PARKS AND PRIORITIES | FRACTURING NATIVE FAMILIES | THE UNSPOKEN LANGUAGE OF ACEQUIAS

High Country News

For people who care about the West

Celebrity Scofflaw

How the feds helped make Cliven Bundy a hero

By Tay Wiles

April 30, 2018 | $5 | Vol. 50 No. 7 | www.hcn.org

CONTENTS

Cliven Bundy walks out of federal court in Las Vegas with his wife, Carol, and attorney Bret Whipple in January, after a judge dismissed criminal charges against him and his sons over the 2014 standoff in Bunkerville, Nevada.
K.M. CANNON/LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL VIA AP

On the cover
Cliven Bundy on his ranch near Bunkerville, Nevada.
ANDREW CULLEN

FEATURES

CURRENTS

DEPARTMENTS

Complete access to subscriber-only content

HCN's website
hcn.org

Digital edition
hcne.ws/digi-5007

Follow us
@highcountrynews

Editor's note

Wild country

For anyone with an appetite for the West's ongoing culture clashes, the new Netflix series *Wild Wild Country* is an unexpected feast. It describes how the followers of Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh bought a ranch outside of rural Antelope, Oregon, in the early 1980s and attempted to build a utopian community. The series hits themes familiar to *High Country News* readers: a persecuted minority seeking a remote place to practice their beliefs without interference; conservative white locals with little tolerance for outsiders; fabulous wealth (the Bhagwan reportedly had 90 Rolls Royces and wore million-dollar diamond watches) contrasted with wretched poverty (the Rajneesh community bused in thousands of homeless people from cities in an attempt to sway local elections); and, of course, guns and violence. There's even an environmental angle – Oregon's first counterattack focused on the community's violation of progressive land-use regulations designed to protect agricultural lands from development.

I couldn't find anything about this tumultuous episode in *HCN*'s archives, perhaps because the story was already heavily covered by the Oregon and national press, or, more likely, because back then we had a tiny staff busy covering Ronald Reagan and his Interior secretary, James Watt, who, citing his own religious convictions, wanted to drill, mine and log as much of the public lands as possible.

But I think we'd cover it if it happened today, much as we have followed the strange, winding saga of Cliven Bundy and his family. This issue's cover story, by Associate Editor Tay Wiles, untangles the many threads behind the Bundys' rebellion. As devout Mormons, the Bundys inherited a reverence for the U.S. Constitution, which protected their ancestors from persecution, even as they absorbed more radical Western strains of anti-government ideology. The story also describes how the Department of Justice and Bureau of Land Management bungled their own legal case against the family.

In Oregon, the state and the feds built a case that led to the conviction of the Bhagwan's lieutenants, the guru's forced return to India and the dismantling of his utopian community. In Nevada, the Bundys walked away unscathed, and Cliven is back to running his cows illegally on the public lands, even as his fellow ranchers dutifully pay the modest fees.

Why the different outcomes? As Wiles points out, the Bundys play right into a Western mythology that still holds enormous sway. They are white ranchers, who unapologetically took land stolen from Native tribes and scratched out a living even as environmental regulations tightened. The Rajneeshis were never part of this narrative.

But the tale of the Bundys and their allies isn't over. One can hope that the next skirmish will help blow away the clouds of Western mythology and reveal the real issues. Allowing a rancher to use the threat of violence to prevent reasonable regulation of public lands should be a thing of the past, perhaps memorialized in a Netflix series.

–Paul Larmer, executive director/publisher

The Sangre de Cristo Mountains, backdrop to Colorado's Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, where more than 18,000 acres will be available for oil and gas leases in September.
PRISMA BILDAGENTUR/UIG VIA GETTY IMAGES)

Drilling, one mile outside Colorado's Great Sand Dunes

This fall, 11 parcels located less than a mile from Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve in south-central Colorado will be up for an online oil and gas lease sale. The park is famous for its iconic sand dunes and has a reputation for being one of the quietest national parks in the country, according to a soundscape study conducted in 2008.

Environmental groups worry that drilling would significantly impact that silence, as well as local wildlife. Though the parcels to be leased are located just over the summit of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, which form the preserve's eastern boundary, they push into previously undeveloped areas that provide important wildlife habitat and serve as migratory corridors.

Critics of the leases say the greenhouse gases and other pollutants released by energy development could harm air quality. Other impacts to the area could include light pollution and the haze and noise caused by increased truck traffic to well sites. The lease sale is set to be announced on July 20, and take place in September. **JESSICA KUTZ**
Read more online: hcne.ws/drilling-dunes

43 Percent of Americans who spent at least some time working remotely in 2016.

1 in 4
Number of people who left Grants, New Mexico, known as "the uranium capital of the world," in the decade after its uranium mines went bust.

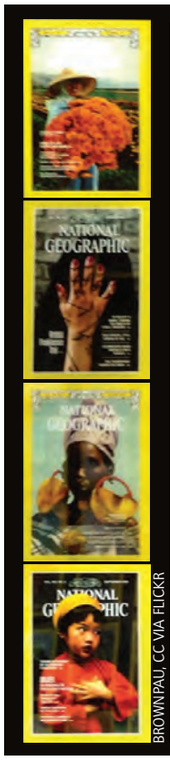
The residents of Grants, New Mexico, population 9,000, face a predicament common to many small town citizens: finding consistent work. But a fledgling state program called SoloWorks is trying to change that.

SoloWorks connects workers to remote out-of-state jobs, one person at a time. While a pilot year showed mixed results — many workers didn't retain their jobs for very long — tweaks focused on increasing retention could help the program succeed. Programs like SoloWorks could be another route to reversing population declines in rural communities across the West, where once-lucrative work in mines and other natural resource industries is harder to come by than it was a generation ago. **LEAH TODD**
Read more online: hcne.ws/remote-work

Audio

"This region's become rapidly more and more politicized. And it's being talked about a lot of times in a way that doesn't really describe it as a vital, lived-in space, and as a place of community and a place of connections, which is really what it is."

— Maya L. Kapoor, talking on the *West Obsessed* podcast about her story, "A Desert Divided on the Borderlands." *Listen online:* hcne.ws/borderlands



BROWNPAU, CC VIA FLICKR

Want better coverage? Hire diverse journalists.

Balance is a basic tenet of journalism — but unrecognized bias can seep into publications that lack a diverse staff. "If (a) newsroom is overwhelmingly white, chances are it still lacks a deeper understanding of any community of color it attempts to cover," writes Graham Lee Brewer in a recent perspective on Native representation in journalism.

Brewer cites *National Geographic* as an example of a publication that's moving in the right direction: The magazine's April issue is devoted to race and the problematic ways non-white cultures have been portrayed in its pages in the past. Still, the issue did not include any stories on Native Americans. "Indian images are everywhere in popular culture, but Native Americans as real people living in America today are often overlooked and ignored," John Coward, a University of Tulsa professor and expert on Native American representation in popular media, told Brewer. "This situation may be improving, but as the *National Geographic* example shows, progress is very slow." **GRAHAM LEE BREWER**
Read more online: hcne.ws/diverse-coverage

After the Oregon standoff

The final defendant in the court case stemming from the 2016 armed occupation of Oregon's Malheur National Wildlife Refuge is set to be sentenced in June. Blaine Cooper, who recruited militia members to join the takeover, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to impede federal officers. Twenty-five other people have been acquitted, convicted or had their cases dismissed; sentences include prison time, probation and thousands of dollars in fines. **TAY WILES**
Read more online: hcne.ws/after-malheur


BROOKE WARREN/HIGH COUNTRY NEWS

"We need to hold a camera and a Constitution in their face, or there's nothing stopping them from shooting and killing patriots and initiating what could be a civil war."

—Jon Ritzheimer, a member of the Idaho militia group Three Percent, as he speaks for a video being filmed by Blaine Cooper during the 2016 occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. The video was a call for others to occupy the land and take a stand.

Trending

Report omits climate change cause

In drafts of a long-awaited report on sea-level rise and storm surge at coastal national park sites, Park Service officials have deleted every reference to the human role in causing climate change.

Critics say the agency's editing of the report reflects unprecedented political interference in government science at the Interior Department, which oversees the Park Service.

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke testified at a Senate committee hearing in March that the department has not changed any scientific documents. "I challenge you, any member, to find a document that we've actually changed on a report," Zinke said. When asked about the altered drafts at a House subcommittee meeting in April, Zinke said he had not seen them and again vowed that he will not censor scientific reports. **ELIZABETH SHOGREN/REVEAL**

You say

THOMAS MANAUGH: "Censorship should be investigated by a congressional oversight committee."

CHARLES ROBERTS: "Implying that debate is ended and all answers are known ... is a very risky position to hold in scientific endeavors."

ERIC HARTMAN: "The fossil fuel industry today is using the same tactics of deceit that were used by the tobacco industry years ago. The stakes are even higher today."

Read more online: hcne.ws/cause-nixed and Facebook.com/highcountrynews

Send letters to editor@hcn.org or
Editor, HCN, P.O. Box 1090, Paonia, CO 81428.

A DRILLING INJUSTICE

Mining damage isn't the only concern for Bears Ears National Monument ("Local hands on public lands," *HCN*, 3/19/18); it's also about the tribes whose stories live there. Utah's public lands are now a national sensation, but the way Bears Ears is being lumped into this larger attack on public lands doesn't do the place justice. The Trump administration is making decisions that disproportionately affect Native nations. Instead of considering the five tribes who worked for decades for that designation, the Bureau of Land Management went ahead and sold off all 13 parcels for leasing.

I went to Utah to understand what mining would mean. Our guides stressed that drilling Bears Ears for dirty fuels represents a much bigger issue — a human rights problem. Youth tribal members shared what Bears Ears means to them — unity and cultural preservation. Eliminating Bears Ears isn't about the actual acres being lost but about the disregard of its value to these nations. Leasing these lands is detrimental enough, but drilling would be a grave injustice.

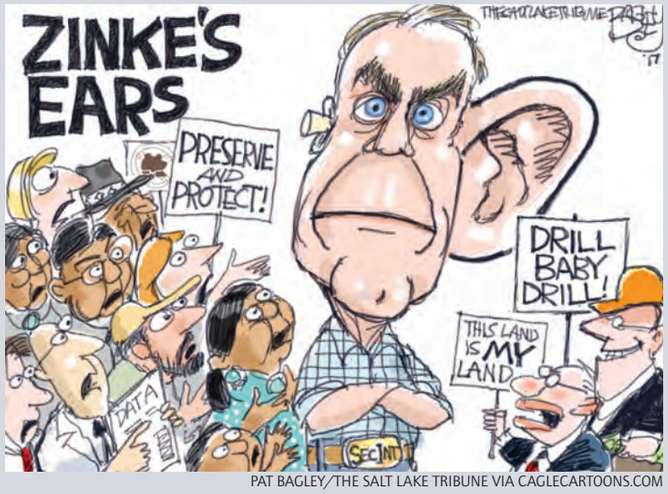
Susana Reyes
Sierra Club vice president
Glendale, California

HUMAN SAFETY FIRST

Regarding the King Cove road ("Alaska wilds lose out," *HCN*, 3/19/18): People have died in the King Cove, Alaska, community because the weather precluded air access, and they could not do anything but wait. Unless you live in a remote location like this, you don't have, in my opinion, standing to protest these folks getting access. The community was incorporated in 1949, but the Izembek Wilderness, which has stopped the road access to the closest all-weather, jet-capable, instrument-approach-equipped airport, was put in place in 1980.

Only 13 percent of the entire Tongass National Forest is in the operable timber base for logging. It's larger by more than three times than the next largest national forest. It's a national forest, not a national park. Lastly, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Here's the scale for the development we are talking about: Place a postage stamp on the floor of one of largest football stadiums in the U.S. There you go.

Charles Nash
Trapper Creek, Alaska



PAT BAGLEY/THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE VIA CAGLECARTOONS.COM

AN INDUSTRIALIZED CHACO

Thank you for focusing on the Chaco Canyon area and the rapid pollution and industrialization of this internationally important area ("Drilling Chaco," *HCN*, 3/5/18). I have watched this area closely for decades and have seen the incredible beauty of the area trashed by boom-and-bust oil development that scars the land permanently and pollutes the water over the long run — all for short-term jobs for mostly out-of-state workers and for carbon fuels that destroy our atmosphere.

Bureau of Land Management lands are owned by all Americans, including our tribal neighbors. Yet the BLM now works for the oil and mining industries, not the American people, as revealed by the massive public effort required to stop a few oil wells in an area that is obviously more valuable for other "uses." The public has a right to be angry that our agency no longer works for us.

Tom Ribe
Santa Fe, New Mexico

IGNORING PUBLIC VOICES

Jonathan Thompson points out an issue common to discussions concerning public-land management in the West ("Local hands on public lands," *HCN*, 3/19/18). Some locals and sometimes large companies, including foreign business interests, have a "vested financial interest" in public-land management decisions because they have grazing leases, oil and gas leases, mining or timbering interests, outfitting rights, etc., on or adjacent to the public lands in question. The rights and opinions of the majority of the American public are largely left out of the decision-making process because the system is set up to give disproportionate weight to entities with the loudest voices and best access to decision-makers.

Ranching, agriculture, mining and development interests have focused priorities, whereas the general public, which is not profiting monetarily, is not involved in the decision-making process proportionate to our numbers. Put another way, vested financial interests wield a disproportionate amount of power and influence over public-land decision-making. The majority of the public, even in the West, is mostly unaware of the process and of who has the power to make decisions, much less a clear understanding of what is at stake. Our country needs to find a way to guarantee more balance in our public-land decision-making process.

Robert Luce
Sierra Vista, Arizona

FISH FARMS NEED DECENT REGULATION

The possibility of commercial utilization is not an off-ramp for regulations restricting the importation of non-native species. There are many examples of this, including fishes that may be suitable for aquaculture, and animals that can be, or are, domesticated in other parts of the world. Your short article "Latest: Washington state bans fish farms" (*HCN,* 4/16/18) appears to be referring to animals or plants that are already commercially reared within a state, such as dairy cattle or catfish. Even there, most states have regulations that would bar releasing the animals into the wild.

This example in Washington certainly shows that there were inadequate regulations in place, even though there is a valuable native salmon resource to protect. Net-pen rearing of fish has been illegal in adjacent Oregon for over 30 years, and substantial regulations are in place for pond aquaculture. Nevertheless, some problems have occurred there as well. Commercial aquaculture — like agriculture — has a larger incentive to control costs than to minimize adverse impacts on the land and water.

Douglas DeHart
Oregon City, Oregon

High Country News

High Country News is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) independent media organization that covers the issues that define the American West. Its mission is to inform and inspire people to act on behalf of the region's diverse natural and human communities. (ISSN/0191/5657) is published bi-weekly, 22 times a year, by High Country News, 119 Grand Ave., Paonia, CO 81428. Periodicals, postage paid at Paonia, CO, and other post offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to High Country News, Box 1090, Paonia, CO 81428. Subscriptions to *HCN* are $37 a year, $47 for institutions:
800-905-1155 | hcn.org

printreleaf CERTIFIED
Printed on recycled paper.

Co-ops get connected

In New Mexico, co-ops lead the way on internet access

BY LEAH TODD

Molly Byrnes and Jesse Hofmann-Smith can't rely on their cellular network to make phone calls. But they can host webinars and build websites online for clients across the country, all from their cozy apartment outside Taos, New Mexico.

Their *casita* is one of about 6,300 homes and businesses in northern New Mexico connected to a high-speed fiber-optic internet network run by an unlikely source: Kit Carson Electric Cooperative in Taos. An increasing number of U.S. electric cooperatives are launching such networks, a way to bring Seattle-speed internet to remote rural areas. But the path to expanding access is challenging, and Kit Carson's struggles offer some lessons for other electric co-ops.

"I want to leave Taos a little bit better than I found it," said Luis Reyes, for 25 years the CEO of Kit Carson. Today, he helps other co-ops hoping to follow Kit Carson's example. "How do we help our own?"

As many as 39 percent of rural Americans can't access a high-speed connection, according to the Federal Communications Commission. In urban America, on the other hand, only 4 percent lack access. That has serious implications for rural communities. One in four New Mexico businesses said they've missed out on business opportunities because of internet problems. As many as seven out of 10 teachers assign homework that requires internet, while New Mexico emergency rooms rely on a fast connection to transmit medical records to urban experts for long-distance consultations.

In the U.S., there has been a long tradition of nonprofit cooperatives delivering rural infrastructure, ever since the New Deal established co-ops to bring electricity to the remote corners of the country. "Essentially, rural infrastructure has generally been delivered by nonprofits," said Chris Mitchell, a researcher with the Institute for Local Self-Reliance who studies cooperatives and other community-led broadband networks. For-profit companies need to make more money than they invest. Co-ops don't. Any extra revenue over costs simply goes back into the service, or to co-op members.

Of the roughly 900 electric cooperatives in the U.S., 60 offer fiber-optic internet access — up from just a dozen or so a decade ago. Kit Carson was one of the first. In the late 1990s, Kit Carson and many cooperatives faced a crisis of declining energy demand. Reyes convened dozens of public meetings to ask a simple question: What other services should we provide? The answers: propane, gas stations, economic development and a service Taos residents were just starting to utilize — the internet. A year later, at an annual meeting, 1,200 co-op members voted to look into providing internet connectivity.

