

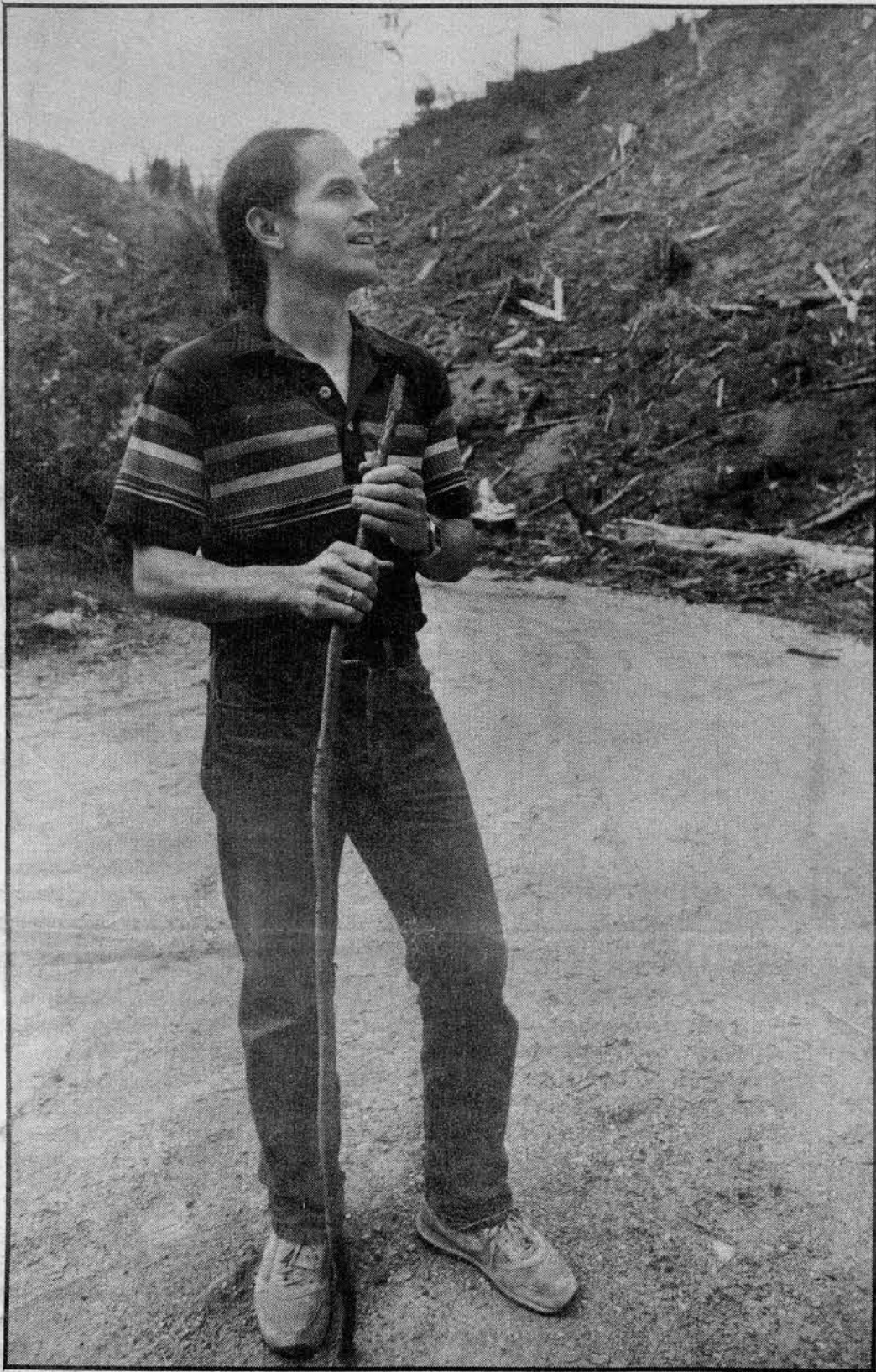
# High Country News

February 26, 1990

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A Paper for People who Care about the West

One dollar



*Is the Forest Service changing?*

## Jeff DeBonis: 'So far it's all talk'

by Pat Ford

**J**eff DeBonis, who last year began a movement from within for Forest Service reform, is resigning as a Willamette Forest timber sale planner to devote more time to his fledgling group.

"I'm resigning as a timber planner, and I may leave the Forest Service altogether," DeBonis said in a phone interview. "I'm not being forced out; it's my choice. AFSEEE is growing so fast that I need to concentrate on it close to full-time."

AFSEEE is the Association of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics, which DeBonis founded in Spring 1989 (*HCN*, 6/5/89).

"We have about 1,000 present and former Forest Service employees as members now, and 2,000 associate mem-

bers," he says. The organization has a five-person board of directors, an attorney, and that indisputable mark of progress, a T-shirt. *Inner Voice*, AFSEEE's newsletter, took a major step up in quality with its second issue late last year.

Public attention has also come quickly. *Outside* and various environmental magazines have done stories on DeBonis and AFSEEE; *National Geographic* and *American Forests* have stories soon to run. He appeared on the ABC news show *Prime Time Live*. In mid-February, he spoke to a Congressional subcommittee on freedom of speech for federal employees.

DeBonis launched his work last year with a long, detailed, heartfelt letter to Forest Service Chief Dale Robertson on the agency's direction and environmental practices. Robertson's delayed reply was short and nearly devoid of substance.

"It was about what I expected," DeBonis says. "He's in a tough spot between political forces and his field people who will see through platitudes. It's good the tone was friendly."

Is real change afoot in the Forest Service? "A lot of people are speaking out now within the agency," he says.

"I hear rumors of bold initiatives in the works in D.C. I hear positive things are happening on the ground in, for instance, Region 9" — the upper Midwest.

"But on the ground here in the Northwest, we are consumed in cranking out the targets under Hatfield-Evans," he continues. Hatfield-Evans refers to the bill Congress passed last year to deal with the ancient forest-spotted owl controversy. "There's a lot of pressure to rubber-stamp the sales and get them out," says DeBonis. "The discouraging thing for people here, espe-

cially biologists, is that day-to-day operations aren't changing. So far it's all talk."

As a timber sale planner deeply involved in cranking out those mandated targets, he admits there is also a personal factor in his decision to stop doing that work. "It's a question of conscience over liquidation of temperate-zone rainforests."

One major choice AFSEEE faces now is whether to deliberately expand to include other federal land managing agencies. "Bureau of Land Management employees are asking us to do that," he says, "and so far no one in BLM is moving to do it separately."

Pat Ford covers the Northern Rockies from Boise, Idaho.

***Inside the Forest Service: Supervisors see a "dysfunctional family" see page 10***



## Dear friends,



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Tom Bell  
Editor Emeritus

Ed Marston  
Publisher

Betsy Marston  
Editor

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Development

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Special Issues

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Research/Reporting

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## Not enough snow

Mark Sterkel writes from Escalante, in southern Utah, to say that last year at this time his cabin, about five miles out of town, had two feet of snow around it. This year, at the end of January, it had about two inches, and they were vanishing fast. Escalante, he says, fears for its municipal water supply this summer.

Judith Roberts, assistant librarian at the Thacher School in Ojai, Calif., writes: "When we have managed to locate it, our students very much enjoy reading *High Country News*." But because the word "library" is not on the label, the "newspaper often ends up in the faculty room or on someone's coffee table."

We have changed the Thacher School's label. If your mailing label isn't correct — even if the error is cosmetic and doesn't interfere with the paper's arrival — we will be glad to change it. Our new computer system can now handle most names and addresses.

## Not-the-shopper

Under the headline, "Feisty environmental biweekly a cry for the wilderness," *Denver Post* reporter Patrick O'Driscoll sketched a comprehensive and deft portrait of *HCN*. The article brought in a minor flood of subscriptions and inquiries, including a letter from Kelly Benson of Aurora, Colo., who wrote: "I would be really interested in what the *High Country News* has to say, since in a few years I hope to be an environmental engineer."

Publicity for *HCN* is great, but sometimes staff wonders how it strikes our neighbors. For example, O'Driscoll's article emphasized the low profile the paper keeps in Paonia. His opening was:

When the phone rings in the newspaper office at 124 Grand Ave., chances are it's a wrong number.

"I want to place an ad," the caller will say, hoping to unload a waterbed, a tractor or a mint-condition set of 1970 Ford Torino hubcaps.

"You want the *High Country Shopper* down the street," comes the standard reply. "We're the *High Country News*."



Steve Hinchman

*People Magazine* photographer Richard Schock, left, takes *HCN* staffers Betsy and Ed Marston out on a story — complete with borrowed desk.

Being mistaken for the local sell-it-yourself tabloid keeps the crew humble at *High Country News*, an acclaimed biweekly of environmental reporting and commentary about the West.

So do local circulation figures. Only a few dozen residents of this mountain valley of orchards, mesas and idle coal mines subscribe."

O'Driscoll then quoted staff as saying: "We're not here to be read by Paonians. We're here to read them."

The quote smacks of both arrogance and the C.I.A., but the major problem is its accuracy.

## No contrivance here!

Speaking of publicity, staff awaits with some trepidation a story on the paper in *People*. The article has been written and two days of shooting on location have ended. Now it is up to the editors in New York to decide if *HCN* and *People* are a matched pair.

The photographic session came as close to a Hollywood experience as one can imagine with black-and-white stills. Photographer Richard Schock scoured Paonia for props — a wooden coat rack and fancy desk from Paonia State Bank (we work off tables), a leather chair from KVNF, the town's community radio station, and a newspaper stand from *North Fork Times*, the local weekly.

That was all loaded onto an ancient

pickup truck loaned to us by Kate Roberts and driven the 50 miles to Louisiana-Pacific's waferboard plant. There, in front of a mountain of aspen logs and a belching smokestack, Schock set up the desk, complete with computer and telephone, and spent the next two hours shooting roll after roll.

The idea, he said, was to tell readers exactly what the paper did with one photograph. Staff writer Steve Hinchman, when he wasn't holding light reflectors to magnify the weak sunlight, took pictures of Schock taking pictures.

The photos will illustrate, and probably dominate, the article, which was written by *People's* Denver correspondent, David Chandler.

## Free HCNs

Development director Linda Bacigalupi wishes to remind our 1,000 or so readers who are also teachers that *HCN* offers free samples of the paper to classes. Simply tell us how many are in your class and what issue you would like us to send, and it will be on its way.

This is the time that fall courses are planned, and you may wish to build *High Country News* into a course on natural resource economics, geography, landscape architecture, Western history, et al. A semester of *HCN* will cost each student \$6.

— Ed Marston for the staff

## WESTERN ROUNDUP

### Western forest cuts its timber harvest

ST. ANTHONY, Idaho — The Targhee National Forest has proposed sharp reductions in timber harvests through 1994, a plan that could cut the workforce at the Idaho Stud Mill in St. Anthony.

Over the last decade, loggers have harvested an average of 77.5 million board-feet of timber per year from Targhee lands in eastern Idaho and northwest Wyoming. But an amended forest plan released Feb. 6 calls for a 1990 harvest of 61 million board-feet. By 1994, the projected harvest decreases to 35.1 million board-feet.

Idaho Forest Industries, the Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, firm that operates the St. Anthony stud mill, wasted little time criticizing the Targhee plan.

It's an "absolute certainty" that IFI will eventually cut back its workforce in St. Anthony, IFI executive vice president Jim English said Feb. 7.

The mill, which salvages dead

lodgepole pine timber to make two-by-four studs, harvests about 50 million board-feet of timber from the Targhee each year. That's the mill's main timber source.

By 1994, the Targhee's plan would reduce lodgepole harvests to 15 million board-feet.

"When you come down to it, you're looking at a pretty good gap," English said.

The amended forest plan would gradually reduce timber harvests in the area. Under the current plan, harvests would be cut from 63.4 million board-feet in 1990 to 47.4 million in 1991, and level off at about 45 million board-feet.

Instead, the reductions will be phased in, allowing the industry more time to react, Forest Supervisor Jim Caswell said.

"The amended plan will, at some point, make it impossible to continue to operate the plant at its present capacity,"

IFI President Tom Richards said in a news release. "At what capacity we will be able to operate and at what point we will have to make the change is being studied."

The mill currently employs about 100 workers, running two shifts a day. Under the Targhee plan, the mill will have to cut back to one shift. However, he said he expects the stud mill to stay open, at some capacity, through the next few years.

Meanwhile, a spokesman for the Greater Yellowstone Coalition said the reduced timber harvests would reverse a trend of overcutting and "timber mining" on the Targhee.

"It's probably more in keeping with what they want to sustain over the long run," coalition spokesman George Wuerthner said. "We do think it's a positive trend."

— Kevin Reichert



# WESTERN ROUNDUP

## New coalition lobbies for Indians

A new, united front of Native Americans has taken a stand in Utah to protect treaty rights and lobby for Indian issues.

Called the Utah Intertribal Coalition, the mix of Native Americans from Utah's several reservations and urban areas recently held a week-long series of meetings, pow-wows and a protest "Indian march for change." The march brought 200 Native Americans, mostly Utes and Navajos, to the steps of the Utah state capitol in Salt Lake City.

Inside, cheering protestors filled the state senate gallery, while several Indian leaders presented a petition with 800 signatures calling for a greater Indian voice in state government and an investigation of alleged misuse of royalties collected from oil and gas wells on Indian land.

Outside, on the capitol steps, Luke Duncan, chair of the Northern Ute tribe of Fort Duchesne, Utah, told the assembled protestors, "You are part of history. This is the first time we have all come together to be heard. There will be meetings like this across the country ... We must all band together."

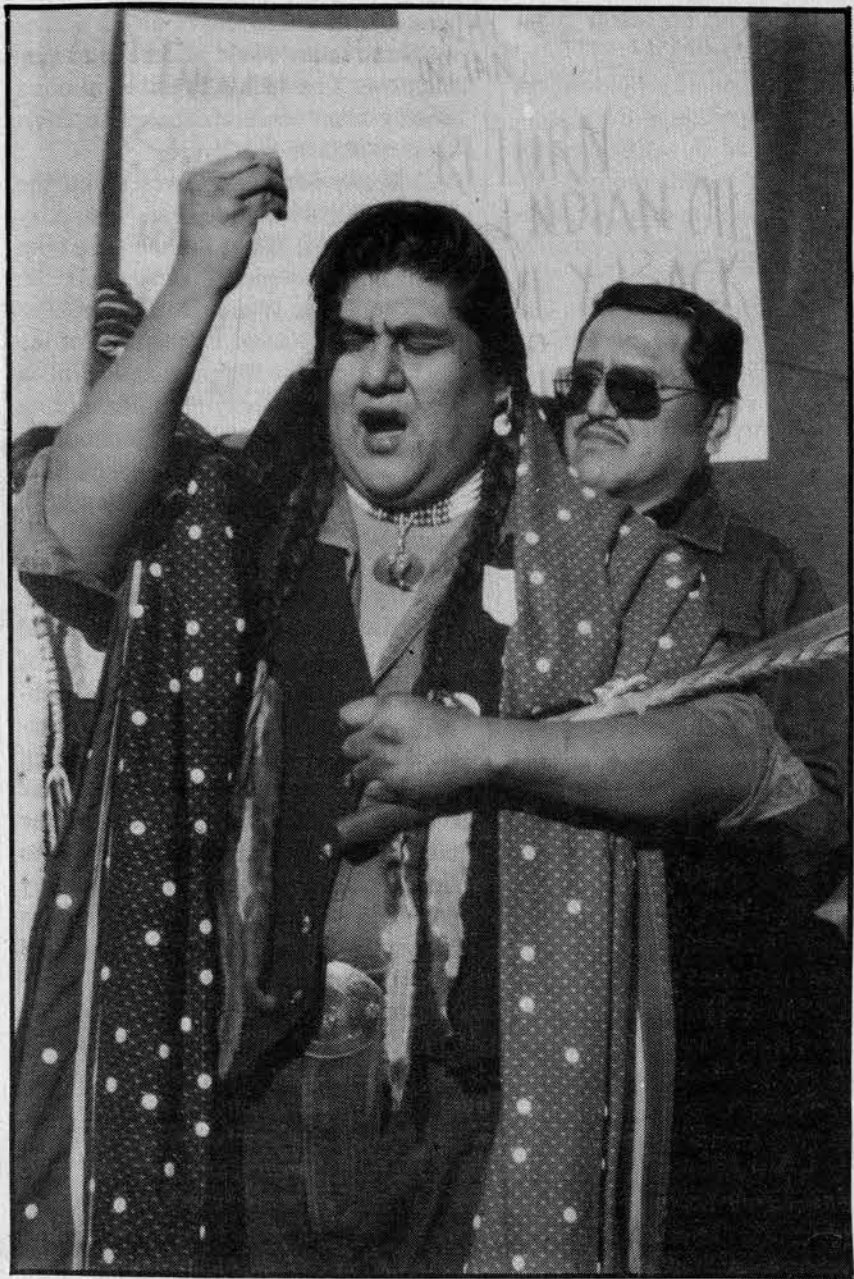
Historically, Indian political effectiveness has been limited by the absence of a united voice that could express the collective political will of different tribes and urban Indians. Utah's recently formed coalition may signal the beginning of a new era of increased Indian political impact.

The coalition's chief grievance involves use of Indian resources such as oil and water. Currently, the group is working closely with Navajo Mark Maryboy, a San Juan County commissioner, regarding royalties from oil and gas wells on the portion of the Navajo reservation that lies within San Juan County.

According to Maryboy, the county received \$28.5 million in taxes from reservation wells in the past 10 years but spent only \$7.2 million on the reservation. About half the county's population is Navajo, but only 5 percent of the county budget is spent on the reservation, Maryboy says.

San Juan County's other two commissioners, Calvin Black and Ty Lewis, deny any unfairness in the distribution of county monies.

The conflict has broad implications across the West, where many rural counties and most Western states collect taxes or otherwise profit from natural resources on Indian reservations.



Paula Quenemoe

Spiritual ceremonies were a part of the week-long gathering in Utah

If Native Americans gain firmer control of some of those revenues, it could help the tribes alleviate the desperate poverty found on most reservations. It could also dramatically reduce the income of the counties and states.

The Utah tribes' assertion of their treaty rights is part of a nationwide trend and it has not come without tension. Two days before the protest march, the Intertribal Coalition picketed a planned three-day, anti-Indian treaty conference in Salt Lake sponsored by the Wisconsin Counties Association.

Wisconsin county officials have engaged in bitter fights with tribes there over fishing and other treaty rights, and they called a national meeting of county

officials to consider "modifications" to Indian treaties, and to form a nationwide organization to lobby Congress to change Indian treaty rights.

The Salt Lake conference drew about 60 delegates from Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota and 10 Western states. But when Wisconsin county officials barred Native American leaders (including elected Indian county commissioners) from entering, a shouting match started.

"You are like cockroaches that run from the light," shouted David Hill, a Choctaw from Konawa, Okla., and an American Indian Movement member who was asked to leave, reports AP.

Conference director Mark Rogacki said the meeting was open only to registered participants.

"That's what we should have said to the pilgrims," Hill responded. Shortly thereafter the Montana delegation walked out.

"We've gone through some trouble to establish good relations with Indian tribes in Montana. We do not want that jeopardized," said Gordon Morris, executive director of the Montana Association of Counties, according to the *Char-Koosta News* of Montana's Flathead reservation.

Wisconsin county officials said they will probably reconvene at another location in the near future. Meanwhile, a call has gone out to all tribes in the nation to convene in Rapid City, S.D., for an emergency pow-wow to protect Native American treaty rights.

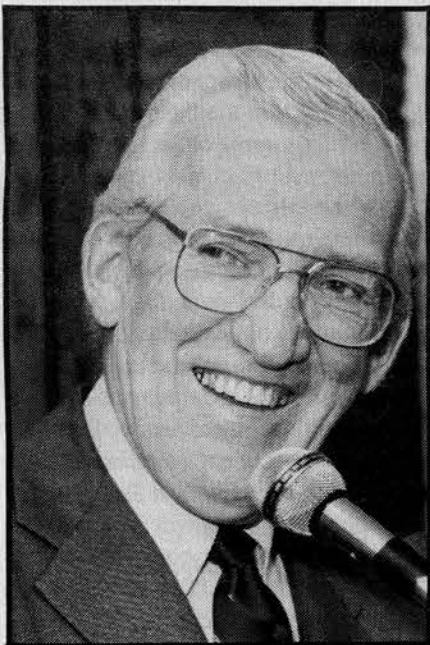
—Daniel McCool

The writer is a professor of public administration at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City.

## HOTLINE

### Nevada still says no

Nevada and the federal Department of Energy have taken their dispute over a high-level nuclear waste dump to court. Nevada has sued the Energy Department for "illegally" targeting Yucca Mountain as a dump site, and in January DOE filed a counter suit against Nevada for stalling on the government's application. In 1987, Congress designated Yucca Mountain, located 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas, as the sole candidate for the nation's first high-level waste repository. DOE applied for a research permit in 1986, but state officials refused to either grant or deny the application. Nevada's inaction led DOE to threaten a suit against the state last November. A month later, state officials beat DOE to the courthouse by filing suit against the agency. Nevada argues that since its state legislature opposes a repository and refuses to relinquish public land at Yucca Mountain, the site is vetoed under the federal Nuclear Waste Policy Act. Opponents to DOE's proposal include Nevada's Democratic Sens. Richard Bryan and Harry Reid, state officials, and many residents, according to polls. "Nevadans will continue to fight until the DOE is DOA at Yucca Mountain," says Gov. Bob Miller. For more information contact the Nevada Nuclear Waste Project Office, Carson City, NV 89710 or Department of Energy, Nevada Operations Office, Box 98518, Las Vegas, NV 89193.



Mike McClure

Ed Herschler

### Tough, kind, orner

Ed Herschler, Wyoming's only three-term governor, died on Feb. 5. Herschler, a Democrat in a very Republican state, was governor from 1975 to 1987, a turbulent period in Wyoming's history. When Herschler took over from former Gov. Stan Hathaway, the state was entering an extended boom fueled by oil, gas, coal and minerals development. When the bust hit, the collapse in the energy, minerals and land boom coincided with a low point for the state's livestock industry. State revenues and population, which had ridden the boom escalator up to dizzying heights, now plummeted to the basement. Despite that, Herschler did not become a Herbert Hoover in Wyoming. In fact, it is said he could easily have won a fourth term, even though the state was then at a low point. His 1982 opponent, Warren Morton, explained this by saying: "Everyone in Wyoming felt that Ed Herschler was their friend." And Wyoming Sen. Al Simpson said: "He was tough, orner, opinionated, pleasant, thoughtful and kind..."

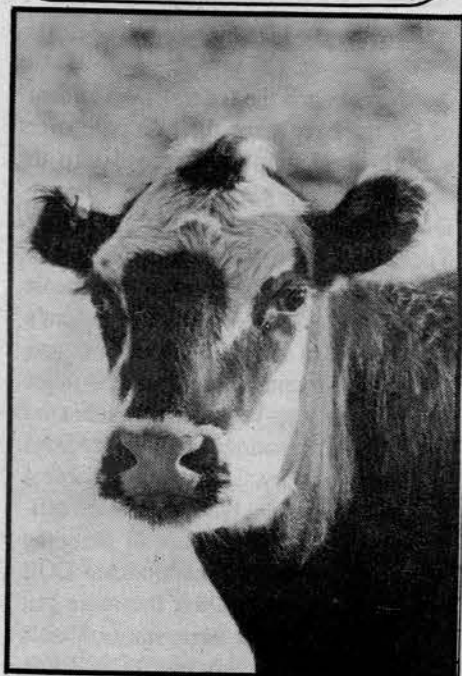


Sara Wilson

Native Americans rally on the steps of the Utah state capitol



## HOTLINE



## Grazing fees to drop

Grazing fees on federal lands will decrease by 2.7 percent, or 5 cents per Animal Unit Month (AUM). Beginning March 1, ranchers will pay \$1.81 per AUM, the amount of forage consumed by a cow and calf, horse, or five sheep or goats in one month. The cost, long a sticking point between ranchers and environmentalists, is established through an equation that considers a fair market value, land-lease rates, beef cattle prices, and cost of production. Though land-lease rates and cattle prices are down, a significant rise in production costs resulted in the lower fee. In 1988, the Bureau of Land Management's 174 million acres of public rangeland generated \$15 million in grazing fees. Half the money was used for range improvements in the BLM districts where the fees were collected, and the remainder was divided between the states where it was collected and the U.S. Treasury. Approximately 19,000 farmers and ranchers graze livestock on BLM lands and almost 90 percent of these permittees have operations smaller than 500 head. Public grazing fees are about a quarter of the cost for leasing private land, and according to The Wilderness Society, free-market pricing could produce an additional \$90 million in revenue.

## Zero funding for a water project

Citing its high cost and environmental damage, President Bush's proposed 1991 budget includes zero funding for Garrison Diversion, a controversial North Dakota water project. North Dakota's congressional delegation, however, has vowed to resurrect the project. That prospect is not unlikely, considering history. At least twice since 1977, Garrison has been scheduled to be mothballed, but the project survived. During 1990, Garrison will receive about \$30 million. The administration estimated it would cost about \$1 billion to complete the project as presently planned.

## BARBS

Washington's legislature doesn't fool around.

Republican State Sen. Jim West introduced a bill making it illegal for residents under 18 to engage in sex, including "heavy petting," punishable by three months in jail or \$5,000. On hearing the proposal, Democrat James Duree suggested taking the restrictions a step further. "Why not make it illegal for legislators to have sex with one another?"

## Citizens sue Rocky Flats bomb plant

Two class-action lawsuits filed in federal court Jan. 30 target former operators of the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant near Denver.

One suit says nearby landowners should receive compensation from Rockwell International and Dow Chemical for a \$250 million drop in their property values, the *Denver Post* reports. An additional \$300 million is asked in punitive damages. The suit was filed on behalf of 60,000 landowners and residents who lived within six miles of the center of the plant between 1954 and 1988.

The second suit, which asks for health studies for 10,000 current and former workers, does not ask for a specific amount, but large-scale health studies at other nuclear facilities have cost tens of millions of dollars.

The lawsuits were prompted by a June 6, 1989, raid on the plant by 75 federal agents probing alleged environmental crimes (*HCN*, 6/19/89). In August, a special federal grand jury took over the investigation and is reviewing allegations by federal officials that plant officials conspired to cover up the illegal disposal of radioactive and hazardous waste at the plant. Sixteen miles northwest of Denver, the plant makes triggers for nuclear bombs from highly radioactive plutonium.

One week before the suits were filed, Energy Secretary James Watkins announced a proposal to make contrac-

tors at weapons plants pay if they damage government property through negligence, mismanagement or illegal activity. Contractors would also have to pay their own fines, penalties and legal costs arising from noncompliance with environmental laws.

Rocky Flats critics welcomed the Energy Department proposal. "The cozy relationship it has had in the past with contractors is one of the reasons the DOE has been in so much trouble lately," Melinda Kassen, an attorney for the Environmental Defense Fund and a member of the Rocky Flats Monitoring Council, told the *Post*. The proposal is not retroactive, however, and would have no bearing on the Rocky Flats lawsuits, DOE spokesperson Katherine Kaliniak said.

On Feb. 6, one week after the suits were filed, Secretary Watkins announced he will request an independent review of environmental, safety and health problems at the plant before plutonium operations restart. Operations were suspended in November while EG&G Inc. took over from Rockwell International, the previous operator. Watkins' decision to have an independent review is a victory for Rocky Flats critics, who feared an Energy Department review would be not objective.

In other news,

• Congress added \$357 million dollars to its 1990 budget for cleaning up

weapons plants. That included \$56.5 million to Rocky Flats for a total cleanup budget of \$139.1 million in 1990.

• The Energy Department abandoned plans to rebuild plutonium processing facilities at Rocky Flats after new estimates indicated \$1 billion will be needed to completely salvage the facility. The department wants instead to construct a new facility at an estimated cost of \$565 million, reports the *Washington Post*. The old plant cost \$215 million and took eight years to build. It was shut down in 1982 due to equipment malfunctions and extensive contamination by plutonium.

Because more than two million people live within 30 miles of Rocky Flats critics were quick to attack the proposal for a new plant. The Sierra Club's Eugene DeMayo called the idea "ludicrous." DeMayo said he thinks the money should go toward moving the facility to a new site that is far from an urban area. Sen. Tim Wirth, D-Colo., told the *Denver Post* it made "absolutely no sense" to process plutonium in a metropolitan area. Instead of rushing to build a new facility at Rocky Flats or elsewhere, Wirth said, the DOE should wait to judge the implications of changing U.S.-Soviet relations.

—Brian Collins

## Cities take water from distant farms

Demand for water along Colorado's arid Front Range has prompted Denver's sprawling suburbs to buy distant irrigation water.

Thousands of acres of former hayfields and cropland are dry while precious water now fills car washes and is sprayed onto residential lawns. One result is that two Colorado cities have found themselves filling new roles as range managers.

Whether it's a pattern that will drastically alter the future the Rocky Mountain West depends upon population growth, planning and what priority society places upon agriculture in the region.

The City of Aurora in 1986 and 1987 bought 13,600 shares — nearly a one-third interest — in the Colorado Canal, a ditch that feeds water to some 50,000 acres of cropland in southern Crowley County. Bought from more than 100 farmers, the water now goes into Aurora's municipal tanks and reservoirs.

A court decree approving the deal requires Aurora to revegetate the land that is retired from agricultural use.

Paul Flack, Aurora's hydrologist and range management specialist, explained the city's reseeding efforts at the 42nd annual international conference of the Society for Range Management, held in Billings, Mont.

Flack showed slides of erosion damage to unwatered cropland in the southern Arkansas Valley. Already, dunes were forming and sparse, weedy vegetation was covered with gray dust from silting where water was pulled off abruptly.

The problem, Flack said, was trying to seed to native range "tired soils in a hot, dry climate." On top of that, back during irrigation, weeds floated in and took root.

"When water is sold," Flack said, "the economy there must keep going. Folks still need to make a living." He said they have tried to improve the value

of the former cropland by starting "wildlife plots" for upland game birds. Most of the land once grew corn and alfalfa.

Ecologically, transfers of agricultural water to municipal use are a new proposition riddled with pitfalls and unknown variables.

"The rules of the game have not been established," said Flack. "We have no baseline criteria yet. The provisions of the court decree were written by lawyers, not range scientists."

He said his office sees growing pains in the project and they detect animosity toward water sales from the rural people.

Flack explained how they mapped out the old fields, tested the soils and selected grass species.

In 1987, Aurora seeded 1,300 acres using conventional and water-injection seed drills, plus, Flack's crew planted another 608 acres in cover crop. It was

the start of a planned five-year, 13,500-acre program. Flack said they hope to successfully seed much of the old irrigated cropland with Alma blue grama grass.

It has been a time for experimenting, including some seeding from airplanes. What they are hoping for is an eventual healthy native grassland, an environment that may help take some of the sting out of the displaced water.

Thornton, Colo., is another city that manages rural water. It bought 10 ranches with water rights in order to claim South Platte River water.

Since 1983, 2,500 acres have gone without irrigation water. Thornton's range managers say they are treading new ground as they oversee the reversion to once-irrigated fields to rangeland.

—Pat Dawson

## HOTLINE

## Is this bill bad for the West?

The Environmental Defense Fund has attacked a Senate acid rain bill because it allows power plants to increase air pollution in the West. The bill, developed by the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, requires that eastern coal plants reduce sulphur dioxide emissions. But Western power plants can increase emissions 50 percent to 100 percent by 2010. The EDF says Western pollution can increase because of an "offset" plan that allows power plants to obtain emission reductions from existing plants. These would "offset" their own new or increased SO<sub>2</sub> emissions. But the bill exempts all plants in seven states including New Mexico, Utah, Montana and North Dakota, from offset require-

ments until 2000, and it allows nearly 100 plants in other Western states to increase emissions by 20 percent without obtaining offsets. The Senate bill also allows Western plants to obtain offsets from Eastern plants, which would increase emissions in the West. The EDF wants the Senate to eliminate exemptions and to require that Western utilities obtain "offsets" only from other Western plants. Sen. Alan Simpson, R-Wyo., speaking on the Senate floor, sharply criticized the EDF report. Simpson called the report "intellectually dishonest" because it assumes exempted states will increase their emissions even though stringent state standards won't allow the increases. But the EDF's Robert Yuhnke called Simpson's statement "simply not true." Some states limit the concentration of SO<sub>2</sub> in emissions, but no state limits the total amount of emissions, Yuhnke said.



# Nature Conservancy buys huge ranch in New Mexico

Moving quickly to head off an unidentified competing bidder Jan. 29, The Nature Conservancy bought the Gray Ranch in southwestern New Mexico. For the time being, at least, the transaction keeps intact a 500-square-mile expanse that holds some of the West's richest wildlife resources. But plans to turn the ranch into a national wildlife refuge still face substantial obstacles.

Sen. Jeff Bingaman, a New Mexico Democrat, plans to introduce legislation in Congress authorizing the federal government to buy the ranch and create a refuge. But neighboring ranchers are still fighting the refuge plan, and they have some clout. Last fall Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan Jr., a former New Mexico congressman, and Republican Gov. Garrey E. Carruthers helped block Bingaman's proposal to appropriate funds in the fiscal 1990 federal budget to buy the ranch.

The Conservancy paid more than \$16.5 million for the ranch, the largest deal in the group's 40-year history. With that much invested, conservancy officials themselves are considering how to make sure that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service adequately protects the ranch's unique ecological values once the federal government acquires it.

"We bought the Gray Ranch to protect it," said Bill Waldman, the Conservancy's New Mexico state director. "We want to make sure that the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Nature Conservancy reach a consensus on conservation goals for the refuge. We want to make sure that the reasons we bought it are the same reason they want to buy it from us."

Some close observers suggest that the Conservancy has been alarmed by an Hispanic wool-growing cooperative's demand that it be allowed to graze sheep on New Mexico Game and Fish Department wildlife management areas in northern New Mexico. As a government agency, they note, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service could be subjected to similar political pressure to expand grazing on the refuge.

"Quite frankly, I don't think they trust the Fish and Wildlife Service entirely," said David Henderson, Audubon Society director of New Mexico. "They want to maintain some leverage on how the ranch is managed."

Stretching north 40 miles from the Mexican border, the Gray Ranch takes in virtually the entire Animas Mountains range and well-preserved grasslands that flank it.

Biologists say that even after 150 years of grazing, the ranch encompasses a nearly intact ecological system. It runs from Douglas-fir forests to well-preserved grama- and buffalo-grass plains to wetlands lined by willows and cottonwoods. It provides habitat for 22 endangered species; more than half of New Mexico's mammals and 43 percent of its birds live within its boundaries.

"It's lain down there like a sleeping giant for so long," noted former New Mexico Secretary of Natural Resources William S. Huey, who is a former national TNC director. "As far as biological diversity is concerned, the Gray Ranch is more significant than any existing national park or wildlife refuge."

Working with Conservancy officials, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Southwest regional office in Albuquerque for several years has been drawing up plans to turn Gray Ranch into a proposed Animas National Wildlife Refuge.

After buying the ranch, sources say Conservancy officials considered an offer by a California rancher who sits on its board to buy its grasslands and graze livestock on them under a conservation easement. Under that three-party ownership, the ranch and Conservancy would control the grasslands while the Fish and Wildlife Service would buy the mountain range for a refuge. The deal would have relieved the Conservancy's heavy debt on the ranch, but Wilderness Society and National Audubon Society officials vigorously objected to fragmented ownership.

Though Conservancy officials now have dropped that proposal, they plan to play a continuing role in how the ranch is eventually managed. Waldman said Conservancy biologists will be studying the Gray Ranch's ecological resources and recommending ways to protect them. He suggested that the group will try to negotiate agreements with Fish and Wildlife Service officials that will spell out "clearly stated and well defined" management objectives.

The Conservancy also intends to maintain ownership of some critically sensitive lands within the ranch to assure that they will be protected.

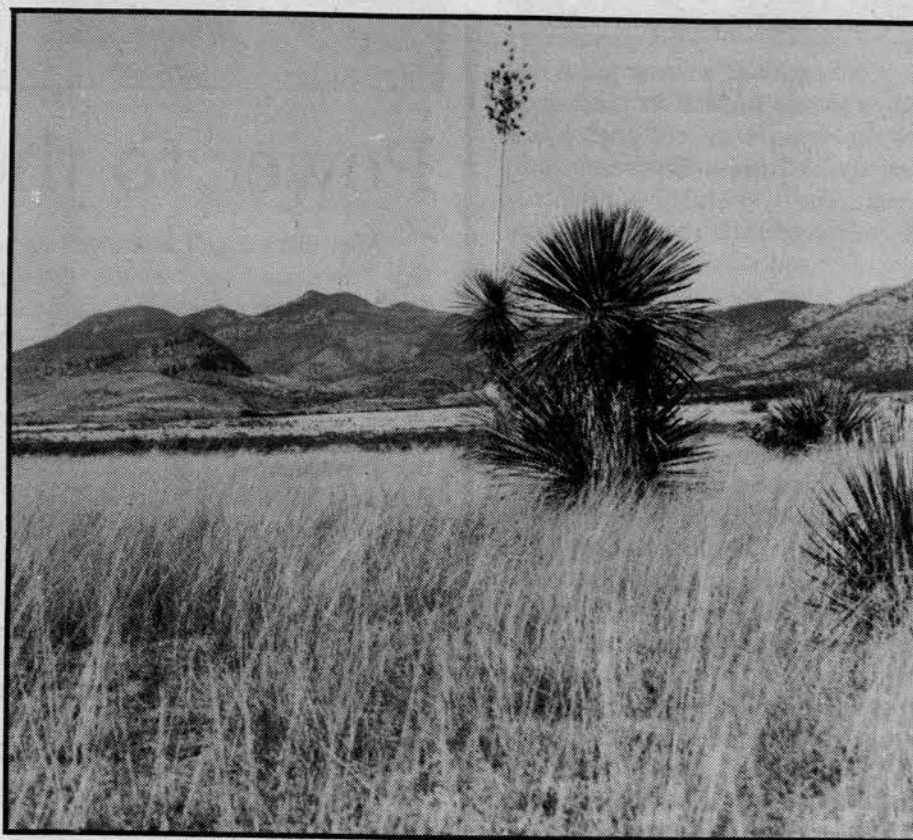
"At this point, we're considering retaining a relatively small amount of land so we'll always have a presence down there," Waldman said.

Tentative Conservancy and Fish and Wildlife Service plans call for cutting livestock numbers on the Gray Ranch in half while removing cattle altogether from critical wildlife habitat. Conservancy scientists want to maintain grazing on parts of the ranch, then compare results to other areas where natural fires control grassland ecosystems.

Officials in Lordsburg, N.M., an economically troubled town just north of Gray Ranch, have been receptive to a refuge that the agency predicts could attract 60,000 or more tourists a year. But the New Mexico livestock industry warns that the federal government will remove all livestock from the ranch and reintroduce captive-bred Mexican wolves, an endangered species.

The Hidalgo County Commission, though it supports the refuge, recently wrote Bingaman and the rest of the state's congressional delegation asking assurances that wolves will never be reintroduced within the county, which includes Gray Ranch.

Both the Conservancy and Fish and Wildlife Service pledge to lease the ranch for grazing. Officials also say they have no plans to release wolves on the



Charles Ault, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

## Gray Ranch

proposed refuge. Neighboring ranchers remain skeptical, and they worry that refuge visitors will disturb their livestock and disrupt the natural conditions that previous private owners have preserved on the ranch.

The Fish and Wildlife Service "wants to come down here and tell us what to do with our environment," said Nancy Duley, who runs the Bard Land and Cattle Co. ranch just west of the Gray Ranch boundary.

"They're looking at 70,000 visitors a year and an \$8 million tourist development," she added. "You're looking at an impact on a pristine area that is totally averse to the purpose of maintaining the environment as it is."

Last year, Interior Secretary Lujan maintained that Fish and Wildlife Service efforts to acquire threatened wetlands should take priority over the Gray Ranch purchase. Carruthers has objected to expanding federally owned lands within New Mexico. After touring Gray Ranch with Lujan and conferring with local ranchers last fall, the governor echoed livestock industry concerns that the Fish and Wildlife Service would release wolves on the proposed refuge.

New Mexico State Land Commissioner William R. Humphries also says that a federal refuge could block development of potentially valuable state-owned oil and gas rights inside ranch boundaries.

Conservation groups say that Rep. Joe Skeen, a Republican sheep rancher from southern New Mexico who sits on the House Appropriations Committee, played a role in persuading House-Senate conferees to drop Bingaman's \$1 million proposal to start buying the ranch.

Conservancy officials and other proponents remain confident that Congress this year will appropriate some federal Land and Water Conservation Fund money for an initial payment for the Gray Ranch refuge. But the plan is competing for funds with other projects, including costly plans to buy up lands on Albuquerque's west side to protect Native American petroglyphs for a planned Park Service national monument.

Bingaman staffers hope that Sen. Pete Domenici, the influential New Mexico Republican, will co-sponsor Bingaman's authorization bill. Supporters suggest that Lujan, bowing to congressional support, will not openly oppose the measure. Steve Goldstein, Lujan's press secretary, suggested that the secretary would defer to the New Mexico delegation's wishes as Congress debates proposed land acquisitions. "We're asking the congressional delegation to tell us what its priorities are," Goldstein said.

— Tom Arrandale

## HOTLINE

### Mt. Graham report was squirrely

Two federal biologists said superiors ordered them to recommend that installing telescopes on Mount Graham would not harm the endangered Mount Graham red squirrel, AP reports. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists' 1988 opinion helped clear the way for congressional approval of the controversial facility 70 miles northeast of Tucson. The revelations came in sworn depositions made last month by Sam Spiller and Leslie Fitzpatrick in connection with a lawsuit filed by the Sierra Club and other groups. The suit charges that the government's approval of the observatory in the fall of 1988 violated the Endangered Species Act. The facility would cause the remaining squirrels,

which number less than 200, to become extinct, the suit said. Spiller, head of the Fish and Wildlife Service's Phoenix office, said he was ordered by Michael Spear, the agency's regional chief, to produce an opinion that would justify placing the telescopes on the mountain. Fitzpatrick, who works for Spiller and wrote the opinion, said, "We needed much more information on the squirrel and its habitat" before making any decision. But University of Arizona vice president for research Michael Cusanovich disagreed. He said the allegations reflect a dispute within the Fish and Wildlife Service that "does not seem to be relevant" to construction of the observatory.

### Jets think twice

Sometimes the U.S. military loses one. In Taos, N.M., the Air Force can-

celled plans to fly military jets at altitudes as low as 100 feet over mountainous regions in New Mexico and Colorado. No local support existed for the training route. Maj. Gen. Edward Baca told the *Taos News*, "When I saw all those people, all solidly against the proposal, I made my decision." Military jets would have carried live ammunition during eight daily runs from Albuquerque to Colorado Springs and back. The bomber route would have crossed over New Mexican wilderness areas used by hikers, picnickers and horseback riders. Areas included the Urraca Wildlife Area near Questa, Sargent and Humphries wildlife areas near Chama, the Pecos Wilderness, and the Latir and Wheeler Peak areas. Opponents to the military's plan included Rep. Bill Richardson, D-N.M., and officials from the Carson National Forest and New Mexico's Fish and Game Department.



## HOTLINE

## Green, not mean

Conventional wisdom has it that today's college students are materialistic yuppies-in-training. Not true, a new National Wildlife Federation poll reveals. The overwhelming majority is intensely concerned about environmental quality, and willing to do something about it. More than nine out of 10, 94 percent, would pay more for products and packaging that are environmentally safe. Nearly 75 percent think that recycling of newspapers, glass and cans should be required by law in all communities. Students want the federal government to reorder its priorities, too: We shouldn't sacrifice environmental quality for economic growth, 70 percent say, and 81 percent say we should spend more on protecting the environment and less on defense. Virtually all students, 95 percent, say the Congress should pass tougher laws to protect the environment. While three-quarters think environmental quality is worsening, nearly 95 percent believe college students can make a difference. The poll surveyed 500 undergraduate college students between the ages of 17 and 24 in November 1989.

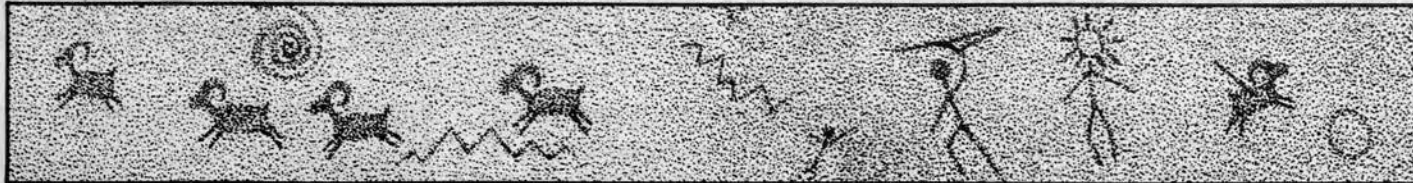


## Javelinas find their turf is limited

Javelinas, which look like hairy pigs, have been invading backyards in a neighborhood that borders a state park near Tempe, Ariz. Only 10 animals visited patios and lawns, but area residents were alarmed to see the 40-lb. animals chewing through their gardens. The animals, technically called "collared peccaries," left their usual turf within 16,000-acre South Mountain Park because it is unusually dry this year. Officials plan to install water basins for the animals, but the problem may be just beginning: New housing developments are surrounding the park, reports the *Arizona Republic*.

## Last chance will get a dump

After 10 years of fighting government officials and industry, residents of tiny Last Chance, