan to protect the spotted owl and asked you to lift the injunction. You found their plan inadequate and refused. This December, the Clinton administration will present you with yet another forest plan. Your ruling on this plan will be one of the most significant environmental decisions of the century.

I imagine that you might agree with me that two things which have made our country great are democracy and an abundance of natural resources. Perhaps you share some of my grief and distress at the continual erosion of both. Through my involvement with the ancient forest issue, I've seen great forests cut down and hauled away, and I've seen civil rights I thought I could stand on crumble beneath me.

Out of a belief that continued logging of the ancient forests was wrong, one July morning in 1987 I chained myself to a logging yarder in the North Kalmiopsis roadless area of Oregon's Siskiyou National Forest. In a nonviolent protest, we "arrested" the machine for crimes against trees, sang songs and hung a banner from the 90-foot spar pole used to drag felled trees up to the waiting log trucks.

The ancient trees were falling fast, and with no one but loggers in the forest to hear them crashing, we had to think of a way to get reporters to drive 40 miles of bad road to the remote logging site. Video footage and photos of our action were widely seen in the local and national news media.

We expected to pay for this publicity. We endured two weeks in jail and fines and restitution totaling \$3,350. What we did not expect was to be sued by Huffman & Wright Inc., a logging firm from Canyonville, Ore., for \$50,000 in punitive damages for staging our protest on their yarder.

Not that Huffman & Wright, a small contractor, acted alone. They were represented by a top timber industry attorney,

Mark Rutzick, who has argued against the spotted owl in your court. At our trial, he brandished spikes and monkeywrenches, even though we had neither done nor been charged with the slightest property damage. We tried to state clearly to the jury our philosophical opposition to tree spiking and all forms of violence, but Rutzick's scare tactics worked.

The Roseburg, Ore., jury of loggers and millworkers awarded \$25,000 to Huffman & Wright. We hoped that, on appeal, the Oregon Supreme Court would recognize that to allow additional punishment through a monetary award would have a chilling effect on every-

OTHER VOICES

one's right to free speech.

But a majority of the Oregon Supreme Court did not agree with us. The ruling opinion asserted that our protest could be separated into a free-speech action and a trespassing action and that a jury is allowed to award punitive damages for the trespassing part.

The court's minority opinion to overturn the judgment was more realistic: hanging the banner from the yarder was an integral part of the statement and a jury would not be able to separate it into two actions. The dissenting justices found that the "... resulting possibility that speech will be punished due to the punitive damages standard is of constitutional magnitude ..."

But the majority rules, and a new legal precedent

has been set. Civil disobedience, the political tool forged at that tea party in Boston Harbor, is probably no longer a viable option for the defense of ancient forests.

That is why I appeal to you, Judge Dwyer. In the battle over the Northwest's ancient forests, yours is the most powerful voice yet to speak for the forests. The ancient forest issue is nearing the end of a long political process, and your court has become the last recourse for the forests and those who speak for them.

The administration promised a new forest plan based on sound science. But when the first eight options developed by Clinton's scientific team failed to allow enough cut for big timber interests, Option 9 was stitched together with all the integrity of a Dr. Frankenstein monster.

If implemented, Option 9 would leave 40 percent of the old growth completely open to clearcutting. Even the designated ancient forest "reserves" would be open to some logging at the discretion of the Forest Service. Much of the designated reserve land is highly roaded and fragmented forest with ancient trees on only about a third of the acreage. Road building and logging would continue in roadless areas where the most valuable ancient forests are found. The Clinton administration, worried that it won't pass muster with you, Judge Dwyer, has threatened to seek congressional riders to once again bypass the environmental laws if environmentalists don't support the plan.

According to government figures, the difference between Option 1, which protects all ancient forests,

and Option 9 is 6,000 jobs across three states. A ban on log exports, a remedy which would create at least 6,000 jobs in local sawmills, is not a part of Clinton's plan. One can only conclude that Option 9 was designed to benefit industry profits, not workers and not the ancient forest ecosystem. When you make your ruling on the legal validity of the plan, I pray you will consider this carefully.

Twenty-one years ago, Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas ruled in a minority opinion that human representatives should be allowed to speak for trees and wild creatures in courts of law. He argued for the "... conferral of standing upon environmental objects to sue for their own preservation." Justice Douglas also said: "Roadless areas are one pledge to freedom."

Our ancient forest heritage is a pledge to freedom that you can make sure America keeps. As for the pledge that citizens will be able to effectively petition our government, I see that freedom turning to sawdust before my eyes, and I fear that soon all defense of freedom will be relegated to minority opinions.

Kelpie Wilson
Cave Junction,
Oregon

The writer can be reached at Box 1444, Cave Junction, OR 97523.



A protester perches atop a 92-foot yarder tower during a 1987 action in the Siskiyou National Forest in which Kelpie Wilson took part

David J. Cross

Is the Gila pasture or wilderness?

opinion by Steve Johnson

The 145,000-acre Diamond Bar grazing allotment in New Mexico is a case study in arrogance. It is New Mexico's largest allotment and almost all the land — 121,000 acres — is either in the Gila or Aldo Leopold wilderness areas. Grazed for more than a century, the Diamond Bar had not made money for a long time, and in 1981, the third owner in eight years went bankrupt.

In 1982, the Federal Intermediate Credit Bank of Texas took over as owner and began advertising the ranch for sale. But the bank was distressed to learn that the Forest Service, as a result of a 1979-1983 range study, proposed reducing its livestock permit from 1,188 to 833 head, a 30 percent reduction. Stating that the reduction would cost the bank \$500,000 in lost value, bank officials met with Forest Service officials, but without initial success.

A year or so later, the bank brought in the Cooperative Extension Service at New Mexico State University for an analysis. The land grant college's "study" recommended a return to 1,188 head. The Forest Service dutifully responded with a Memorandum of Understanding with the bank, authorizing 1,188 head plus 15 new stock tanks to be built in the wilderness.

The ranch was sold in late 1985 to a family partnership for about \$850,000, or roughly \$715 per head. With only 100 acres of private land included, nearly all the value of the ranch was based on the public-land grazing permit.

A year later, the Diamond Bar Cattle Company presented the Forest Service with a plan for 45 more stock tanks, 33 of which were to be in wilderness areas. The new owners characterized the new stock tanks as "relief for the riparian areas" and good for both cattle and wildlife. Water located away from the streams would draw the cattle to the uplands, thereby "utilizing the range more intensively," according to a letter to the Forest Service from Wesley Snyder, one of the partners.

Once again eager to please, the Forest Service released a draft plan in 1987 that proposed using bulldozers in the wilderness, with 33 new stock tanks to be dug out of wet meadows in drainages above trout streams sheltering the endangered Gila trout. The justification for the bulldozers was "resource protection" of riparian areas and less impact to the land than the numerous trips that would be required of horse-drawn equipment.

Despite claims from The Wilderness Society and the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund that an environmental impact statement was required, the Forest Service spent four more years in a planning process that seemed to ignore much of the public comment. In response, local New Mexico environmentalists formed a grass-roots group called Gila Watch, documenting management problems on the allotment, and bringing scientists in to see the riparian areas. Susan Schock, a Silver City resident and leader of the grass-roots opposition to the new

stock tanks, saw the proposed development in wilderness areas as a dangerous precedent for all wilderness areas. To anti-grazing activists, spreading cattle out with additional water sources is an agency ploy to avoid reductions in livestock. According to Schock, the uplands targeted for more cattle tanks are already in poor condition, their streams converted from perennial to intermittent flows. She accuses the Forest Service of a basic failure to recognize the connection between upland watersheds and the riparian areas they support.

Yet another problem develops in riparian areas with cattle. It takes constant herding to keep livestock out of the stream bottoms, something the new permittees of the Diamond Bar cannot afford. According to Schock, two hired hands are present only for about three months during some years. Under such conditions, it does not matter how many additional tanks are constructed, since cattle will still spend most of their time in the cool stream bottoms.

In the summer of 1992, riparian expert Bob Ohmart wrote a letter to the Gila Forest Service after a six-hour hike into a riparian area in Upper Black Canyon, in the Aldo Leopold Wilderness. Ohmart works at Arizona State University's Center for Environmental Studies. "I have always defended the management of the U.S. Forest Service over that of the Bureau of Land Management," Ohmart wrote, "but the Upper Black Canyon pasture is as degraded as any riparian system I have ever observed on BLM lands."

There is nothing unusual about the impact of cattle on riparian areas in the Southwest, or anywhere else in the arid West. Like the cattle themselves, the signs of grazing abuse are everywhere in the thin green lines that are scattered over a predominantly brown land. But when those streams flow through the Aldo Leopold and Gila wildernesses of New Mexico, the destruction is harder to bear. Here, in the birthplace of our great system of wilderness, where the Gila Wilderness was 75 years ago, one expects to find a place free of the cow, where streams don't smell and taste like a stockyard.

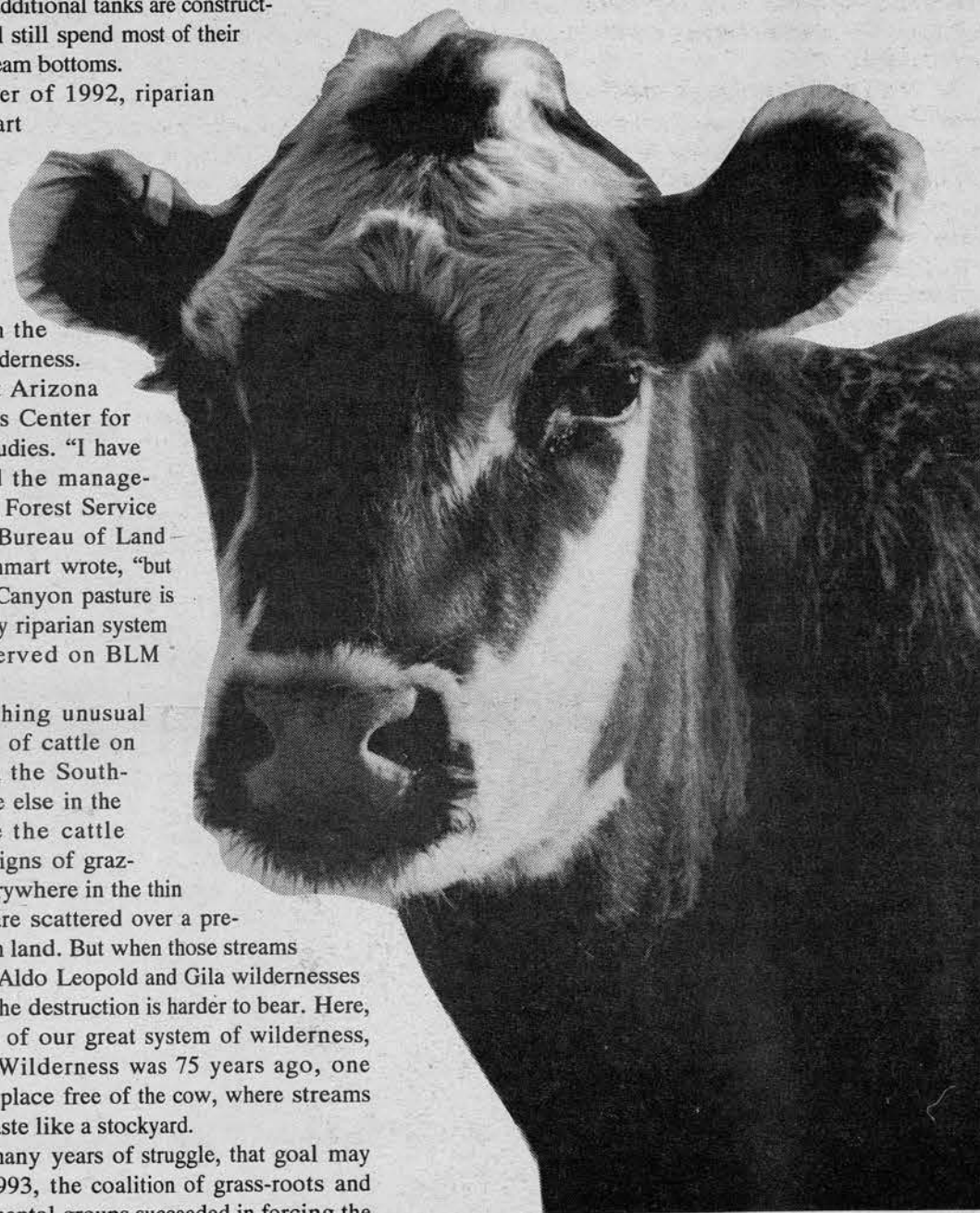
Now, after many years of struggle, that goal may be in sight. In 1993, the coalition of grass-roots and national environmental groups succeeded in forcing the Forest Service to prepare an environmental impact

statement on its plans to expand cattle grazing in the Gila and Aldo Leopold wildernesses.

The coalition insists that the forest plan's goal to "improve all riparian areas to satisfactory condition or better" be followed on the Gila National Forest. If it's not, the coalition made clear, litigation is possible.

A draft of the EIS is due in mid-November, according to the Forest Service. For a copy or for other information, contact Gerald A. Engel, Mimbres Ranger District, Gila National Forest, P.O. Box 79, Mimbres, NM 88049, or contact Susan Schock, Gila Watch, P.O. Box 309, Silver City, NM 88062 (505/388-2584). ■

Steve Johnson is a wildlife advocate and free-lance writer in Tucson, Arizona.



Mike McClure

LETTERS

WASHINGTON, D.C., DOESN'T HAVE THE ANSWERS

Dear HCN,

Jeff St. Clair's essay, "Babbitt's no Stegner or Abbey," is a welcome critique of the environmental community (HCN, 9/6/93). However, our reliance on Washington, D.C., solutions demands that we seek out people like Babbitt and Frampton and put them in key political positions because we have built the success of our community on the short-term politics of Washington, D.C. Interestingly, the essay sharing the page with St. Clair's, "Forest Service: Villain and Scapegoat," by Chip Rawlins makes a crucial point about this national perspective. The Forest Service has become so centralized that the forests, the places Chip talks about, lose their meaning to the very foresters charged with caring for those values.

The same occurs in the environmental community. Places become secondary to battles. Even at the local level where environmentalists fiercely battle to protect wildernesses, it seems losing the battle is of more concern than losing the place. That occurs because this obsession with Washington, D.C., spreads the conflict so wide that polarization is the norm.

While we all recognize we must shift concepts of land and wildlife management from sustained yields to that of sustaining systems — the buzz word is *ecosystem management*, which is a valuable concept despite most federal and state land management agencies' prostitution of the idea by simply applying it to traditional sustained yield production — we haven't advanced our concept of community or politics as far.

It's obvious that the concepts surrounding system sustainability can't be defined, except in a programmatic context, by a Babbitt, Frampton or anybody

else at that level. At the same time it is abundantly obvious that I'm not suggesting the ludicrousness of a sagebrush rebellion. But the social paradigm must change as well since there is no such thing as a neutral or assumption-free scientific approach to land management.

To belittle Babbitt because he is a "regionalist" or a "communitarian" and, therefore, not really an environmentalist, is a remarkable step away from reality.

If there is nothing hopeful coming from Butte or Farmington, then it is exceptionally clear there is not much more coming from Aspen, Moab, Phoenix, Salt Lake or Seattle. I understand that saving the mythical old West is futile, as numerous contemporary historians have noted. But to allow the West to be defined by the out-of-control large and small urban areas plagued by every condition counter to "environmentalism" is every bit as hopeless.

We need a better Wilderness Act,

one that focuses on biodiversity, not recreation. We need a better Endangered Species Act, one which focuses on systems of life, not single species. We need state wildlife agencies which focus on values of wildlife, not simply full creels and harvest rates.

But solutions must move away from Washington, D.C. That model of decision-making fails the adaptive, participative, dynamic, long-term view. The point is, our models — the paradigm — must change. All of them. The split Rawlins wrote about is profound and deep and we must heal it in ourselves or the quandary will continue.

Dick Carter
Salt Lake City, Utah

The writer is coordinator of the Utah Wilderness Association, 455 E. 400 S., #306, Salt Lake City, UT 84111.

Opinion by Richard Manning

A weird clarity comes from seeing the seminal story of one's hometown played out on the front page of *The New York Times*. It's not that we get or even expect news in such a venting; the details surrounding the clearcutting of western Montana have been hashed and rehashed locally for at least five years (*HCN*, 9/23/91). The plant closings and layoffs had already been announced. By now we know the drill.

On the other hand, being smeared on the lens of the national microscope is a two-way experience in perspective; it can produce some moments of insight for the observed as well as observer. In this particular case, we got not so much news of our sad past as a confirmation that it will emerge as our future.

The short history of the event in question is this: Most of the private timberlands in Montana — about 1.7 million acres — were split among two corporations — Champion International and Plum Creek Timber. In the late 1970s, all departments of both corporations except those engaged in public relations abandoned the doctrine of sustained yield and began a "liquidation" of their holdings, a sort of double whammy. Like most blitzkriegs, this one was particularly unkind to the flora and fauna that make a forest something beyond saw logs.

Further, the aftershock spun into the human community, undermining economy as well as ecology in towns stretching from Libby to Bozeman. With the "liquidation" complete there are few logs left, unless of course the Forest Service can be persuaded to make up the difference from public lands. This persuasion, subtle and otherwise, has become the foundation of the region's politics. It was, for instance, responsible for the firing of Regional Forester John Mumma. Thus far, however, the corporations have not been as successful as they had hoped. The logs are gone. The party is over, and we, with the help of *The Times*, turn a page of Montana's story.

Champion, in the firmest tradition of the West, has cut and run, acknowledging the liquidation of its trees. It announced it has sold its land to Plum Creek and its mills to a new player that will hire back at reduced wages about half of the 1,500 workers Champion laid off.

All of this points to the sort of hangover that ought to set the state to working toward a future better than its past. Not so. It's in *The Times*, and there we may read about it.

In the Oct. 14 story is a remarkably candid quote from Tucker Hill, remarkable in that he is Champion's official "spokesman." (Oh, how I long for those days when we simply called them "flacks.") He is handsomely paid to be anything but candid, but here is his response to the sniveling about his corporation's ravaging of watershed and economy: "I don't think you can hold a company's feet to the fire for everything

they did over the last 20 years."

Why can't we, Tucker? Our prisons are full of people being held accountable for decades of past behavior. Why should corporations be free of a past, especially timber corporations, which claim to accept responsibility for 300-year-old ponderosa pine, but deny responsibility for the past two decades?

I admit there are times in my own life when I longed mightily to shed my past, but I finally realized that the past was my path to my future. It is through such realizations that humans mature, but corporations have no such goals as maturation, happiness and responsibility to community. Corporations have the single goal of profit, and so it is in their interest to live

IN MONTANA, LOGGING COMPANIES CUT, RUN AND WHINE

a shell game that makes the past vanish. Champion's gambit of cut-and-run is only one variation on the theme, and an unsophisticated one at that.

What, for instance, of Plum Creek? In a letter to the editor of *The Times* responding to the referenced story, Plum Creek Chairman Donald Leland did some sniveling of his own. His gripe was that Plum Creek has spared no advertising space announcing the advent of the Age of Enlightenment within corporate walls, a new age of virtuous forestry, and *The Times* story did not appropriately trumpet the hosannas.

Leland went on to support his assertion with a quote from "one of the state's leading newspapers." Although he doesn't mention it, one wonders whether his criteria for "leading" have anything to do with the fact that the newspaper in question, the *Missoulian*, ran a news story announcing Plum Creek's miraculous conversion to enlightened forestry in the same edition and section as Plum Creek's paid advertisement announcing the same glad event.

But then there has been developing recently a mutual admiration society between Plum Creek and the *Missoulian*, no doubt born of the pristine symmetry of one now

owning most of the state's trees and the other being owned by a single corporation (Lee Enterprises of Davenport, Iowa) that owns most of the state's daily newspapers. It makes everything so much tidier when it's time to pass out Christmas hams, university endowments and seats in the U.S. Senate.

And easier, too, when it is time to ignore past sins. Said the *Missoulian* editorial that Leland quoted: "Plum Creek deserves more credit than it gets. It has worked to improve its logging practices and it has invested heavily and wisely in its plants and equipment. The most important thing is that the 867,000 acres of forest now owned by Champion would remain in the timber base and be actively managed for timber production."

Is that the most important thing for Montana's future, that corporations continue to rip forests off the hills? The U.S. Forest Service has spared no effort in recent years hatching euphemisms for the word "clearcut" but "actively managed for timber" seems to best all of the agency's efforts. Perhaps this is what is meant by "cutting-edge" journalism.

Champion and Plum Creek remind me much of two hell-raising brothers in the small farm town where I was raised. After a binge, one would simply leave town. The other would find the nearest tent meeting and get himself born again (again), loudly proclaiming his conversion for any of the neighbors inclined to hold a grudge for previous excesses. Often this conversion would last at least until the taverns opened for business the following Friday.

All of this would be as comical as the brothers, except that the binge of corporate excess is Montana's past and its future. Nothing has changed.

Go back to that quote from Tucker Hill and read it again not as a lamentation of the public's legitimate complaints, but as a blunt statement of fact.

Montana has known for at least five years exactly what Champion was up to. As a reporter for the *Missoulian* then, I wrote about it, but for a lot of people, my reporting was redundant — for industry insiders, for the Forest Service, for state officials and even for the mill-workers. They knew then their jobs would soon be over. Still, people did nothing about it then; we still can't, and that's exactly what Hill is saying. The corporate shell game is not an illusion. They really can disappear when the need arises, disappear from view and from accountability.

Hill says the people of Montana cannot hold corporations accountable; Leland says amen and neither can the press. I am reminded of Judge Roy Bean's words when he confronted a friend who, like Hill and Leland, offered a blunt confession of a regrettable truth. Said the judge, "Well, shame on you for admittin' it."

And shame on us for putting up with it. ■

Dick Manning lives and writes within sight of Champion's clearcuts near Missoula, Montana.



Photo by Neal and Mary Jane Mischler

After liquidating much of its valuable timber, Champion International Corp. is pulling out of Montana. Last month Champion said it would sell 867,000 acres of its Montana land to Plum Creek Timber Co.