It took 10 years and three tries at federal funding to get where Kit Carson is today: nearly 3,000 miles of fiber-optic cables entrenched underground, strung along mountainous highways and dangling over an 800-foot-deep river gorge, reaching 6,300 customers to date with a waitlist of 12,000 more.

Kit Carson relied on federal funding to extend fiber-optic cables to its customers, including a $44 million grant and $19 million loan from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. But not all co-ops have done the same. Continental Divide Electric Cooperative in Grants, New Mexico, for instance, is working with Reyes to design its fiber-optic internet service, which it will have to pay for on its own. Continental won't be the first co-op to pay its way to a community-owned broadband network; for example, Co-Mo Electric Cooperative in Tipton, Missouri, stayed solvent despite going it alone.

"Our board is extremely fiscally conservative," Continental CEO Robert Castillo said. "Does this match up with our philosophy as a cooperative? It is just almost a perfect fit. … The competition is interested in cherry-picking the big loads in an area. As a cooperative, we're here to serve the guy who's otherwise not going to be served."

But cooperatives, used to being the lone player in town, sometimes hit roadblocks when they move into the more competitive field of internet providers. Kit Carson had to hire new customer service employees, for example. "I tried to instill (that) we are in a competitive environment," Reyes said. "It was a cultural change. We're not the only game in town. The minute we start thinking that way, we lose."

And other issues have emerged: The waitlist is long and complicated, for one, with thorny questions over who gets access first. And technological problems can hinder progress: Battery packs designed to power the telephone and internet in electric outages haven't been working at the home of Kelly Motl, an accountant and Kit Carson customer.

Still, Motl is thrilled that the co-op offered to install fiber-optic lines miles down a canyon road for her and a few neighbors. The connection allowed her to install a security system that live-streams video and to work from home during tax season.

"It changed our lives," Motl said. □

David Trujillo splices fiber optics at a home in Taos. Kit Carson Electric Cooperative was one of the first electric co-ops in the U.S. to offer high-speed internet service, and now serves roughly 6,300 customers in northern New Mexico with broadband internet.
KATHARINE EGLI

Leah Todd is a freelance reporter living in Taos, New Mexico. @leahktodd

Fish and Wildlife's radical new approach

The agency is reconsidering how it handles rare species

BY MAYA L. KAPOOR

The Tipton kangaroo rat, above, was listed as an endangered species in 1988. It lost a lot of habitat due to agricultural conversion. The San Rafael cactus, top right, is endemic to central Utah and was listed as endangered in 1987 due to threats from collection, OHVs and mineral exploration. These species have not yet had critical habitat designated, even though that is required by law.
USFWS

In March, Susan Combs became temporary assistant secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, in charge of overseeing both the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service. Combs, a Texas rancher and politician with a history of hostility toward protected species, fought to avoid protecting dwindling Texas species when she served as comptroller. Her appointment happened quietly on a Saturday and had not been announced on the department's website as of this writing. Environmental advocacy groups believe her appointment invalid, because Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, not President Donald Trump, appointed her. The nonprofit Natural Resources Defense Council commented, "In typical Trump administration fashion, (Combs) now oversees what she hopes to dismantle."

Combs' controversial appointment comes as the Fish and Wildlife Service is quietly but radically altering its approach to the Endangered Species Act, from species protection to habitat management.

According to a draft document obtained by *E&E News*, the agency is considering tossing blanket protections for threatened species. Currently, almost 1,300 federally protected species are considered "endangered," or at imminent risk of extinction, while almost 400 are "threatened," or almost endangered. In 1978, Fish and Wildlife began giving threatened species the same protections as endangered ones, although people affected by this could apply for exemptions.

In April, the Louisiana pinesnake, one of North America's rarest snakes, received threatened status. But landowners and timber producers may still conduct activities — including forest management and herbicide applications — that could harm the dark-patterned reptiles, which are imperiled by habitat loss.

The changes worry Brett Hartl, government affairs director with the nonprofit Center for Biological Diversity. The original policy was intended to prevent threatened species from becoming endangered. "Effectively, what the Trump administration is doing, for all threatened species moving forward, is making it harder to recover them," he said.

But Timothy Male, executive director of the nonprofit Environmental Policy Innovation Center, says that because the changes would mean less uncertainty for private landowners, they might become less antagonistic to threatened species on their property.

"Especially in the West, it's often federal action that's really the threat, and ranchers or other private landowners or land interests get caught up in the middle," Male said. Long-term, the changes could even encourage conservation: "If you know that, if an endangered species (improves to) threatened status, it's going to be managed or regulated differently, that can be a really powerful incentive," he said.

The agency — which declined to comment — is also reconsidering critical habitat, another core part of the Endangered Species Act. Whenever a species is federally protected, the landscape it needs to survive is supposed to become "critical habitat." Federal agencies must go through permitting for projects that might harm critical habitat, while private landowners need permission for projects that receive federal funds.

In 2016, the Obama administration clarified how critical habitat worked, partly in response to lawsuits from conservation organizations. Previously, land use could occur as long as it didn't nudge species closer to extinction. Under the 2016 policy, actions that could stop a species from recovering enough to be delisted could be regulated, too. "If environmentalists can go to court and challenge federal actions — things like timber harvests, mining, grazing, all the things the feds can be involved in permitting — and just show that it's going to adversely modify habitat, not jeopardize the species, that's a big stick," University of Vermont Law professor Patrick Parenteau said.

The 2016 policy also loosened requirements for designating critical habitat where a species does not currently live, if that unoccupied habitat is essential to its survival. Future habitat matters, said Parenteau. "Climate change is moving species poleward and upward. The idea of unoccupied habitat for climate change is migration corridors, adaptation and relocation."

But soon after Trump's inauguration, 20 states joined a lawsuit challenging these changes, dropping it only in March, when the administration agreed to reconsider them.

The lawsuit called the Endangered Species Act "present-focused," applying only to places where protected species could currently live, not possible future habitat. For that to be designated, the plaintiffs said, all available occupied habitat had to first be designated and found inadequate. Only then could unoccupied habitat be designated. Otherwise, they warned, entire states could become critical habitat. "The states made wild, outlandish claims you could designate anywhere in the U.S. That's foolish nonsense," Parenteau said. "(The agency) would be sued for sure if they did." In reality, Parenteau said, critical habitat's main harm may be lowering property values. Spooked buyers mistakenly believe that the designation makes developing private land much harder and more expensive, not realizing that's only the case when federal funds are involved.

Some question critical habitat's effectiveness. A 2015 study found that, for seven years, more than 88,000 projects affecting such habitat went ahead largely unaltered, even when they threatened endangered species' survival. And according to the Center for Biological Diversity, the agency has yet to designate critical habitat for more than 600 species. That task now will be overseen by Combs, who, according to the *Austin American-Statesman,* once referred to proposed endangered species as "incoming Scud missiles." □

Maya L. Kapoor is an *HCN* Associate Editor and writes from Tucson. @Kapoor_ML

Sharing food sovereignty

Colonial contact introduced foreign foods and diseases to tribal nations, but a digital generation is reconnecting with tradition

BY KIM BACA

In a white ceramic bowl, Mariah Gladstone mixes canned salmon, corn meal and chia — creating the kind of nourishing meal anyone can fix at home in minutes. While it's not exactly what her Blackfeet ancestors ate, the ingredients have a long history: They have helped sustain entire civilizations.

The connection between traditional foods and culture can be lost if it is not practiced. But through outreach endeavors like her cooking videos, Gladstone and other Native cooks are helping their peers embrace their culinary traditions by teaching about traditional foods, what they are, and how to find and cook them.

Mariah Gladstone cuts open a spaghetti squash in her home in Kalispell, Montana, while filming an instructional video for Indigikitchen, which focuses on pre-contact Indigenous recipes and food. CELIA TALBOT TOBIN

"We're missing a lot of information on how to prepare food," says Gladstone, 24, who started making cooking videos two years ago after she learned about various tribes' efforts to increase access to affordable, nutritious foods.

When Native Americans were forced to assimilate — confined to reservations and placed in Indian boarding schools — traditional food preparation waned, forgotten in a world of processed foods and modern cooking conveniences. But Gladstone, who shops at the grocery store, hunts or receives food from family and friends, wants to show how easy, affordable and tasty Indigenous cooking can be. Her recipe for salmon cornmeal cakes, which takes just five steps and five ingredients, appears in a how-to video on her "Indigikitchen" (Indigenous kitchen) Facebook page, which has more than 1,400 followers.

"There is also a lot of interest from Native communities across the country to revitalize their Native foods, not only for the health benefit but for the connection to our ancestors and to recognize our identities as Native people," she said.

Some Indigenous chefs are incorporating traditional foods in anti-Thanksgiving pop-up dinners, cooking without any dairy, processed flour or sugar, all ingredients introduced after European contact. This excludes frybread, often considered a traditional Native food enjoyed at powwows and other Indigenous events. Few realize that frybread was created by Navajos in 1864, during their forced removal, when they had little to eat other than U.S. government rations of white flour, sugar and lard.

But "pre-contact" cooking is more than a foodie trend for people like 13-year-old Maizie White, an Akwesasne Mohawk seventh-grader who writes about Indigenous food and shares recipes on her blog, NativeHearth.com. Her recipes include avocado hominy salsa, spiced squash waffles, wild rice stuffed squash and venison roast and gravy.

"It helps Indigenous farmers and local people who are growing the food to make a living," said White, who was invited by Sean Sherman, an Oglala Lakota known as "The Sioux Chef," to cook at the renowned James Beard House in New York City. "We're giving back to our community and it is much more healthier and much more economical to cook. It also brings us back to what was here beforehand and respect what was already here."

According to a report by the Center for Native American Youth, 79 percent of Native children say that their communities lack access to healthy food. On some reservations, the closest thing to a grocery store is a gas station convenience store, where most of the items are processed foods high in sugar, fat and sodium. This contributes to epidemic rates of diabetes and obesity — diseases unknown among Native Americans before colonial contact. Traditional foods can help reduce Type 2 diabetes, according to the Centers for Disease Control, as well as address food insecurity in Native communities.

But Native youth are intrigued by more than just the nutritional aspect; many are finding that an Indigenous diet can revitalize their traditions. Robert Baldy, 18, a Hupa living on the Hoopa Valley Reservation in Northern California, was taught the traditional Hupa ways of hunting and fishing by his father. His deer-skinning and fish-filleting videos have appeared on the youth Facebook page of the Intertribal Agriculture Council, a national nonprofit supporting Indigenous agriculture and youth food sovereignty programs. "It keeps the culture alive and not forgetting who we are through our foods," said Baldy. He started R.O.O.T.S., or Restoring Our Own Traditional Sustainability, last year, a club for those interested in agriculture and tradition.

Robert's mom, Meagen Baldy, director of the tribe's community garden and the district's natural resources, said that many adults and children shy away from traditional practices because they were never taught them or believe they can't practice them now. "If they're falling in love with their cultural foods, they are going to make sure that the environment is protected for their kids, and these lands and foods will be available for their kids, too," she said.

Robert and Meagen Baldy agree that, while it takes time to forage and prepare traditional foods — the acorns used in acorn soup, for example, need to be gathered, dried, ground and bleached — the health benefits and connection to the land make the work worthwhile. "If your food dies, your culture kind of dies, too," Robert Baldy said. "You can't truly be sovereign without feeding yourself." □

Kim Baca is a freelance journalist based in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

THE LATEST

Backstory

Wyoming produces more than 40 percent of the nation's coal, and mining contributes more than $1 billion annually to state and local budgets. But production has been declining for several years now as cheaper, cleaner energy sources take its place. **Despite President Trump's promise to bring back coal, Wyoming miners saw a net loss in jobs during 2017** ("Can coal remain the bedrock of Wyoming's economy?" *HCN*, 9/18/17).

Followup

The future of Wyoming coal looks bleak: **In late March, the U.S. Energy Information Administration projected that demand will stay flat for several decades.** Last year, companies withdrew applications for 901 million tons of coal in the Powder River Basin. In December, Contura Energy sold two Powder River Basin mines for just $21 million, the amount of taxes it owes the state. And this winter, power-plant owners in Colstrip, facing eventual plant closure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promised the coal-dependent town $13 million to help its economy transition beyond coal.

JODI PETERSON

CREATIVE COMMONS

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke testifies before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on the 2018 budget proposed for the Interior Department. His proposal was almost $2.5 billion less than what Congress allocated.
WIN MCNAMEE/GETTY IMAGES

What to do with an extra billion or two?

Congress rejected the deep budget cuts proposed by the Trump administration, creating an unwieldy windfall

BY CARL SEGERSTROM

Since his confirmation in March 2017, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's push to trim the department he oversees while opening more public lands to energy development has been lauded by Republicans and denounced by Democrats. When it came to the budget, however, both sides agreed on one thing: No big cuts. In the omnibus federal budget, which recently passed with solid bipartisan support, Congress decided the Department of Interior was worth nearly $2.5 billion more than the administration had proposed.

The Trump administration had proposed substantial budget cuts at a time of record visitation to public lands, billions of dollars of maintenance backlogs and some of the lowest staffing levels in decades at agencies like the National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management. But in the appropriations bill signed March 23, the Fish and Wildlife Service and BLM each received more than a quarter billion dollars more than requested, and the National Park Service got almost $650 million more than the secretary asked for. Still, Zinke and the administration have other ways to cut back and redirect spending to bring it in line with their vision of budget cuts and bureaucratic reshuffling.

Among the programs that got a boost from Congress was the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which uses money from oil and gas leasing to support public-lands access. The fund purchases land, provides grants to states and municipalities, and supports conservation easements for farmers and ranchers. Zinke's department had proposed restructuring the program and cutting spending by over $330 million. Instead, Congress bumped up funding from $400 million in 2017 to $425 million in 2018.

The bill touted the importance of the Land and Water Conservation Fund for promoting recreational access and instructed the agencies to continue designating important lands that could be acquired through it. In a statement following the bill, The Nature Conservancy praised the program and the spending levels it set. "The passage of today's spending bill demonstrates that bipartisan cooperation can lead to significant progress for conservation in America," said Nature Conservancy CEO and President Mark Tercek in a press release.

Congress also increased spending on agencies that serve tribal nations. The administration's proposed budget included more than $370 million in cuts to the Bureaus for Indian Affairs and Education and more than $100 million in cuts to BIA education programs. "These reductions are untenable and absolutely break the trust responsibility to Indian tribes," the National Congress of American Indians stated in its analysis of the proposed budget.

Instead of going along with the proposed cuts, Congress voted to boost spending for the bureaus by more than $200 million over last year's budget. New Mexico Sen. Tom Udall, D, who chairs the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, said after the bill's passage that it "rejects the president's dangerous proposed budget cuts and instead provides funding increases that will lead to healthier communities and better outcomes across Indian Country."

Still, the administration is eyeing ways to work around the spending increases. Federal law prohibits agencies from not spending the allocated funds, but the executive branch can still ask for cuts and influence how money is spent through reviews of grants by political appointees and staffing shake-ups.

The relationship between the power of purse held by Congress and the executive's authority to spend money can be traced to the Nixon administration. After Congress passed the Clean Water Act in 1972, President Richard Nixon decided that the price tag for the new legislation was too high. Nixon directed the Environmental Protection Agency not to allocate more than $10 billion in Clean Water Act grants between 1972 and 1974, much to the appropriators' chagrin.

In response, Congress passed the Impoundment Control Act of 1974. The law created the Congressional Budget Office, a bipartisan office that advises Congress on budgeting matters, and led to the formulation of dedicated House and Senate appropriations committees that are responsible for crafting the federal budget. The law also required agencies to spend all the funds they're allotted and established a formal process for the president to request reductions, called rescissions.

The Trump administration is currently working on a rescissions package with House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif. Matt Sparks, McCarthy's communications director, confirmed that the representative is working on a package to trim the bill, but wouldn't comment on possible cuts. If the administration asks for rescissions, Congress has 45 days to grant or deny its requests.

Since the Impoundment Act was put into place, the popularity of rescissions has ebbed and flowed. Presidential rescissions were popular during the Reagan administration, when Congress agreed to reduce spending levels by hundreds of millions of dollars. Recently, the tactic has fallen out of favor; neither George W. Bush nor Barack Obama made rescission requests.

Carl Segerstrom is an editorial intern at *High Country News*. @carlschirps

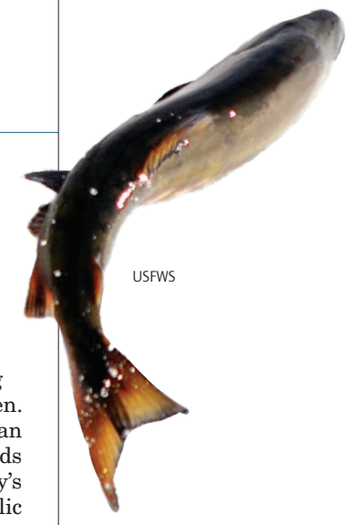
The Trump administration seems to be examining all avenues in its pursuit of lower spending. Since the 2018 budget bill passed last month, President Donald Trump and Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin have suggested that Congress should give the president the power to make line item vetoes, something that was ruled unconstitutional in 1998, after President Bill Clinton had been temporarily vested with the authority. Overturning the funding priorities set in the bipartisan spending bill would likely be a tough sell in the Senate, where Republicans hold a slim 51-49 majority.

Absent reductions to spending levels, the Interior Department can stall funding for staffing and programs that don't fit the vision of department leadership and redirect grants through a new process. Under Zinke's leadership, the department has developed a political review process for grants doled out by its agencies, intended to make sure departmental grants match the administration's political priorities. According to documents obtained by the *Washington Post*, many discretionary grants above $50,000 are subject to review by political appointees in Interior's leadership. The memo specifically notes grants to nonprofit organizations and higher education institutions as being subject to review by Steve Howke, a lifelong friend of Zinke's, who had a 30-plus-year career at credit unions before he joined Interior.

The agency can also plot its own course by moving around senior staff and pursuing buyouts, which can stall spending by creating vacancies in hard-to-fill positions. There are few ways to *not* spend money in congressional budgets, but "agencies can say they're having a hard time finding people to fill jobs and drag feet on spending that way," says Richard Kogan, a senior fellow with the Washington, D.C., Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a progressive economic policy think tank. The department touts the moves as an effort to get more staff in field positions. But former Interior officials warn that losing senior staff could mean the loss of valuable experience, including knowledge of how the agencies work and of who their most important partners are.

Even as the Interior Department comes to terms with the spending levels set by Congress, the budget hearings for the 2019 budget are already underway. And the second budget from the administration and Zinke looks similar to the first one, with major cuts to land-management agencies and tribal programs. The response to Zinke's trips to Capitol Hill to defend next year's budget offers a clear indication of the partisan reaction to the administration's vision for Interior. In a budget hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee, Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R, broadly praised the direction being set by Zinke and his willingness to open up new drilling sites in her state, while Washington Sen. Maria Cantwell, D, called his tenure an unprecedented attack on public lands and an "abandonment of the secretary's stewardship responsibility of our public resource."

In this year's budget, Congress rejected the slimmed-down version of the Interior Department proposed by Zinke and the Trump administration. With more time to evaluate the agency's progress and direction, Congress will have the opportunity to set its own priorities for it again with the 2019 budget. How the department spends the 2018 budget will influence the amount and types of appropriations made for the next fiscal year. Moving forward, Congress can fund Zinke's vision of a slimmer, reorganized Interior Department or, if lawmakers decide the administration is moving in the wrong direction, craft a more prescriptive budget that forces the Interior Department to reflect the priorities of a Congress that has thus far rejected cuts to the department. □


USFWS

THE LATEST

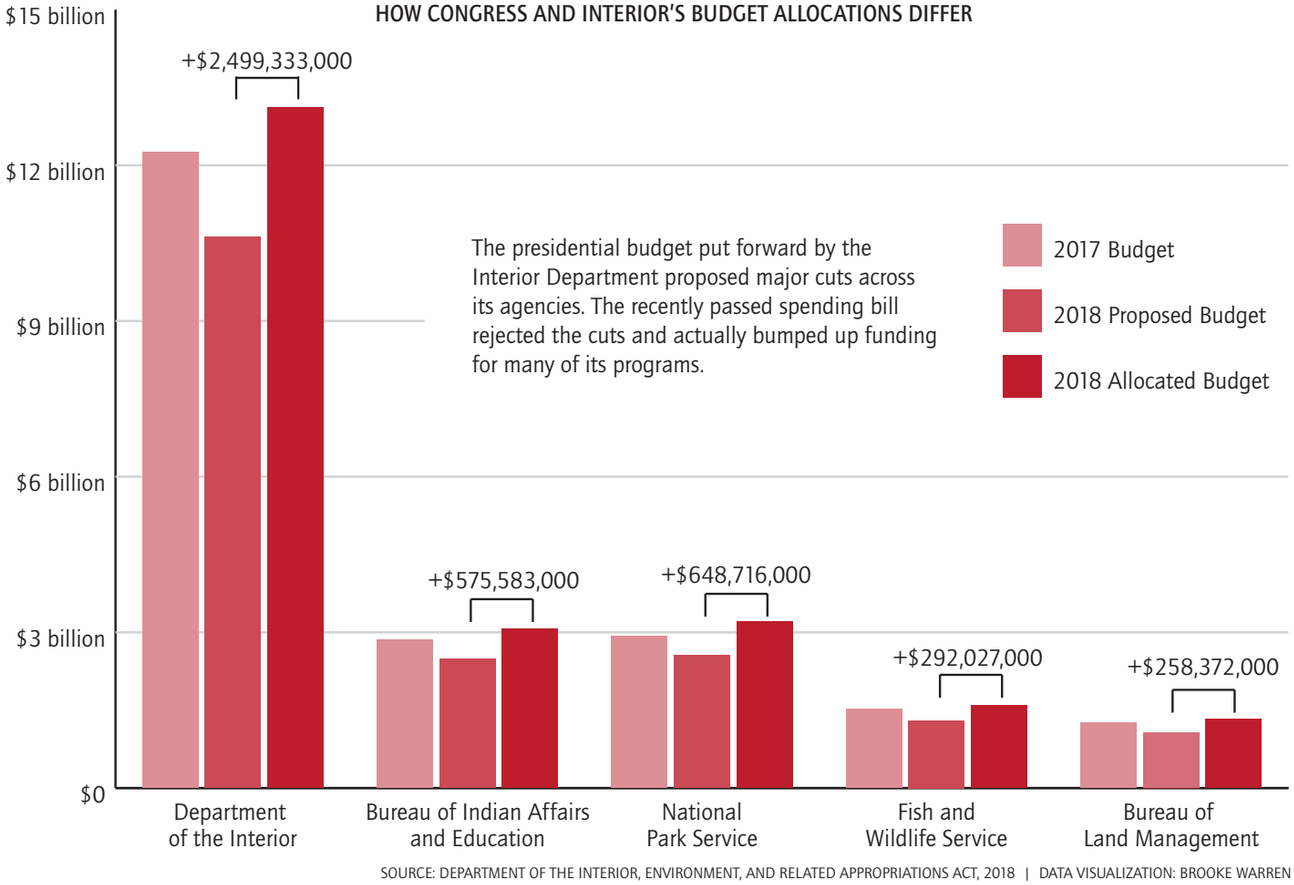
Backstory

Some 16 million salmon and steelhead once returned to the Columbia River Basin to spawn each fall. **The construction of several large dams, starting in the 1930s, decimated their numbers, and despite recovery efforts, they failed to rebound.** In 2006, court-mandated spillovers – running less water through hydropower turbines and spilling more over dams – began each spring to help young fish pass safely over the structures ("Columbia Basin (Political) Science," *HCN*, 4/13/09).

Followup

In early April, a court ruling required dam managers to spill the largest amount of water yet over Columbia and Snake River dams. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a ruling last year ordering increased spill, despite controversy over the practice's cost and effectiveness. Joseph Bogaard, executive director of Save Our Wild Salmon, told Oregon Public Broadcasting, "This is a short-term measure, but it's a critical one, given that salmon populations – especially in the last few years – are headed in the wrong direction."

JODI PETERSON



SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2018 | DATA VISUALIZATION: BROOKE WARREN

RESEARCH FUND

Thank you, Research Fund donors, for being part of our heritage

Since 1971, reader contributions have made it possible for *HCN* to report on the American West. Your tax-deductible gift directly funds nonprofit, independent journalism.

Thank you for supporting our hardworking journalists.

***Making a b-line to HaidaBucks, Salmonberry Frap #ftw #starbucksFAIL #lol, 2016,* digital intervention on an Emily Carr painting (Yan, Q.C.I 1912), Archival Pigment Print, 33 x 22 inches.** SONNY ASSU, COURTESY OF THE ART AND THE EQUINOX GALLERY

GUARANTOR

Anonymous (7)
In memory of Mrs. Nancy K. Putney
In memory of Angela Lu Self-Redcross | Noble, OK
In memory of Nelle Tobias | McCall, ID
In memory of Grace Wing
Dick & Gwen Adams | Grants Pass, OR
Joseph Barsugli | Boulder, CO
Sarah & Bill Bishop | Paonia, CO
Barbara Bolles | Bainbridge Island, WA
Roger & Marisa Boraas | Centennial, CO
John Carron & Traci Telander | Boulder, CO
David P. Catterson | Olympia, WA
Susan Chadd | Port Angeles, WA
Janene Colby | Borrego Springs, CA
John E. Cook | Page, AZ
Deb Cookingham | Silver City, NM
Cowboy Moving Foundation | Englewood, CO
David Foss | Boulder, CO
Jonathan Gibson & Eliza Mabry | Shrewsbury, VT
Lucy Del Giorgio | Tucson, AZ
Amy & Chris Gulick | Clinton, WA
Alexis Halbert, Orton Family Foundation | Colorado
Darcy James | Boise, ID
Gregory Krush | Fort Collins, CO
Steven Lamy | San Gabriel, CA

BENEFACTOR

Anonymous (4)
In honor of Mary H. Millard
In memory of democracy & decency in central North America
In memory of Wayne C. Annala | Ignacio, CO
In memory of Tom Bell
In memory of Donald & Gregory Orr
In memory of Gladys P. Sullivan | Denver, CO
Earl F. Layser, Pattie Layser Memorial Fund of the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole | Alta, WY
Dan Bean | Grand Junction, CO
Al Canner & Claudia Naeseth | Boulder, CO
Monica J. Jungster & Charles F. Brasen | West Glacier, MT
Jon Maaske | Albuquerque, NM
Sydney S. Macy | Stanford, CA
John & Betsy Messer | Dallas, OR
Ray Miller | McKinleyville, CA
Maxwell Milton | Helena, MT
Amy Mower | Maple Falls, WA
Virginia Mudd & Clifford Burke | San Jose, NM
Chris Neill | Falmouth, MA
Jim O'Conner & Karen Demsey | Portland, OR
Karen Olson | Rapid City, SD
Kevin & Katie Reily | Chapel Hill, NC
Peter & Linda Rhines, Rhines Charitable Giving Fund | Seattle, WA
Jack Sawaske | Carpinteria, CA
Tim & Anne Schaffner | Tucson, AZ
David Schroeder | Eugene, OR
Karen & Sam Schroyer | Carbondale, CO
Russ Shay & Debbie Sease | Washington, DC
Lili Simpson | Hailey, ID
Richard & Christine Stohlman | Brooklyn, NY
Terry Taylor & Susan Joseph-Taylor | Minden, NV
Wayne Terrell | Torrington, WY
Craig Thompson | Rock Springs, WY
Ernie & Laura Thompson | Reno, NV
Peter J. Tronquet | South Beach, OR
Sharon Hall & John Watson | Durango, CO
Tim Welch | Littleton, CO
Jay Withgott & Susan Masta | Portland, OR
Mike Wynne | Seattle, WA

SPONSOR

Thomas Engelman | Park City, UT
Jim Evans | Vashon, WA
James & Cynthia Fournier | Denver, CO
Lynn & Jim Gibbons | Portola Valley, CA
George Griset | Gustine, CA
David Gunn | Barre, VT
Robyn Harrison & Tom Hyden | San Antonio, NM
Richard Heermance | Palo Alto, CA
Eric Hellquist | Oswego, NY
Laura Helmuth | Rockville, MD
Judith A Hildinger | San Luis Obispo, CA
Laura & Parker Mills | Elk, CA
Eva Ihle | San Francisco, CA
Matt Jenkins | Arlington, VA
Rita & Roger Jensen | Pagosa Springs, CO
Dana & David Joslyn | Salt Lake City, UT
Bob Kiesling | Helena, MT
Malcolm & Pam Kinney | Sandpoint, ID
Peter Landres & Madeline Mazurski | Missoula, MT
Tom Lehman | Corbett, OR
Jane & Rick Lewis | San Antonio, TX
Leonard Lloyd | Fremont, CA
Barbara Lowe | San Francisco, CA
Ryan & Jamie Lower | Las Vegas, NV
Jennifer Lowry | Fort Collins, CO
Sharon Markey | Poulsbo, WA
Kevin McClelland | Santa Clara, CA
J. Conrad Metcalf | Boulder, CO
Cecil & Lisa Moreno | Anchorage, AK
Wendie L. Morris | Reno, NV
Marla Morrissey | Ashland, OR

PATRON

Anonymous (21)
In honor of Roy Breckenridge
In memory of Public Lands
In memory of Homer & Frances Bradey | Ronan, MT
In memory of Fred Cheever | Denver, CO
In memory of Mary Alice & Howard Evans | Fort Collins, CO
In memory of Grant Heilman | Buena Vista, CO
In memory of Dick Hirshberg | Davis, CA
In memory Bradley R. Johnson | Thornton, CO
In memory of Bob & Barbara Morrison | Lexington, MA
In memory of Christina Reed | Denver, CO
In memory of Lucienne Regan | Burlingame, CA
In memory of Orville E. Sumner | Fresno, CA
In memory of Jean Weaver
In memory of David J. Weber | Dallas, TX
In memory of Frances Werner | Tucson, AZ
Frances Aaberg | Lafayette, CO
David & Christine Abell | Denver, CO
Ellen Aiken | Bent Mountain, VA
David Allan | Oak City, UT
John & Kathryn Allen | Orofino, ID
Suzanne Anderson | Seattle, WA
Mark Andreasen | Soda Springs, ID
Jack & Laurel Babcock | Albuquerque, NM
Kenneth Bacso | Apo, AE
Carl Bauer & Brooke Bedrick | Tucson, AZ
Dave & Marge Baylor | Seattle, WA
David Bell | Ketchum, ID
Bill Berg & Colette Daigle Berg | Gardiner, MT
W. Scott Berry & Coleen Cantwell | Santa Cruz, CA
Tom Bihn | Burien, WA
Karl & Kathleen Blankenship | Seven Valleys, PA
Stephen Bomkamp | Seattle, WA
Christopher A. Boone | San Francisco, CA
Gregory A. Booth | Clatskanie, OR
Thomas Bosteels | Salt Lake City, UT
Ed Bousquet | Fort Collins, CO
Virginia Boxall | Albany, OR
Shonny Bria & Gary Talkington | Grand Canyon, AZ
Kathy Brill & Emmett Evanoff | Longmont, CO
Chris Brown | Boulder, CO
Tim Brown & Angela Dean | Salt Lake, UT
Christopher L. Brown | Bellingham, WA
James Buckley | Denver, CO
Lydia Budak | Snohomish, WA
Michael Budig | Salt Lake City, UT

☑ YES! I care about the West!

☐ $35 Friend
☐ $75 Patron
☐ $150 Sponsor
☐ $250 Benefactor
☐ $500 Guarantor
☐ $1,000 Steward
☐ $2,500 Philanthropist
☐ $5,000 Publisher's Circle
☐ $10,000 & up Independent Media Guardian

Amount of gift $ _____ ☐ Make this amount recurring
☐ Here's my check (or voided check/1st month's gift for recurring gifts)
☐ Charge my credit card $15/month minimum

Card # _____ Exp. date _____
Name on card _____
Billing Address _____
City/State/ZIP _____

High Country News | P.O. Box 1090 | Paonia, CO 81428 | 800-905-1155 | hcn.org D016A010

SONNY ASSU: A SELECTIVE HISTORY
Sonny Assu with Candice Hopkins, Marianne Nicolson, Richard Van Camp and Ellyn Walker.
224 pages, softcover: $34.95.
The University of Washington Press, 2018.

A clash of cultures plays out in Sonny Assu's artwork. The popular cereal "Frosted Flakes" becomes "Treaty Flakes," with an ingredients list that reads: "sugar-coated lies, government bureaucracy, self-governance, land resources, broken promises, abandoning the past, securing the future." Assu's work, a decade of which is chronicled in *Sonny Assu: A Selective History*, traces his experience awakening to his Kwakwaka'wakw heritage while growing up in urban Vancouver, B.C.

The visually driven book highlights the artist's work, with accompanying essays by contemporaries and Assu himself. Assu's art leaps from medium to medium and includes graphic art, carvings, prints, photography and combinations of each.

"Framed by contributions from some of our brightest intellectuals, Sonny Assu's canvas is more than an examination of how Indigenous Peoples respond to the Canadian experience," writes the Haida artist and lecturer Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas. "His witty and gentle hand offers Canada a mirror to consider its own scarred identity." **CARL SEGERSTROM**

FRIEND

Anonymous (10)
In honor of Sally Jewell
In honor of Jonathan Thompson, from Jim & Marty Hartmann
In memory of Pete Burton
In memory of Fred W. Cropp | Wooster, OH
In memory of Margaret D. Hayden | Evergreen, CO
In memory of Rick Leo
In memory of Irene Sweetkind
In memory of Eila Weisman | Chicago, IL
Pier Albano | Rochester, NY
William Ammentorp | Cannon Falls, MN
Kurt Anderson | Las Cruces, NM
A & D Ankrom | Bend, OR
Clare Austen | Spokane, WA
Diane Austin | Tucson, AZ
Russell Axelrod | West Linn, OR
Guy Ayrault | Vail, CO
John Balda | Oak Harbor, WA
Ian Baring-Gould | Boulder, CO
Lois Barry | La Grande, OR
Don Barton | Alta Loma, CA
Marty Bauman | Madison, WI
Kirk Beardsley | Colorado Springs, CO
Ted Beatty | South Bend, IN
Anna Beauchamp | Ashland, OR
Lara Beaulieu | Carbondale, CO
Donald A. Begley | Santa Fe, NM
Barbara Bell | Libertyville, IL
Bonnie Bell | Cedar City, UT
Melissa Benton | Colorado Springs, CO
Thomas Besser & Kathleen Potter | Moscow, ID
Glenn Biehl | Eugene, OR
Vina Sue Bishop | Denver, CO
Virginia H. Black | Longmont, CO
Brigida Blasi | Green River, WY
Mark Bowler | Idaho Springs, CO
Dennis Bramble | Escalante, UT
Joe Brazie | Eugene, OR
Peter Brewer | Bend, OR
Derik Broekhoff | Bainbridge Island, WA
Wesley Brown | Cave Junction, OR
Beth Brownfield | Bellingham, WA
Laurie & Rick Bryson | San Jose, CA
Brandon L. Bunderson | Washington, DC
Woodruff Burt | Gallatin Gateway, MT
Francis Butterworth | Saugus, CA
Janet Carter | Ketchum, ID
Justin Cetas | Milwaukie, OR
Avram Chetron | Ashland, OR
Dawn Zinser Church & Alan Church | Monterey, CA
Bob & Dee Clary | Cheyenne, WY
Suzanne & Peter Coe | Pagosa Springs, CO
James Colby | Moneta, VA
Francis Colwell | Placentia, CA
Steven C. Cowgill | La Jolla, CA
Rolf & Sylvia Dahl | Wheat Ridge, CO
Alice de Anguera | Moab, UT
Adam Diamant & Melissa Eizenberg | El Cerrito, CA
Steve Drake | Corvallis, OR
Ben Eastman Jr. & Gloria Eastman | Denver, CO
James Ehlers | Bayfield, CO
Walt Ehmann | Groveland, CA
David & Pat Eisenberg | Tucson, AZ
Gunnar & Cindy Ellsmore | Sierra City, CA
Mike Erwin | Billings, MT
William & Nancy Evenson | Corvallis, OR
Annie Faurote | Chico, CA
Roger N. Felch | Idledale, CO
Ted Fisher | Columbia, MO
Edith Forbes | East Thetford, VT
Steven Galipeau | West Hills, CA
Tom Garban | Klamath River, CA
Katherine Gard | Boulder, CO
Paul Garrahan | Portland, OR
Sally Vogel | Lacey, WA
Betty & Ralph Waldron | Corvallis, OR
Kelvin Walker & Jan Hawkins | San Jose, CA
Greg Warren | Golden, CO
David Webber | Jarbidge, NV
Jana Weber | Pinedale, WY
William L. Welch | Lewiston, ID
William H. Wellman | Santa Barbara, CA
David Wernecke | Baraboo, WI
Paul & Jory Westberry | Naples, FL
Bonnie White | White Salmon, WA
Grant Wiegert | Luray, VA
Stephany Wilkes | San Francisco, CA
David Williams | Portland, OR
Sue Williams | Ventura, CA
Larry & Becky Williams | Columbia Falls, MT
Walter & Joan Willis | West Salem, WI
Judy & Don Willott | Bainbridge Island, WA
Steve Winslow | Cedar City
Julice A. Winter | Livermore, CA
Kent Winterholler | Park City, UT
Kent Woodruff | Winthrop, WA
Dave Worley | Reno, NV
Jack Wright | Poulsbo, WA
Steven Wright | Seattle, WA

Beyond buzzwords

Spring has brought a topsy-turvy spell of weather to our home in Paonia, Colorado. At the beginning of the week, it was in the 70s, and we were working on our tans, but the following days brought hail, snow and ice that threatened the valley's budding fruit trees. The erratic weather comes against the backdrop of a bleak water outlook for the Colorado River. Many in the Southwest are likely to be sweating this summer.

Rain or shine, though, we've had visitors. Retirees **LoAnne** and **Dale Barnes** from Leeds, Utah, and **Clyde** and **Barbara Jex** from nearby Grand Junction, Colorado, made a special trip to tour *High Country News* headquarters. LoAnne, a longtime subscriber, said what she loves about *HCN* is that "you get background that you wouldn't get anywhere else." Longtime subscribers **Gretchen Long** and **Jeff Brack** stopped in after a 10-day camping trip in Utah, touring Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments "before the oil and gas got in there."

Meanwhile, Executive Director **Paul Larmer**, Contributing Editor **Cally Carswell** and Board Member **Luis Torres** met with a small group of *HCN* readers in Santa Fe in March. Chief among the topics was civic discourse: In an age of information overload, how do we get more people to exercise their basic rights as citizens? **Susan Martin**, who works for the local Sierra Club office, said her experience canvassing voters has given her a clue: Don't use politicized buzzwords, and focus on the practical ways issues manifest in people's lives.

In staff-related news, our photographer and graphic artist extraordinaire, **Brooke Warren**, will be lighting out at the end of spring. Brooke plans to spend her summer "using her body and not just her brain," as an instructor with the outdoor education program Outward Bound. She's also considering a career as a freelance photographer (which means we can look forward to seeing more of her pictures in our magazine). "Brooke has introduced so many wonderful photographers to *HCN*, and she's become our in-house whiz on data visualizations," Art Director **Cindy Wehling** said. "The magazine and the website are losing a great contributor."

Corrections: Due to a reporting error in "Cashing in on Standing Rock" (*HCN* 4/16/2018) we erroneously claimed that Michael Wood, using donations to Veterans Stand, paid $65,000 to WorldViz for virtual reality services for the Vans Warped Tour in June 2017. We have verified that although Veterans Stand corresponded with WorldViz, no contract was signed and no payments were made. Additionally, we made some errors in presenting the timeline of Veterans Stand and Standing Rock. President Barack Obama on Nov. 1, 2016, announced that the Army Corp was reevalauting the path of the Dakota Access Pipeline, and he denied a crucial easement on Dec. 4, the same day that many Veteran Stand volunteers arrived, not the next day. The article has been updated to include that 300 people were injured and 26 were hospitalized following a clash with the Morton County Sheriff's Department, and that local law enforcement disputes the nature of Sophia Wilansky's arm injury. Michael Wood moved to Playa Vista in the spring of 2017, and it was Anthony Diggs, not Wood, who eventually abandoned the Vans Warped Tour.

A caption in our April 16 Research Fund book review incorrectly stated the year by which musk oxen were nearly eliminated from Alaska: It was 1900. We regret the errors.

—Carl Segerstrom, for the staff

Who Can Adopt a Native Child?

The Indian Child Welfare Act has helped repair the damage of the boarding-school era — but not everyone wants it in place

FEATURE BY ALLISON HERRERA

On a hot summer day in 2007, Gary Williams sat on a worn loveseat across from his dad, Floyd Williams, in Floyd's Buckeye, Arizona, home. Gary, his sisters Diane and Letha and his brother Gerald were there to ask his father some serious questions, mainly about what happened after Gary's mother, Julia, died some four decades earlier, when he was just 1 year old. Williams doesn't know what his mother looks like. He has no memories of her face, or her hands, or her smell — not even any photos of her. For decades, he couldn't remember where he was born and spent his first months, the Gila River Indian Reservation in Sacaton, Arizona.

Williams spoke to his dad — who was in his late 70s, neatly dressed with slicked-back, still-brown hair — but he saved the toughest question for last: *Why?* Why did the state social workers take him away from his home, his family and his tribe when he was only a baby, and then shuffle him through Arizona's foster system for the next 16 years?

There are seemingly simple answers — back then, Floyd was a long-haul trucker who was seldom at home, and the state said Gary and his two sisters and two brothers needed a female figure to care for them. And there are more complicated ones. "The system failed me," says the younger Williams, whose wavy salt-and-pepper hair and gentle brown eyes reveal a quiet intensity and confidence. The system robbed him not only of his childhood family, but also his heritage.

Had he been born just a decade later, however, he might have been spared some of this trauma. In 1978, Congress passed the Indian Child Welfare Act, or ICWA, to prevent this sort of family-fracturing practice. The ICWA mandates that when a Native American child's parent dies, exhaustive efforts must be made to reunite the child with the surviving parent or other relatives. Children are placed with non-Native families only when an Indigenous foster home, preferably one within the child's tribe, cannot be found.

Now, a conservative Arizona think tank, the Goldwater Institute, is pushing hard to destroy some of the main parts of The Indian Child Welfare Act. It claims that the law is "race-based," and therefore unconstitutional, and that it deprives non-Indian people of the chance to adopt Indian children. ICWA has survived numerous such challenges over the years, but with a president who has shown little support for Native Americans, this effort might finally topple it.

Dave Simmons, a policy expert from the National Indian Child Welfare Association, says that if the Goldwater Institute succeeds, it could throw federal Indian policy back a century. "What concerns us is that they're trying to generalize and say, 'You can't trust any tribe anywhere to take care of their children,' which is an old line that was used over a hundred years

Girls in a classroom at the Phoenix Indian School in the early 1900s. Federally run Indian boarding schools were a key element of the effort to "Americanize" American Indians beginning in the late 1800s.

RC284(2)1.154
PHOENIX INDIAN SCHOOL COLLECTION, BILLIE JANE BAGULEY LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES, HEARD MUSEUM, PHOENIX, ARIZONA

ago, as they forced Indian people onto the reservations, and they took their kids forcibly from them and put them in military-style boarding schools."

During the boarding-school era that began in the 1870s, Native children were taken from their homes and families and sent far away to live with strangers and learn "how to be white." The policy was designed to erase Indigenous culture and force children to assimilate, thereby setting the stage for the adoption practices that followed. A lack of culturally competent child welfare workers and, in some cases, financial incentives for placing Indian children out of their homes added to the cultural devastation.

From the 1950s until 1996, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ran what's known as the Indian Placement Program, which removed Indian children from their tribes and put them into the homes of its members. During the 1970s, some 5,000 Indian foster children were living in Mormon homes. In his book *The State and the American Indian: Who Gets the Indian Child?* the late Troy R. Johnson, an American Indian studies professor, estimated that as many as 25 to 30 percent of Indian children were taken away to live in non-Indian homes before ICWA became law in 1978.

Williams was one of them. As a child, he was tossed from home to home, from one ugly situation to another. When he was just 6, his foster father, a man whom the children called "Uncle Jack," was an alcoholic who physically abused Williams and his sisters, as well as his own wife and the two children they had adopted from a family member. He even beat the family dog. Williams and his sisters finally escaped by running away — taking the dog with them. To this day, Williams has trouble seeing out of his right eye, the legacy of a beating "Uncle Jack" gave him with a belt buckle.

Just before he started high school, Williams made his way back to Sacaton to reconnect with his biological father, his Gila River heritage and what was left of his mother's family. By then, his sisters were grown and had families of their own. Williams' grandparents had passed away, and the only relative who remembered his mother was his uncle Bobby, his mother's younger brother. He and his sisters still hurt from the loss of their heritage, and they believe the state could have helped them more than it did.

Since the passage of ICWA in 1978, the law has been labeled the "gold standard" for child welfare laws — and not just for Indian children. Policies created under ICWA have been adopted by some states to ensure that children are only removed from their homes as a last resort. To honor the children and preserve the memory of what life was like before ICWA, Sandy White Hawk, a Sicangu Lakota citizen from South Dakota, hosts an annual powwow called Gathering of Our Children, where she welcomes people who were adopted or fostered out to non-Native families. She's been able to uncover and share the stories of hundreds of children from all over the country who have been reunited with their Native families.

As many as 25 to 30 percent of Indian children were taken away to live in non-Indian homes before ICWA became law in 1978.

The Goldwater Institute, however, says that it is "fighting for equal protection of Indian children." It cites a handful of cases where "active efforts" to reunify Indian children with abusive parents — rather than immediately placing them with foster families or putting them up for adoption — traumatized the children. It points to cases like one in Oregon, in which the state terminated a couple's parental rights to their son after they failed to follow through on court-ordered counseling and therapy. The institute has not provided any other details, including whether the boy, who is referred to simply as "L," was abused or neglected.

"I think everybody would admit … that there are some cases in which it is better for a Native American child to be placed with a white or black or Hispanic family than with a Native American family," Timothy Sandefur, one of the organization's lead litigators, said. "That's the point of all of our litigation here, is that the best interests of a particular child have to take precedence over other values."

Even today, solid data about ICWA and its results is hard to come by. But available statistics tend to contradict the claims of widespread abuse in tribal communities. The number of deaths of Native children due to maltreatment is below the national average, according to a 2016 report from the Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities. The report found only 10 cases of death due to child abuse or neglect over a 10-year span.

In contrast, the Arizona Department of Children's Safety is facing a class action lawsuit: A district judge in Arizona has ordered the department to improve its guidelines for removing children from their homes. Complaints against the department allege that it was taking kids at a very high rate, terminating parental rights without demonstrating adequate reasons. Arizona currently has 17,000 children in state custody for abuse and neglect.

The Goldwater Institute, named after former U.S. Sen. Barry Goldwater, R-Ariz. — who actually voted in favor of the Indian Child Welfare Act — is better known for advocating for private property rights, smaller government and lower taxes. Yet it has been focused on dismantling the law — rather than going after the Arizona foster care system — since 2014. Sandefur insists that the law amounts to racial segregation; ICWA, he says, discriminates against children based "solely on their DNA," and tears children away from loving homes. His group just wants to "protect some of the most vulnerable Americans," he says.

Gary Williams stands for a portrait near the summit at South Mountain Park in Phoenix, Arizona. He hopes to help other Native people work through trauma they may have experienced in the foster system in Phoenix. CAITLIN O'HARA

The think tank is currently litigating six ICWA cases in Arizona, California, Ohio and Texas. Messaging is an important part of its strategy: It has hired a so-called "investigative journalist" named Mark Flatten, formerly of the right-leaning *Washington Examiner*, to back up claims of abuse and neglect on reservations.

The institute's messaging has been enhanced by mainstream media coverage. During the recent controversial Baby Veronica case, which involved a Cherokee father from Oklahoma and a non-Native couple in California, television news viewers witnessed a wailing child being ripped from her adoptive parents' arms so that she could be sent back to live with her father. Media reports noted the amount of Indian blood that the child had, a distinction that is rarely publicly discussed when it comes to children of other races in the foster care system. ICWA is complicated, the cases are emotional, and good sources are not always easy to come by, especially on a deadline. As a result, media narratives are not always fully informed. The story played very well for the non-Indian couple in the Baby Veronica case, who eventually won in the U.S. Supreme Court in 2013.

The National Indian Child Welfare Association, members of the Gila River Tribe and others in the field of Indian law are outraged over the Goldwater Institute's efforts to derail legislation that has helped thousands of children stay within their communities and retain their culture.

Mary Kathryn Nagle, an attorney with Pipestem Law in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Washington, D.C., who works on ICWA cases, says that Goldwater is cynically mischaracterizing how the law works. "Goldwater's claims that the ICWA constitutes an unconstitutional race-based classification are simply wrong," she says. "Goldwater is attempting to use equal protection terms to dismantle a statute that is tied to citizenship in a sovereign tribal nation, not race. Nothing in the text or history of the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause supports the idea that Congress cannot classify individuals based on their citizenship in a sovereign tribal nation." Legal experts contacted for this article liken ICWA laws to international adoptions, which must proceed as a government-to-government affair. The U.S. should deal with tribes as the sovereign nations they are, just as the government does with other nations.

Stephen Roe Lewis' father, Rod Lewis, was one of the first Native Americans to be admitted to the Arizona state bar, and he helped craft some of the original language in the 1978 law. To the younger Lewis, now governor of the Gila River Indian Community, Goldwater's motives aren't about child welfare. "Their ultimate aim is to attack sovereignty," he says.

Sovereignty gives the Gila River people the power to guide their own destiny, to interact with the federal government on a nation-to-nation basis, and to have their own courts and laws based on their own cultural values, which include taking care of children. Tribal members say they rely on ICWA to help them do that.

Lewis objects to the Goldwater Institute's negative portrayal of reservation life and in particular its insistence that ICWA is harming children. "You know, they make some outlandish claims," he says. "No state, no town or city is perfect. No reservation is perfect. To characterize tribal nations in such a very base

and racist way. … It's devoid of any type of humanity."

Lewis wants to build a family advocacy center, a place that brings together tribal social workers, police, Gila River's legal resources and investigators to make sure children are getting the help they need in cases of abuse or neglect. Those services are being paid for with money from the tribal-owned Wild Horse Pass Hotel & Casino, grants and federal dollars. But it's not enough.

Dave Simmons, a policy expert from the National Indian Child Welfare Association, says the agency is the first to acknowledge the challenges some tribal communities face when protecting their children. Tribes receive almost no prevention funding, he notes. Though American Indian children represent just 2 percent of the total child welfare population, they are overrepresented in the state system, at a rate of 12 to 14 percent. Yet these children receive just half of 1 percent of the available child welfare money.

Simmons says the institute's messaging shows how little it knows about Indian Country or its laws. "They are trying to generalize that you can't trust any tribe anywhere to take care of their children," he said. "So we have to take kids away from Indian people because they can't be counted on to take care of their own children."

In 2014, Gila River was forwarded an email from Goldwater, soliciting adoption cases involving non-Indian couples wanting to adopt Indian children. It offered its services — which normally run as high as $500 per hour — free of charge. Simmons said the institute is working with the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys, a very powerful group that stands to profit from every adoption it can push through successfully.

Goldwater doesn't list donors on its website, citing privacy concerns. But its recent 990s, a form the IRS requires tax-exempt nonprofits to submit, show the organization's main source of revenue comes from private donations totaling over $4 million. According to the watchdog group Source Watch, the organization is taking money from the Koch brothers and other donors who also funded President Donald Trump's campaign. "I feel that our children have a bounty on their heads," says Gila River Gov. Lewis.

Sandefur acknowledged that Native American children and their families suffered horrible abuse during the boarding school era. Still, he remains firmly opposed to ICWA, calling it a matter of civil rights. He says ICWA violates children's rights by forcing them back into abusive homes in dangerous places.

But for Gary Williams, those dangerous places turned out to be outside the tribe. Years after he had moved on, Williams drove to the house where his abusive foster father still lived. "I just wanted to see him," he said. He parked across the street and spotted an old man scuttling around in a wheelchair. But Williams never got out of his car.

He did confront his foster mother years later, at the church they attended when he was a boy. Williams sat down next to her in the pew. "If any of these people knew what went on in that house, they would be shocked you're a Christian lady," he whispered in her ear. "But I forgive you." She died two months later, he said.

After high school, Williams managed to stitch himself together and become successful. He was the first Native American to graduate from CalArts, paid for in part through tribal scholarships. Later, he worked as an animator for Disney, a job he remembers fondly. Today, he works for the Gila River gaming commission.

Williams and his sisters stayed together during part of their time in foster care. Eventually, however, they were split apart, and though he sees them now, the feeling of distance lingers. After he left foster care and moved in with his father, there were no family get-togethers or attempts to reunify the tattered family.

Most heartbreaking to him, however, is the knowledge that, back when his mother died, he had uncles and aunts in Texas who were willing to care for him and his siblings. On that 2007 trip, Williams wanted to ask his dad why he hadn't been sent to those relatives. He wanted to tell his father about bouncing from home to home and the physical abuse that still scarred him. But in the moment, as he and his siblings confronted him, Williams said it was like looking at a ghost. "There was nothing he could say. Not even sorry." □

Allison Herrera is a member of the Salinan Nation and has covered the environment and Native American communities in Oklahoma for KOSU Radio. Her work has aired on *Reveal, All Things Considered* and *National Native News*.

Teresa Carney, an American Indian student attending Denver School, plays with a dog and Sandra Stay, a girl she shared a room with, in 1973. Carney lived with Stay's family as part of the Indian Placement Program, which placed some 5,000 Indian foster children into the homes of Mormon families during the 1970s. BARRY STAVER/THE DENVER POST VIA GETTY IMAGES

Celebrity Scofflaw

How the feds helped make Cliven Bundy a hero

FEATURE BY TAY WILES

Cliven Bundy speaks to a packed house at the Freedom and Property Rally in Paradise, Montana, following the dismissal of federal charges stemming from the Bunkerville standoff. TONY BYNUM

On Jan. 8, 2018, the trial room on the seventh floor of the Las Vegas, Nevada, federal courthouse was packed with over a dozen reporters and at least five times as many spectators. At the front, facing the bench, was a 71-year-old rancher named Cliven Bundy. He didn't look well; his ankles were shackled and his back hunched. Four teeth had recently been pulled. He had been on trial for eight weeks and imprisoned for nearly two years. In a bit of trial theater, he was wearing blue jail-issued clothes with "detainee" stamped on the back. Nearby sat two of his sons, Ryan and Ammon, as well as another ally, a self-styled militiaman named Ryan Payne.

For more than 20 years, Cliven Bundy had illegally grazed cattle on federal land surrounding his ranch 75 miles north of Las Vegas. When the feds attempted to round up the cattle in April of 2014, the Bundys and Payne led a protest that escalated into an armed confrontation with the Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service. Now, the four men faced 15 charges, ranging from threatening federal officers to conspiracy against the United States, carrying a maximum sentence of over a century for each defendant.

On the face of it, the case was the federal government's to lose. Bundy's supporters had pointed loaded weapons at federal agents, and the rancher owed the American people more than $1 million in unpaid grazing fees. The Bundys' argument hinged in part on their belief that the federal government cannot legally own land — a fringe interpretation of the U.S. Constitution unlikely to stand up in court against a century of case law. The verdict promised a final reckoning for the Bundys, the BLM and Western public lands.

U.S. District Judge Gloria Navarro took her seat overlooking the room. "The court finds that a universal sense of justice has been violated," she said flatly into her microphone. But she wasn't talking to the Bundys; her disappointment was directed at the U.S. attorneys, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and, by extension, the BLM. She was dismissing the case, with prejudice, meaning that it could not be brought again and would provide no answer to the question of whether or not the Bundys had broken the law.

Instead, there remained only lingering questions: How did it come to be that, at 10:50 a.m., Cliven Bundy strode out of the courthouse, unhunched, unshackled, in a gray blazer, blue jeans and white cowboy hat — a free man? And what role did the government play in creating an anti-public-lands hero, through its own bungled attempts to take him down?

The Virgin River flows past the Bundy ranch near Bunkerville, Nevada. The ranch itself is 160 acres, but the Bundys once held grazing rights on more than 150,000 acres surrounding it.
ANDREW CULLEN

THE BUNDYS' DISPUTE with the federal government is deeply entwined with the family's sense of place. Their strength comes from their sense of story. At the center of their story is Bundy Ranch, just south of Interstate 15 on 160 acres of private property in Clark County, Nevada. Cliven's parents bought the property in 1948 from a second cousin. His father used it to secure a federal permit for the Bunkerville grazing allotment, which spanned 154,000 acres of BLM desert around the ranch.

In 1990, after the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the Mojave desert tortoise as a threatened species, the number of animals ranchers could graze on BLM land was limited to preserve sensitive habitat. Clark County, seeking to mitigate the impacts of Las Vegas development on the tortoise, worked with the BLM and The Nature Conservancy to buy out grazing permits. "There was quite a bit of peer pressure among the ranching community," said Jim Moore, formerly of The Nature Conservancy, who worked on the buyouts. "Nobody wanted to be the first to break." Seeing fellow ranchers sell out helped inspire Cliven to proudly declare himself "the last rancher standing" in Clark County.

Ultimately, he alone refused the offer, and in 1993, he stopped paying grazing fees. The BLM offered him a new permit, with more restrictions, but he declined. Court decisions in 1998, 1999 and 2013 ruled that Bundy must remove his livestock from public land. Bundy ignored them. For years, hundreds of his cows roamed wild as far south as Lake Mead, 40 miles from his ranch.

He was, in his words, making his "stand" for what he saw as right and good: a settler family who had earned its place in the landscape through legacy and hardship. Bundy's maternal great-great-grandfather, Myron Abbott, settled near present-day Bunkerville, Nevada, in 1877, where he farmed cotton, melons, wheat and other crops. A paternal great-grandfather, who settled just over the border in a remote part of northwest Arizona in 1916, helped found what became known as Bundyville. The settlement became the center of a tight-knit community with a strong sense of personal history, bonding its residents to each other and to the land.

For years, Cliven Bundy has argued in various public forums that these generational ties and early uses gave him full rights to the land where his cows roamed. When confronted with the much longer legacy of the Southern Paiutes — who had lived on the same land and the surrounding region for at least 900 years before him — he would respond simply, "They lost the war." (The Moapa River Paiute Reservation sits 40 miles west of Bundy Ranch, home to a tribe that lost over 90 percent of its people and millions of acres in the course of white settlement.)

When the trial began in mid-November, Ryan Bundy gave an opening statement drawn from this same family ethos. He chose to represent himself, trading his jail scrubs for a black suit. Through his romantic descriptions of life on the ranch, he indicated that his family's legacy gave them the right to use the land in perpetuity. Meanwhile, he suggested, the family's 11 active water rights near the Bundy property allow them to run livestock without federal permission. It's true that legacy is a form of currency out West: Many mining, grazing and water rights are stronger the older they are. Yet all of these rights come with rules attached. Nevada water rights, for example, merely allow someone to use water, not "do an end run around grazing fees," as University of Nevada law professor Ian Bartrum wrote in a deeply researched essay about the Bundys.

Ryan Bundy also suggested, as his father has long contended, that the state or county — not the federal government — are the rightful administrators of local

Cliven Bundy talks with his son Ryan, who helps on the ranching operation, from the living room of the family home near Bunkerville, Nevada. The Bundy children and grandchildren, and the temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in St. George, Utah, are pictured in rustic frames hanging above the couch.
ANDREW CULLEN

rangeland. In fact, Bartrum writes, more than a century of constitutional doctrine says otherwise: "(The Bundys') claims have very little merit."

Indeed, prosecutors pushed back against Ryan's water law argument, and the judge agreed, barring further discussion of the topic. But in some ways, the Bundys had scored a victory. Deep in weedy discussions of land and water law, it isn't hard for laypeople to wonder if these details even matter when it comes to who deserves what. As one prospective juror put it: "In this whole state, there's so much land … who cares?" Who wouldn't want to get back to talking about something with clearer stakes? Fortunately for the Bundys, that's what they're best at — staying out of the weeds and on message.

"I feel that it's important if you're here to judge me," that you get to know me, Ryan Bundy told the jury. The rancher's son displayed a photo of himself with his wife, six daughters and two sons, projected on screens throughout the room. "This is my ID," he said. "This is who I am" — more than a driver's license or other government-issued identification. Family, land, a history — these were what conferred legitimacy, not state-given authority.

Ryan Bundy's opening statement was a hit. In the following days, pro-Bundy news sites and fans praised him on social media. Supporters began calling this "the trial of the century."

THE BUNDYS' PERSONAL CONVICTIONS come not only from family history, but from an idiosyncratic set of religious beliefs that glorify the U.S. Constitution and warn against government overreach. Ammon Bundy took solace in those beliefs last year while being held off and on in solitary confinement for what he said was more than four months. "Imagine living in a bathroom where the tub is your bed," he told me by phone. While awaiting trial, he said, he was punished for not cooperating with rules he described as unconstitutional, such as strip searches. "You see (guards) put food through the hole in the door. Don't see sun, nothing. If you're lucky, you get a book. I had my Scriptures."

Ammon, like his family, is Mormon, a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The U.S. Constitution has always been important to the faith. The religion's founding prophet, Joseph Smith, considered it divinely inspired. Mormons in the 19th century were persecuted for their religion, forced from New York to Missouri to Illinois to Utah. The First Amendment offered them a chance for survival.

In the 1950s, Cleon Skousen, a former FBI agent and Brigham Young University professor, seized on old claims that Smith had prophesied a future time when the Constitution would be under attack, and Mormons would have to keep the country from losing its way. Skousen's beliefs are not LDS Church doctrine, but they deeply influenced the Bundys' philosophy. A neighboring rancher first gave Cliven Bundy a bundle of Skousen's handwritten notes in the 1980s. "That's where I started to understand (the Constitution)," Bundy told me.

In the '90s, as tensions built over the desert tortoise, Bundy found yet more spiritual support for his position. His neighbor, Keith Nay, produced a 175-page booklet of quotes from Mormon Scripture, founding U.S. documents and conservative thinkers, all focusing on the connections between the Constitution and LDS theology. Notably, the so-called *Nay Book* also includes passages from the *Citizen's Rule Book*, a pamphlet that has made the rounds of anti-government circles for decades. The *Rule Book* encourages jury nullification — the idea that, when jurors find a law to be unjust, they can ignore it and acquit defendants — as a way to

circumvent the justice system. (Bundy's supporters actively promoted jury nullification with signs outside the courthouse during the trial.)

The *Nay Book* relies particularly on Ezra Taft Benson, a former U.S. secretary of Agriculture and prophet of the LDS Church from 1985 to 1994. Benson's distrust of big government was a product of the Cold War, during which many Americans saw communism as both the political and moral enemy, says Matthew Bowman, Henderson State University associate professor of history. The *Nay Book* quotes Benson as saying: "One of Lucifer's primary strategies has been to restrict our (individual) agency through the power of earthly governments." Most mainstream Mormons disagreed with Benson's most far-right, conspiratorial ideas. "However, there is a cadre of Mormons, people like the Bundys, who take much of what he said very seriously," Bowman says.

Ammon Bundy picked up the ideas from his father, Skousen's books, and publications like *The New American Magazine*, published by a subsidiary of the John Birch Society, a far-right advocacy group. I asked Ammon whether he also read up on the BLM and its mission while in custody; he said he did not. Jail merely reinforced his sense of the "true enemy," composed, he said, of "two main fringes: socialist, communist fringe and then the extreme environmentalist fringe. They work together. They used and infiltrated bureaucracies and have filled them full of people that believe the same as them. And then built up law enforcement systems to enforce their ideology. That is literally what's happened to us."

WHEN STEVEN MYHRE, then Nevada's acting U.S. attorney, began presenting the case against the Bundys in the Las Vegas trial, he relied on a very different story about the federal government, and about the Bundys. The BLM, he told the jury, carries out a commendable mission to manage public lands for all Americans and for the nation's wildlife — not just for ranchers.

When the agency began to confiscate the Bundys' cattle on April 5, 2014, he said, it was acting on behalf of those other constituents, enforcing laws the Bundys had long flouted. As the impoundment proceeded, the ranch family sent out calls on social media for supporters to help them stand against the government. Hundreds of people traveled to Bundy Ranch, angered and inspired by the online messages. Payne, head of a militia group called Operation Mutual Aid, organized militia members from across the country and used social media to recruit more supporters. Over the next few days, the Nevada gathering turned into one of the largest buildups of "militants" the FBI had ever seen.

On April 11, federal employees heard that protesters might storm their trailers, which were parked near the impounded cattle and used as a command station during the multi-week roundup. For days, BLM employees had received threats by phone and email. A Bundy supporter called a hotel near the town of Bunkerville where contractors and staffers were staying, and threatened to shoot the receptionist in the head. One BLM agent testified that someone also phoned in an anonymous bomb threat to a hotel where government officials were staying. "We received information on a conference call that there were dangerous individuals in the area," said Mary Hinson, a Park Service ranger in Nevada at the time, who helped lead the impoundment. "We had no idea what was going to happen that night."

Supervisors told Hinson and her colleagues to "shelter in place." That night, they slept in their vehicles and in the command station trailers, in chairs and on the floor, going to the bathroom in pairs.

The next day, violence felt imminent. By mid-morning, Clark County Sheriff Doug Gillespie told a crowd of angry protesters that the BLM was calling off the impoundment. An assistant sheriff made the final call to release the cattle as quickly as possible to avoid bloodshed. But when Cliven Bundy's supporters arrived at the sandy wash to retrieve the cows, the feds still hadn't left. Hundreds of protesters, many in tactical gear with long guns, approached the federal officers serving as a buffer between them and other employees.

That day was terrifying for those employees, Myhre told the jury and Judge Navarro. There were about 400 protesters and "guns everywhere." The prosecutor said the Bundys and Payne had intentionally escalated the situation — misleading their supporters to believe that they were under threat by a militarized federal government. Actually, Myhre concluded, the opposite was true: The military show of force came from Bundy's supporters.

"They pointed weapons at us," Erika Schumacher, head BLM ranger in southern Nevada at the time, told me. (She has since left the agency.) Some armed

Protesters cheer as horseback riders herd cattle belonging to rancher Cliven Bundy after they were released from federal holding pens near Bunkerville, Nevada, in 2014. Hundreds of people, many of them armed, rallied there to protest the federal roundup, hanging a banner that read "The West has now been won."
JIM URQUHART/REUTERS

Bret Whipple, the lawyer who represented Cliven Bundy in the case brought by the federal government, outside his offices in Las Vegas, Nevada.
ANDREW CULLEN

protesters took high ground on a bridge, others on the sides of the wash. Payne would later tell the *Missoula Independent* that he was operating as a "kind of on the ground commander" for the militia. "We had counter sniper positions," he said. Eventually, the feds left in a steady stream of dozens of trucks and SUVs, escorted by local police for their own safety, and surrounded by yelling protesters.

Yet while Myhre made his case, something else was going on behind the scenes. Days earlier, at a pre-trial hearing, the defense stumbled on some intriguing information. Hinson mentioned that a government video camera was placed on public land near Bundy Ranch before the standoff to monitor the area. Cliven's attorney, Bret Whipple, couldn't believe his ears. "Nobody had heard (about the camera) before," Whipple told me (though prosecutors claim they provided this information back in 2016). A surveillance camera apparently spying on the Bundy residence would not look good for prosecutors, Whipple thought. "I didn't even look up because I was too afraid I would give away my shock. I just remember my body going on alert," Whipple said.

As the defense dug deeper, they found that the government had concealed the fact that it had mounted its own militarized operation. The FBI, Park Service and BLM also had snipers on the scene. This was a shocking revelation, because in two related trials earlier in the year, prosecutors had obscured the fact that the government had such gunmen. The indictment for the present case partly hinged on the idea that the Bundys' and Payne's social media calls for help were deceitful. Now, it turned out, their claims of government snipers were true after all. According to court documents, BLM Special Agent Dan Love, who was leading the roundup, "employed, dispatched, and inserted multiple BLM and NPS officers who were heavily armed with AR-style assault rifles and who used armored vehicles all around the Bundy Ranch home from April 5 thru April 8, 2014."

The defense team also learned that the government had withheld behavioral and threat assessments indicating that the Bundys were unlikely to resort to violence. This might not sound like a lethal blow to prosecutors, but their case also hinged on the notion that the Bundys were dangerous. "The government has relied, time and time again in pleadings and prior trials, on findings that Cliven posed a threat as a means to explain the overwhelming presence of law enforcement in the area," Ryan Payne's attorneys argued in late November. Yet an FBI analysis suggested the Bundys weren't a serious physical threat, they said.

One of the threat assessments included a communication plan for the BLM and Park Service to use in 2014 to "educate the public and get ahead of negative publicity." But the BLM never implemented that plan. Therefore, the judge suggested, it wasn't Ryan Payne's fault if Bundy supporters fed him misinformation. "No alternative information was available for him to discover the truth directly from the government," Navarro said. The government's decision not to provide more explanation for the impoundment appeared to be hamstringing the prosecution in court.

The more information the defense team dug up, the more the impoundment resembled the Bundys' descriptions of it in countless social media posts to their followers for the past three and a half years. By December, the government's case had begun to unravel.

THE BLM HAS BEEN IN THE BUSINESS of law enforcement longer than any other natural resource agency. Around 1832, its predecessor, the General Land Office, hired its first agents to crack down on timber theft from public land. Law enforcement in agencies like the Forest Service and BLM differs from regular policing in that it focuses on protecting natural resources — something local police and sheriffs aren't as focused on. BLM rangers gained authority to make arrests and carry firearms with the Federal Land Policy Management Act in 1976. The law enforcement program began in earnest in the Southern California desert soon after.

During the new program's first couple of decades, the BLM's cops usually had prior natural resource experience. But as the population grew and encroached on the West's public lands, managers faced increasing crime. Problems ranging from vandalism to illegal marijuana grows demanded rangers with more law enforcement experience.

In the early 2000s, that culture shift accelerated. "(The BLM) started hiring more from Border Patrol, air marshals, from prisons and other agencies that don't deal with resource protection," said Ed Patrovsky, a retired ranger of nearly 30 years, the first to patrol 3.2 million acres in northwest Colorado in the '90s. The change was part of a push across federal agencies to increase security after 9/11. The Interior Department received counterterrorism funds to help address

"I didn't even look up because I was too afraid I would give away my shock."

—Bret Whipple, attorney for Cliven Bundy, describing his reaction when a witness revealed in court that the feds had a camera filming the Bundy ranch — a revelation that led to the unraveling of the case against the Bundys.

Cliven Bundy visits a canyon to repair a leaking water pipe in an area of the Gold Butte National Monument where he grazes cattle, near his ranch in Bunkerville, Nevada.
ANDREW CULLEN

human and drug trafficking on public lands at the U.S.-Mexico border. Former Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Assistant Manager Carolyn Shelton said law enforcement rangers were eager to be sent on more exciting, higher-paid details at the border. "We'd say, 'We really need you to talk to this (grazing) permittee.' They'd say, 'Go talk about cows? No, I got to get down to the border.' The whole agency feeling is becoming so militaristic that the natural resources folks don't even want to be there any more."

The BLM was also responding to a 2002 Inspector General report titled *Disquieting State of Disorder: An Assessment of Department of the Interior Law Enforcement.* The report described BLM law enforcement as chaotic and leaderless. It recommended the agency raise the profile of its policing arm and have special agents across the country report to a new director of the program in Washington, D.C., rather than to state directors. Over the next several years, this change left BLM special agents siloed — separated from their colleagues in a more autonomous arm of the agency, several former BLM managers said in interviews.

Dan Love — the BLM top agent for Utah and Nevada and the man who led the Bundy cattle impoundment — was a perfect example of the culture shift, Patrovsky said. Love, a former employee of the Federal Air Marshal Service, also had a personality that proved problematic for the BLM. On one occasion in 2014 in San Francisco, he walked into a conference room to meet with the organizers of Burning Man, an annual arts festival in Nevada's Black Rock Desert, wearing sunglasses and a handgun on his hip.

"I was embarrassed for BLM," said Mike Ford, a former manager at the agency for 25 years. The festival worked closely with the BLM to secure land-use permits each year and had hired Ford as a private consultant to facilitate the relationship. During the meeting, Love made outrageous demands, Ford said. Love wanted Burning Man organizers to provide 100 pairs of high-end goggles to protect against dust, and funds for additional law enforcement officers; later, he demanded ice cream machines and washers and dryers for his BLM compound. "I called (Love) out," Ford said. "He became very agitated. He was trying to bully his way through a situation." Jim Graham, a spokesman for Burning Man, confirmed Ford's statements. The festival organizers capitulated for multiple years, but are now appealing with the Interior Department to recoup costs.

Love was also the subject of two ethics investigations by the Office of Inspector General. One concluded, in January 2017, that he intimidated colleagues; the other, released last August, found he had tampered with evidence for an unrelated case. The BLM fired him last year. He has become a favorite scapegoat for the Bundy standoff on both sides of the political spectrum, though his supervisors at the BLM's Office of Law Enforcement and Security likely bear responsibility as well.

Some say it was Love's hubris that led to the spectacular failure of the impoundment. The amount of law enforcement at the 2014 roundup was overkill, Ford told me. "I'd have ranchers literally put a gun in my chest in Wyoming in the early '80s," Ford said. "But Bundy had never been a threat, what I'd consider."

Former Nevada BLM ranger Erika Schumacher countered that times have changed since the '80s. The heavy law enforcement presence in 2014 was a valid response to the unique circumstances, she told me. The number of cattle — she estimated over 1,000 — and the massive expanse of rough terrain left the feds feeling exposed. And "we were getting intel that the militia was coming," Schumacher said. Indeed, the Oath Keepers, Three Percenters and Operation Mutual Aid were all bringing people to Bundy Ranch. Social media had become a force multiplier in ways that the BLM had never seen. "It was almost a monster," Schumacher said.

It got worse, she said, when the Clark County sheriff, who had agreed to assist in the operation, backed out the week before: "Once the sheriff pulled out at the last minute, they called in FBI to help with security. … We didn't really have much of a choice." It was Love who requested that the FBI place a surveillance camera on public land to monitor the pro-Bundy protesters — the same camera that would feature prominently in the undoing of the government's case.

In many ways, the BLM roundup was doomed no matter what the agency did. A gentle response might not have ended the 20-year deadlock. But a firm one created the perfect foil for the ranch family, and helped write the Bundy story. As Dennis McLane, the BLM's first chief ranger in Washington, D.C., and an authority on the agency's law enforcement history, recently wrote: "Bundy's recalcitrant beliefs turn any effort to end this trespass into a somewhat impossible situation."

ON THE MORNING OF JAN. 8, Navarro dismissed the case. "The court finds that the government's conduct in this case was indeed outrageous, amounting to a due process violation," she said. The prosecutors had suppressed hundreds of pages of information, the camera and the threat assessments. "It seems no coincidence that most, if not all, of these documents are authored by the FBI," but even if it was that agency that withheld evidence, it was the prosecutors' job to seek it out. The prosecutors' misrepresentations in court made questions about whether the BLM's show of force was warranted irrelevant. The U.S. attorneys had engaged in "flagrant misconduct," Navarro said, and she dismissed the charges with prejudice. The government would not get a second chance any time soon, and the Bundys could go home.

The next 90 minutes were a flurry of excitement. Bundy friends and family poured out of the courtroom and into the hallway, tears and laughter coming all at once. Cliven Bundy wanted to remove his shackles outside the courtroom, in front

of the media and his community. (The marshals said no.) He walked out of the building 45 minutes later, arm-in-arm with his wife, Carol. "If the BLM comes to do an impoundment, it will be the very same thing as last (time)," he told the gathered scrum of reporters.

A crowd of over 100 supporters swarmed him and his sons outside the building. A pro-public lands protester asked Ryan Bundy if the family would start paying their grazing fees. "What the hell are grazing fees?" Bundy responded.

"The land belongs to 326 million Americans," the protester said. Bundy countered that the land belonged to "the state and her people," and told his adversary to read the Constitution. An hour later, reporters filtered away and the excitement began to cool. Drops of water fell on the crowd, breaking into a southern Nevada record of 117 days of drought.

It's unclear exactly why the prosecutors withheld evidence. The U.S. Attorney's Office in Nevada declined to comment because the case is technically still open. President Donald Trump's Attorney General Jeff Sessions has said his department will investigate the prosecutors' missteps. Myhre quietly stepped down from his position in March. Many Bundy supporters see the dismissal as an act of God and proof of the government's evil ways — explanations that echo loudly in the vacuum of the government's non-response. Some wondered if the prosecutors were overconfident, but considering the poor track record of Bundy convictions leading up to Cliven Bundy's trial, Myhre's team may have felt more desperate than complacent. (In 2016, Ammon and Ryan led another armed protest against federal authority, and an occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon that lasted 41 days, but a jury acquitted them. In 2017, jurors convicted only two of six men on trial for the Bunkerville standoff.)

The federal government has not been forthcoming about why it took two years to indict, and over three years to prosecute, the Bunkerville defendants. Dan Love's ethics violations came to light during that time, which almost certainly complicated trial preparations. To make matters worse, internal conflicts within the BLM may have also made trial preparations a struggle. One employee alleged BLM misconduct in the agency's investigation of the standoff, though Maxine Bernstein at *The Oregonian* quotes another BLM investigator who disputes those allegations.

"This was an extreme trial," Bret Whipple, Bundy's attorney, told me. Whipple said he had never seen misconduct on this scale before. But it does happen. In a high-profile 2014 murder case in Oregon, federal prosecutors found piles of undisclosed documents at the office of a state police detective who was supposed to be helping with the investigation. The detective had reportedly become overwhelmed with the workload and hid evidence to make up for it. The judge lambasted prosecutors for their failure to unearth the documents sooner. In Nevada, the Bundy case is just the latest in a series of federal cases in the last 15 years that fell apart after prosecutors withheld evidence.

The sheer volume of material in the Bundy trial also proved overwhelming. There were hundreds of thousands of pages of documents and thousands of videos and photos — the heaviest load Myhre's office had ever faced. "If you have a large amount of discovery, the FBI is very well equipped to help you in that regard," said Paul Charlton, a former U.S. attorney in Arizona. "But to a lesser degree is BLM capable of helping you in that regard. … (The BLM) are men and women of good faith. … But if you took a sample today of the BLM cases being brought in Nevada or Arizona right now, what you'd find were maybe theft of cactus cases, you might find camping beyond the 14-day limit cases, you might find killing of a wild burro or horse case." The Bundy case was far more complex.

IN THE END, IT SEEMED, all the trial had done was cast doubt on the federal government's story, on the agencies' actions at the impoundment, on their honesty in court, on everything. As with the federal government's show of force at the impoundment, its inexplicable decision to withhold evidence regarding its own law enforcement played right into the Bundys' hands, ironically fueling a movement bent on ending federal authority over public lands.

In the months after the trial, Cliven Bundy's star continued its rise. The feds' embarrassing failure in court left the melon farmer and rancher feeling vindicated. He was getting back into the swing of ranch work. Reporters called every week, and supporters solicited him for speaking engagements in multiple states. Some members of the legal defense team even encouraged him to run for sheriff, but he wasn't interested. By March, though, his son Ryan had announced a campaign for Nevada governor. And a handful of like-minded ranchers have also benefited from the Bundys' celebrity. One couple in Amargosa Valley, Nevada, has been rallying against the Fish and Wildlife Service with support from the Bundy network; the agency reportedly rerouted a stream, drying up the couple's property. Eric Parker, a Bunkerville defendant and member of the militia group Idaho Three Percenters, is supporting a rancher in a long-standing dispute with the Army Corps of Engineers in Washington.

On a February morning, I met Cliven Bundy at his house at the ranch, tucked into sagebrush above the quiet Virgin River. He was clean-shaven, wearing jeans and a shiny belt buckle. We climbed into his wife's Honda SUV and veered off the main dirt road onto rougher tracks crisscrossing BLM land. Once, he stopped to show me forage, ripping off a handful of tough shadscale that cut his thumb, his blood mixing in with tiny leaves before he tossed them into the breeze. We drove by the site where law enforcement arrested his son Dave, throwing him on the ground and handcuffing him, a scene that went viral on social media and helped rally people to the Bundys' aid. We paused at water improvements his family maintains: a small pipe collecting water from the creek, a circular tank for cattle to drink from. He fiddled with the infrastructure, fixing a leak here, adjusting a pipe there. "See how much work it is to create water here in the desert," Bundy said.

Within the ranching community, the Bundys remain on the fringe. The vast majority of Western cattlemen and women still pay their public-lands grazing fees, and most show no intention of stopping. Yet the Bundys' following taps into something more mainstream. Supporters who latch onto them do so for the same reasons many voters turned to presidential candidate Donald Trump: a desire to end economic hardship in largely white rural America, and to stay relevant despite the nation's shifting demographics. The "Patriot" movement — a collection of far-right individuals and groups, who hold small- or anti-government views — finds a compelling mode of self-expression in the Bundys' personal story. And in return, the Bundys get a public relations apparatus for free.

That apparatus is far-reaching, but by no means does it present a united front. There is an active Facebook page where disillusioned supporters air their grievances, including claims that their donations for things like lawyer fees, transportation and housing for protesters at the trials are being misused. Cliven Bundy's former bodyguard, Brian Cavalier, of Arizona, and militiaman Ryan Payne, who summoned hundreds of people to the Bundys' aid, are among those who have since distanced themselves — Cavalier from the Bundys and Payne from his militia network. Neither man escaped all the charges the way the Bundys did; Cavalier, Payne and others have taken the fall for the family.

As Cliven Bundy and I bounced over dun-colored hills through the cooling afternoon, he seemed invigorated. I asked what it was like to have critics — not just environmentalists, but average Westerners who care about public lands, or even people who know nothing about the issues and dismiss the Bundys as hicks and zealots. "I've never had anybody criticize me to my face," Bundy said. Out of 1,000 letters he'd gotten in jail, he said, only two questioned him. During an hour at the county fair recently, 15 different people asked to take a photo with him. The media focuses disproportionately on the haters, he said. But you must know you have critics, I pressed. "No," he responded, raising his voice slightly in a mix of exasperation and candor. "I *don't* know." □

"The whole agency feeling is becoming so militaristic that the natural resources folks don't even want to be there any more."

—Former Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Assistant Manager Carolyn Shelton, speaking about the cultural shift within Interior Department agencies following 9/11.

Associate Editor Tay Wiles writes from Oakland, California.
@taywiles

This coverage is supported by contributors to the High Country News Enterprise Journalism Fund.

Notice to our advertisers: You can place classified ads with our online classified system. Visit hcn.org/classifieds. April 27 is the deadline to place your print ad in the May 14 issue. Call 800-311-5852, or e-mail laurad@hcn.org for help or information.

Advertising Policy: We accept advertising because it helps pay the costs of publishing a high-quality, full-color magazine, where topics are well-researched and reported in an in-depth manner. The percentage of the magazine's income that is derived from advertising is modest, and the number of advertising pages will not exceed one-third of our printed pages annually.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Conservationist? Irrigable land? Stellar seed-saving NGO is available to serious partner. Package must include financial support. Details: http://seeds.ojaidigital.net.

EMPLOYMENT

Assistant Manager/ Trainee needed for 16,000-plus-acre conservation property in south-central Colorado. Qualified candidate should have experience working on a ranch or wilderness property, general forestry/fire management knowledge and skills, more than basic carpentry, plumbing and electrical skills, able to maintain and operate equipment, horsemanship, strong communication skills. Send résumé and cover letter to assistant@roland-farm.com.

Accounting Clerk – Our director is seeking to employ the services of an Accounting Clerk to assist with various accounting and administrative tasks. This is a great opportunity to get your foot in the door with a well-known and reputable construction company that appreciates its staff and offers special perks! 224-255-7517. contacts@whiteowlconstructioncompany.com whiteowlconstructioncompany.com.

Studio Architects is seeking an architectural drafts-person/project manager with one to three years of experience. Résumé and cover letter to studio@vbsa.net. Full-time, DOE.

Executive Director, Community Radio Project – Community Radio Project, Cortez, Colo. (KSJD & the Sunflower Theatre). Visit ksjd.org and click on the Executive Director search link. CRP is an EOE. edsearch@ksjd.org.

Associate Director – Grand Staircase Escalante Partners seeks an experienced fundraiser with excellent communication and organizational skills. gsenm.org.

Executive Director – Washington Association of Land Trusts seeks an ED to build on WALT's significant success and to lead the association to new levels of achievement. See full job announcement at walandtrusts.org/jobs-ed/.

Program Manager position in Phoenix with the Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy. www.lincolninst.edu/program-manager.

Executive Director – If you are deeply committed to public service and would like to become part of our high performing, passionate and diverse team, NCAT is looking for an Executive Director in Butte, MT. Information at www.ncat.org/executive-director/.

Nanny in Escalante – Nanny for 18-month-old. Yearly salary, vacation, health insurance. Spanish/other foreign-language native speaker preferred. nannyjobinescalante@gmail.com

HOME AND GARDEN

Western Native Seed – Specializing in native seeds and seed mixes for Western states. 719-942-3935.

MERCHANDISE

Enduring Performance in wide-ranging applications with environmentally friendly, extended drain AMSOIL synthetic lubricants. Wholesale accounts encouraged. 877-486-7645. www.PerformanceOils.US/index/html.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Expert land steward – Available now for site conservator, property manager. View résumé at: http://skills.ojaidigital.net.

PUBLICATIONS AND BOOKS

Clovis – The most relevant environmental novel of 2018, with the most unlikely heroine you will never forget. 406-446-1277 clovissite@gmail.com. jackclinton.com.

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

North Tucson foothills – 11.63 acres of lush desert foothills on Tucson's near north side, secluded, secure, no HOA. Ten-minute walk to Waldorf and Montessori schools, regional bike trail. Sale by owner. $700,000. jluepke49@gmail.com.

A 160-acre hidden paradise in northern Washington – Surrounded by Idaho Panhandle National Forest. Handcrafted home, barns, shop, garage, fruit trees, gardens, greenhouse, hay, pasture, wetlands, at headwaters of year-round creek. $865,000. For details, contact 208-448-1776 or begolf014@gmail.com.

Former retreat center/conservation property for sale – 57 acres in Skull Valley, Ariz., 17 miles from Prescott, year-round creek, swimming holes, secluded canyon, hiking/meditation trails, oaks, pines, garden, greenhouse. House, office building, garage, shop, pumphouse, farm/maintenance equipment. 760-777-0370. atlaspine@gmail.com. https://ciphercanyonranch.com/for-sale-to-qualified-buyers/.

8.66 acres with home, apartment, double garage, well, shop, barn – Must see for short/extended family or corporate retreats in pines! $1,030,000. 928-699-2061. sharan,winnicki@russlyon.com.

Roads End Cabin near Yellowstone Vaulted ceilings, two fireplaces, two bedrooms, loft, jetted tub, Wi-Fi. Forest, mountain views, wildlife. wapitiwild@gmail.com.

New Castle, Colo. — 3,500 square feet, four bedroom/four bath, three-car garage, sun-room/deck, hot tub, evaporative cooling, solar and thermal PV, views, fireplace. By appointment, 970-274-3251 or fischerdedog@sopris.net. Visit hcn.org/castle.

2.28 acres in Torrey, Utah — Valley, mountain and red rock views. City water and electricity at lot line. Five miles from Capitol Reef National Park 775-345-5613. jimsue.ashby@gmail.com.

Glacier National Park views — 321 acres, 4,500 feet waterfront on Duck Lake, lakeshore campsite, septic in place, aspen, meadows and wildflowers, five miles from park boundary. ducklake355@gmail.com.

Custom Mountain Valley Home Home/horse property on 22.8 acres, pasture and ponderosa pines, near Mora, N.M. Views of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Near fishing, skiing, backcountry hiking. Taos MLS 100971, 435-881-3741. johnj.taosnm@gmail.com.

Salmon River, Idaho — 1,800 square feet, off-grid home, quarter acre, well, fruit trees, large organic garden. gymnogyps@gmail.com. jzrebski.wixsite.com/salmonriverhome.

Historic ranch home with 20 acres Historic 1893 ranch headquarters. Four-bedroom, 3.5 bath, 4,000 square feet. Remodeled 2002. Includes two studio apts, stables, arena, workshop, five RV hookups. Chiricahua and Peloncillo mountain views. Photos at www.darkskynewmexico.com. 505-227-9725. Nmhokie1@gmail.com. www.darkskynewmexico.com.

Beautiful custom strawbale home in western Colorado! Secluded, energy efficient Southwestern home on 40 wooded acres. Broker — Rand Porter — United Country Real Colorado Properties. 970-261-1248, $425,000.

Gila National Forest — Nine-plus-acre inholding. Passive solar strawbale off the grid at 7,400 feet. Three bedrooms, 1,200 square feet, $189,000. 575-313-2599.

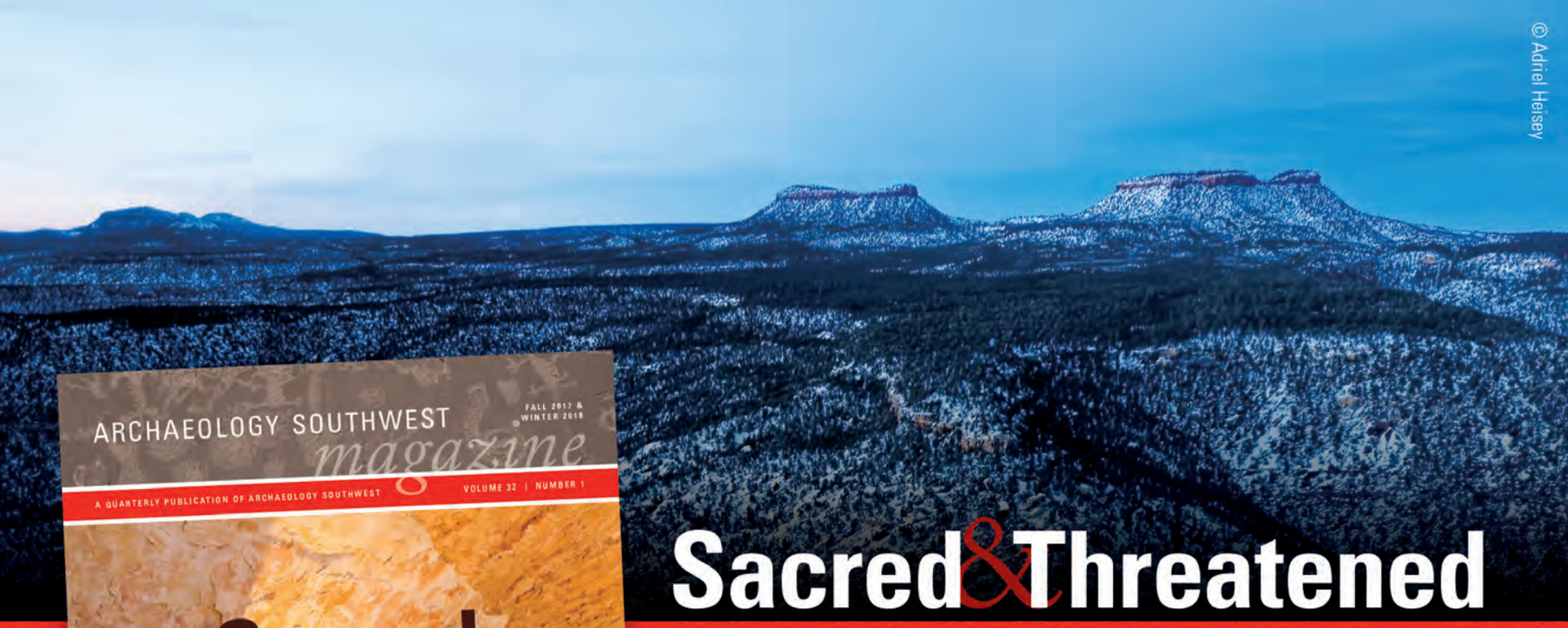
TOURS AND TRAVEL

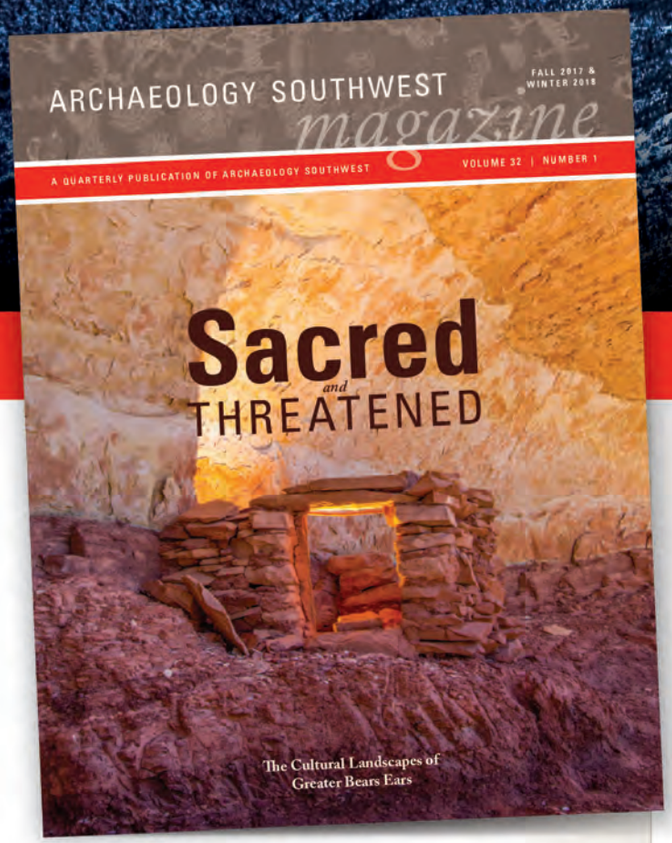
Grand Staircase-Escalante, Utah The Old Bailey Place is where to hang your hat when visiting Grand Staircase. www.theoldbaileyplace.com.

COPPER CANYON, MEXICO, TREKKING Ten-day tour, from Los Mochis airport, two nights El Fuerte, train, two nights canyon rim hotel, five nights trek-style camping. $2,000 pp/do www.coppercanyontrails.org. 520-324-0209.

Learning adventures on the Colorado Plateau — Small group, active, adult field seminars with guest experts, plus private custom trip options for your family or group. Canyonlands Field Institute, Moab, Utah. 800-860-5262. www.cfimoab.org.

Coming to Tucson? Popular vacation house, everything furnished. Rent by day, week, month. Two-bedroom, one bath. Large enclosed yards. Dog-friendly. Contact Lee cloler@cox.net or 520-791-9246





Sacred & Threatened

THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPES OF GREATER BEARS EARS

This special edition of *Archaeology Southwest Magazine* features authors who share their strong personal, spiritual, cultural, professional, and intellectual connections to the Bears Ears region. Like you, they are all committed to respectful preservation of the natural and cultural landscapes of Bears Ears.

Sacred and Threatened:
The Cultural Landscapes of Greater Bears Ears

Archaeology Southwest Magazine
(Volume 31, No. 4, and Volume 32, No. 1)

Issue editors:
R. E. Burrillo and Benjamin A. Bellorado

64 pages, full color

Published by Archaeology Southwest
March, 2018

HCN READERS *special offer*

Purchase your copy of "Sacred and Threatened" before ***September 1, 2018*** *for:*

$10.00 | as a single issue
Offer includes free shipping

$25.00 | as part of a yearlong subscription
Normally $35.00. Enjoy $10.00 in savings!

Archaeology Southwest (520) 882-6946 | **www.archaeologysouthwest.org**

Order yours today www.archaeologysouthwest.org/hcn-special

KNOW *why* this place is sacred | KNOW *who* values this place | KNOW *what* should be protected | KNOW *how* to visit with respect | *When?* NOW.

A young wildfowl hunter. MITCH KEZAR / DESIGN PICS

Why I'm teaching my daughters how to hunt

OPINION BY
BRIAN SEXTON

When I talk to people about how I've been slowly introducing my daughters, now 3 and 5, to hunting, a common reaction is that I must really long to have a boy. Why else would I subject my girls to "manly" pursuits like killing big game?

I was introduced to hunting early, and vividly recall hanging around my dad, older brother and uncles as they cleaned ducks in the garage. I remember the *thwap* sound that a goose heart would make hitting the garage floor when it was thrown to my brother's tomcat. I can smell the gunpowder after I shot my first pheasant in a grain field at the age of 9.

We didn't rely on the meat for food like some of my friends' families did, but I recall feeling some kind of primal longing to place myself in uncomfortable situations in search of game. By the age of 8, I had my own BB gun and would ride my bike to the nearby alfalfa fields to shoot dirt clods and the occasional unwary ground squirrel. The sense of independence and responsibility this developed in me was invaluable as I grew up, and I want the girls to build that kind of strength as well.

I've begun laying the groundwork for them to grow into responsible gun users and gun owners. We often talk about gun safety and what they should do in the event they come across a gun. We also talk about the outdoors and why anyone chooses to hunt.

From the time they could ride along in a pack on my back, they've accompanied me on short outings. My oldest, Brooks, loved to come along into the forests of spruce that surrounded our home back in Wasilla, Alaska, to search for grouse. I'd put aviator earmuffs on her to keep her warm and protect her hearing just in case we had the opportunity for a shot. I packed the ancient Stevens .22/.410 that once belonged to my grandfather. Its wood stock gleams golden from the oil used by the hands of three generations of Sexton boys. In the not-too-distant future, perhaps, a female fourth generation will continue that tradition.

A couple of seasons ago, my wife and I harvested a cow elk. Brooks stayed by my side all day, watching intently as I butchered the meat into steaks, stew meat and burger. She was fascinated by the impromptu lesson in anatomy mixed with culinary arts. This year she will turn 6, and I'll buy her a BB gun so we can plink cans in the backyard. As I teach and encourage her, I am fairly certain that my youngest will also be by my side, soaking up the lessons like a sponge.

Meanwhile, hunters are an endangered species, so the way I figure it, raising my girls to be hunters is my civic duty. The Pittman-Robertson Act, which levies an 11 percent tax on guns and hunting equipment, ensures that hundreds of millions of dollars flow to conservation causes every year. On the state level, proceeds from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses and tags provide the main source of funding for state wildlife agencies.

But these days, only around 5 percent of Americans participate in hunting, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service — half of what it was in 1950. It is true that becoming a hunter requires a hefty price tag, and it comes with a low probability of success and a steep learning curve that turns away many prospective hunters at the gate. So the least that hunters can do is pass on the tradition to our kids. For me, this has nothing to do with feminism or competing with men or making a statement; it's about practicing a Western tradition that's fading out.

Pound for pound, I'll also take my free-range, organic, grass-fed, non-GMO venison over the finest wagyu beef from the butcher shop. My wife and I made sure our girls ate wild game as their first introduction to meat.

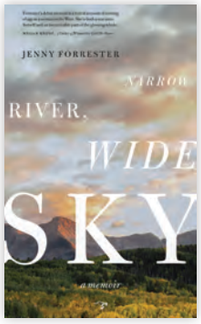
Over the next decade or so, the girls will decide whether hunting is for them. It could be that my daughters will be mocked for doing something that traditionally only boys and men do. I can only hope that if they've learned to like to hunt, they will rejoice in learning skills they'll use in some of the West's most beautiful places. At the very least, I hope that the girls will be comfortable enough with hunting to help their old man pack out elk quarters when his beard is gray, his back is hunched and his knees are blown out. □

Brian Sexton lives in Oregon and is a volunteer for Backcountry Hunters and Anglers.

WEB EXTRA
To see all the current Writers on the Range columns, and archives, visit *HCN*'s Web site, **www.hcn.org**

Writers on the Range is a syndicated service of High Country News, providing three opinion columns each week to more than 70 newspapers around the West. For more information, contact Betsy Marston, betsym@hcn.org, 970-527-4898.

The long road from violence



Narrow River, Wide Sky: A Memoir
Jenny Forrester
212 pages, softcover: $18.95.
Hawthorne Books & Literary Arts, 2017.

In her poignant memoir *Narrow River, Wide Sky*, Jenny Forrester unflinchingly shares the gritty details of what she calls her "American trailer trash Republican childhood" in rural Colorado and the serpentine path she takes to escape the violence that defined her youth.

Most other books on rural poverty published during the rise of Donald Trump have focused on Appalachia or the Deep South (J. D. Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy*, Arlie Hochschild's *Strangers in Their Own Land*, Nancy Isenberg's *White Trash*). But Forrester tackles life in the American West.

Forrester was born in the Vail Valley, down-valley from the famous ski resort, daughter of a conservative ski patroller father and a God-fearing teacher mother. She and her younger brother were frequently subjected to their father's corporal punishment. Forrester was a delicate, sensitive child, deeply affected by the ruthless way her father dispatched problem kittens, problem birds, problem anything.

Eventually, her mother took the children and left, moving to a trailer in Mancos, Colorado, a small town of roughly 1,000 people in the rural southwestern corner of the state.

"Mancos was haven to Mormon fundamentalists and the Second Amendment in cross stitch and engravings and everyone in closets and no privacy and artists as painters of old western motifs and children of belt-smacking parents and violence as love," Forrester writes. "Mancos was knowing who's in town, who's leaving town, and who'll never come back. Mancos was wanting more and also wanting nothing to do with the outside world. Mancos was belonging to mythology through genetics or land."

Forrester refrains from dissecting rural Western poverty, analyzing it or drawing conclusions. Instead, she lays out the bleak facts of life: Her single mother raised two children in a trailer in a small town. Sometimes they ran out of food. In Mancos, with its ethos of militant self-sufficiency, there was a stigma about accepting food stamps and other "government handouts."

The lack of opportunity in places like the Vail Valley and Mancos is especially stark, given their proximity to expensive ski resorts, where the glitterati jet into Vail or Telluride. There's a Colorado dynamic of ski town versus down valley, Front Range versus Western Slope, along with the broader conflicts that define the West — urban versus rural, city folk versus ranchers.

"We were always facing drought — fire on the roadside; parched, dead animals; dust because of Denver and industry and pollution and all of the other people living on the Front Range, east of the Continental Divide. They always had to have enough. There were more of them. That's how we saw it," Forrester writes. "That Continental Divide splits Colorado in so many ways."

Forrester and her brother, Brian, drift apart ideologically as they age, almost despite themselves. They embody the nationwide trend of the past three decades, with its drastically polarized political and cultural landscape. Jenny embraces feminism and moves from small-town Mancos to Phoenix and then Portland, Oregon. Brian marries into a Western Slope ranching family and is born again as a Baptist, beginning a travelling ministry with his wife. Jenny and Brian's wife have a family-straining blowout argument over abortion and religion.

Though Forrester doesn't shy from those taboo subjects — religion and politics — *Narrow River, Wide Sky* is just as much about the struggles women face in simply living: sexual assault, peer pressure, drug use, depression and death.

Ultimately, she's writing about violence against women. A young vegetarian is forced to go on hunting expeditions so her mom's boyfriends can use her hunting tag. Boys demand sex but won't wear condoms. There's the violence of an abortion without money for painkillers, the fear of stalker ex-boyfriends — slapping and punched walls, textbooks slammed on the floor at school.

Through it all, Forrester doggedly survives. Her resilience and hope shine from the pages. Her fiery spirit comes through her spare, deliberate prose. Her husband takes her to the Salt River outside Phoenix and she has a revelation:

We sat listening to the water between the stones and along the sand. I started to remember again rivers and where I'd come from after spending so much time and emotion on forgetting what I'd been and learned and forgetting what I'd fought against without knowing why. I'd been pushing memory away. … The Salt River, a stream most of the time in the Sonoran Desert, whispered to me to return to the source of what no drug, no man, no circumstance can kill.

But in the end, Forrester leaves the Southwest, walks away from juniper and piñon pine, from rusty rainbow-colored mesas and the Milky Way shining in the clear night sky.

She flows away from the waters of the Dolores, is washed clean in the waters of the Salt, and comes to rest in the crisp clear waters where the Willamette and the Columbia meet under tall Northwest pines. No matter how deep the trauma, no matter how long it has lasted, it is possible to be cleansed and start anew.

BY MARY SLOSSON

Clockwise from right: Jenny Forrester's mother holds the dead bobcat that her father killed after it killed their chickens in Minturn, Colorado. The trailer and barn where Forrester and her family lived in Mancos, Colorado. Forrester's grandpa, mom, cousin Natalia and William the cat gather at their home in Mancos, Colorado, for her graduation in 1984.
COURTESY OF JENNY FORRESTER

This *acequia* life

From the porch near the house, I see Papa in the distance, shovel on his shoulder, his outline as familiar as his presence. Egrets graze along the water that moves in and across the field, alfalfa plants brightening the morning with a welcoming green. The swallows — *las golondrinas* — fly down and across the water, grasping at food too small for me to see. And Papa walks his field, slower now with age, his boots soaking up water, wearing them as the only lovely he knows.

San Isidro, the patron saint of farmers, is said to have been extremely pious. My father, on the other hand, is impatient, bossy and sometimes quick-tempered. He eats far too much sugar. San Isidro, an icon in New Mexico, is said to have had a faith larger than mountains. My father sometimes curses. Even so, I sometimes imagine him standing there in his field with San Isidro, both men just trying to find their way into a meaningful life among the seasons of growth and harvest, knowing there are never any guarantees, never any promise or prospect in this *acequia* life.

Acequia is a word. *Acequia* is a place.

*Acequia*s evolved over 10,000 years in the deserts of the Middle East and were introduced into southern Spain by the Moors. Later, Spanish colonizers introduced *acequia*s to the American Southwest, long before the land was claimed by the United States. *Acequia* is the irrigation conveyance system, the canal, all the infrastructure that delivers water from the river, the Rio Grande, to the fields. But *acequia* is also a way of life, a presence. *Acequia* defines our West in ways that I can hardly explain.

Heading out into the field, I meet Papa halfway between the house and the water's edge. The water moves slowly, inching along between soil and plant. I imagine San Isidro next to Papa like an apparition, a spirit watching him as Papa's hands grip the *compuerta* wheel, turning it counterclockwise, water rushing through as the metal gate lifts up by the strength of his aging arms and hands. It is river water that quenches the thirst of Papa's alfalfa fields. Color of the water brown, like coffee with cream, a color cliché in the great American Southwest. The color of adobe. Color of my soul.

Papa looks at his watch as he determines the time and speed of the water over the field. "How much longer?" I ask, and he leans onto the handle of his shovel. "Another hour, *mas o menos*," he replies, his "Spanglish" as familiar and reassuring to me as his worn hands and hat. He's been up since 2 a.m., "checking the water" as they say in the valley. We remain there, just looking out into the field, each in our own thoughts. Off in the distance, a kestrel balances on the barbed wire.

I sense Papa is tired, but he won't admit it. He labors with a hernia he won't have fixed. To ease his arthritis, he pops large pills of ibuprofen. Rather than taking care of his diabetes, he carries miniature candy bars in the pockets of his jacket, neatly tucked away. He resents men who take vacations, watch sports on the weekend, wear sandals and lounge around in the living room. Papa irrigates fields, brands cattle, repairs tractors, and never has enough daylight. The work he loves is also wearing him down, but he can't give it up, and so he laces on his boots every morning, devoting himself to a land that has never promised to sustain him. Water supply is shrinking, due to rising water demands and climate change, but still, he continues.

Does any part of him secretly want to give this up and buy a townhouse in Albuquerque? Would he rather spend his days in a comfortably worn recliner, changing the cable channels, watching documentaries about presidents and wars? I want to ask him, but I know his answer would be unspoken. He communicates much like the water itself, speaking only through movement.

I'll continue to wait for the day Papa admits he is tired. Until then, I imagine him alongside San Isidro, not because my father is a saint, but because he both inspires and baffles me. San Isidro is often depicted as a humble man, a saint bowing his head. As the *golondrinas* circle around us, Papa takes a similar stance: He leans on the handle of his shovel, tool of the earthen *acequia*, speaking the unspoken language of this land he just cannot give up. □

El Cerrito y La Acequia Madre: A Village Life Portrait — Lalo Irrigating.

Leeanna T. Torres is a native daughter of the American Southwest whose essays have been published in *Blue Mesa Review*, *Tupelo Quarterly* and *Natural Wonders*, an anthology by Sowing Creek Press (2018).

The parks have been fixed before

How the government tackled the post-war threats of national park 'disfigurement' and 'destruction'

RECKONING WITH HISTORY
BY ADAM M. SOWARDS

When the Great Depression and World War II concluded, the national park system was in disarray. The extractive industry sought greater access to resources, such as timber in Olympic National Park, while bureaucrats eyed sites for future dams, including in Dinosaur National Monument. Most importantly, the park system was growing as new units were added and more visitors came. Costs accumulated, but congressional appropriations did not keep pace. By the late 1940s, the writer Bernard DeVoto was sounding the alarm about the parks' "alarming rate" of deterioration, while many roads and trails had to be closed because of safety concerns. DeVoto first drew attention to the problem in his "Easy Chair" column in *Harper's* in 1949, hoping that an enraged public might demand action. That hope was in vain. Four years later, he reported, the Park Service was "beginning to go to hell." Until Congress was "willing to pay," he wrote, we should close the parks, with the Army patrolling them to keep them secure. Congress, he declared, needed to act promptly to end this national disgrace.

National Park Service Director Conrad L. Wirth agreed that problems existed. In 1955, he acknowledged the dire sanitary situation, likening some campgrounds to "rural slums." Embarrassed by such conditions and tired of congressional cuts, Wirth and his allies pushed "Mission 66," an ambitious plan to mark the agency's upcoming 50th anniversary in 1966. President Dwight Eisenhower supported the idea, writing Congress to urge funding and an immediate start.

Beginning in 1956, for a decade the Park Service invested more than $1 billion, adding 2,767 miles of new or repaired roads; nearly 1,000 miles of new or improved trails; parking capacity for 155,306 vehicles; nearly 30,000 new campsites and 114 visitor centers. The agency also added utilities, improved administrative buildings, increased employee housing and rehabilitated historic structures. Besides the physical changes, the Park Service realigned its staff, bolstering the number of landscape architects and engineers. All these amenities and changes were meant to facilitate a better — an easier — tourist experience. It worked. Visitors rushed into the new and improved parks. The year Mission 66 began, visitation reached 61.6 million; the year it finished, it topped 133.1 million. By most metrics, Mission 66 was a rousing success.

Mission 66 attracted both welcome and unwelcome attention. Construction permeated the parks, and not everyone embraced the steamrollers. A powerful protest countered agency ambitions. In one well-known instance, the Sierra Club, led by famed photographer Ansel Adams, protested plans to improve and reroute Tioga Road in Yosemite National Park. Adams and his allies recognized that improved roads would increase visitation — which would require building more facilities to accommodate yet more visitors. The momentum would be irresistible and, in Adams's ominous words, Americans would "see the complete adjustment of the material and spiritual aspects of the parks to human need."

For Adams and others, the preservation of nature mattered more than visitor convenience or park commercialization. In important ways, the Wilderness Act, which passed in 1964, received a boost from the Park Service's paving, constructing and development priorities and the increased political activity it prompted among groups like the Sierra Club. As the Park Service modernized and urbanized the parks, it ushered in what iconoclastic writer Edward Abbey condemned as "industrial tourism." At the same time, others within ecological circles critiqued the Park Service's management emphasis. Rather than build more roads, campsites or visitor centers, the famous 1963 *Leopold Report* recommended the agency make parks "a vignette of primitive America." This, along with a National Academy of Sciences report that appeared a few months later, chastised the agency for lacking scientific rigor in management. The late Richard West Sellars, a longtime Park Service historian, called these reports "a kind of ecological countermanifesto." From both within and without, the parks were pressured to restrain development.

From the Organic Act of 1916 through Mission 66 and beyond, the Park Service stumbled along the fine line embedded in its mission: "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." Finding an acceptable balance continues to bedevil the agency.

Science lost to commercial development in the 1980s, just as concerns over ecosystem resilience, biodiversity and climate change rose during the Obama administration.

Budgets reveal priorities, and priorities swing like pendulums. Science lost to commercial development in the 1980s, just as concerns over ecosystem resilience, biodiversity and climate change rose during the Obama administration. Now, citing record numbers of visitors, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke stresses the parks' deferred maintenance and infrastructure problems, because, as in the 1940s and 1950s, congressional appropriations are failing to keep pace with needs. Resolving such issues will require sometimes intrusive construction, and Zinke recommends ramping up extraction and raising park fees to pay for it.

DeVoto warned in the 1940s that "some of the wilderness, scenery, and natural spectacles in which the public takes the greatest pride are threatened with disfigurement and even destruction." Today is no different. The parks remain as popular as ever, but how lawmakers and administrators within the Department of the Interior support the agency remains crucial. A program that finds money for roads and buildings, but not endangered species and climate change, is all but guaranteed to undermine landscapes and generate a backlash among those who wish to see the nation's parks unimpaired and inviolate. □

Adam M. Sowards is an environmental historian, professor, and writer. He lives in Pullman, Washington.

WEB EXTRA
Read more from Adam M. Sowards and other perspectives at **www.hcn.org**

CAN HEAVY DUTY BE LIGHTER WEIGHT?

Introducing All Seasons Hemp Canvas Workwear

Drawing its strength from industrial hemp, our newly developed work cloth is a lightweight but remarkably durable material that requires no break-in and offers the resilience and freedom of motion needed to carry the day as temperatures rise.

Michael O'Casey of the Oregon Natural Desert Association removes old barbed wire fencing in the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area, allowing native wildlife to move freely through the landscape once more. **SAGE BROWN**

Women's All Seasons Hemp Canvas Bib Overalls

Men's All Seasons Hemp Canvas Double Knee Pants

patagonia®

U.S. $5 | Canada $6

HEARD AROUND THE WEST | BY BETSY MARSTON

CALIFORNIA

When you visit California's wonderful new Sand to Snow National Monument, better keep your eyes peeled for a gang of horny marauders. There are 150 unbranded bulls and cows roaming the monument, which is near Palm Springs, acting like bullies that own the place, reports Louis Sahagun in the *Los Angeles Times*. Recently, five feral bulls, "each the size of a small car," glared down from a ridge on hikers, "snorting, stamping and pawing the ground — postures indicating they were ready to charge." Instead, they lumbered off to ravage trails, waterways and native plants. Cattle have been "ripping up the monument and scaring the heck out of folks," said Terry Anderson, a board member of the Society for the Conservation of Native Sheep. Don Line, 63, a monument tour guide, can describe the danger firsthand: He was doing trail maintenance when a bull suddenly appeared and charged him from 30 feet away. "Line said he grabbed a fencepost he had been carrying and swung it like a baseball bat, hitting the bull in the side of the head." The bull dropped, then quickly bounced up again and trotted off, apparently unfazed. The feral cattle are believed to be the descendants of herds that grazed ranchlands a century ago; driven to lower elevations by drought, they've merged into one herd that takes "an even bigger bite out of the lowland's sagebrush and grass." They're not the only exotic inhabitants visitors should avoid: A pack of wild pit bulls is also roaming the place, targeting some of the wild cattle.

THE WEST

Spring brought the overwhelming odor of skunks to the New Mexico town of Hagerman, population 1,200. Wandering about looking for mates, the skunks showed up early after a mild winter, reports the Associated Press. Now residents want somebody to do something about the distinctive cologne that's hanging like a pall over the town. Police have started setting up traps, and any healthy skunks they catch will be relocated to the east side of town near a river.

In Breckenridge, Colorado, it's the smell of dog poop that is fouling the air. Dogs owned by residents of four town-owned apartments are said to be the source of dozens of complaints, reports the *Glenwood Springs Independent*. Now the frustrated town is considering "CSI for canines." Pet Scoop, a Denver-based company, offers a DNA-testing service for dogs, which costs $40 to $50 per animal. Once the dogs' cheeks are swabbed and their DNA profile established, said company owner Sam Johnson, "most properties will see a 70-90 percent reduction in uncollected dog feces. …" Should the puppy poop problems persist, tests to identify the culprit cost an additional $60-$80 each. Some 60 to 70 communities have signed up for his "PooPrints" DNA service, Johnson says. Its mere existence has a deterrent effect, because once they're aware of it, the behavior — at least of the owners — changes fast.

Maybe it's a trend, but in Winter Park, Colorado, residents of a newly built town-owned apartment house are also failing to do their dooty duty. While the ski-resort town mulls DNA testing, resident Suzie Royce Cruse told *Sky-Hi News* she sees another species as the problem: "I think we should DNA those visitors who continually leave trash cans and bags out for wildlife and locals to pick up. Come on, VRBO renters — get a clue."

NEVADA **It's a Bovine 747 with a great in-flight mooovie.** RON WOLF

UTAH

A Utah State Bar email advertising its 2018 Spring Convention in St. George was accompanied by something unexpected — an attached photo of the top of a very topless blonde. On Twitter and over texts, some male attorneys reacted with amusement: "I can't circulate this fast enough — hysterical," said one lawyer who sent it to KSTU-TV. The State Bar's executive director was not amused: "We are horrified," said John Baldwin. "We are investigating to discover how this occurred. Our goal is to find out what happened and (e)nsure it never happens again." Several hundred female attorneys belong to the State Bar, but none were asked what they thought of the remarkably inappropriate photo in the email, which was apparently put together "in-house," reports the Associated Press.

NEVADA

In another example from the bad-decision department, the Las Vegas police recently raffled off a custom AR-15 rifle similar to the weapons with which Stephen Paddock killed 58 people and injured more than 700 others. The department's honor guard, failing to detect any irony in its actions, set up the raffle to raise money for activities that included participation in a memorial service for Charleston Hartfield, an officer killed in the mass shooting in Las Vegas Oct. 1. Police spokesman Rich Fletcher tried to reassure critics of the raffle: "Please understand, that rifle was meant for all good intentions," reports the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. The raffled rifle even had a bump stock similar to the kind used by the murderer.

WEB EXTRA For more from Heard around the West, see **hcn.org**.

Tips and photos of Western oddities are appreciated and often shared in this column. Write betsym@hcn.org or tag photos #heardaroundthewest on Instagram.

"If the Trump wall is ever built, **it will unnecessarily fragment trans-boundary wildlife corridors** in ways that will profoundly affect pronghorn, bison and two deer species."

H. Ron Pulliam and Gary Paul Nabhan, in their opinion piece, "Border wildlife don't need the National Guard," from Writers on the Range, hcn.org/wotr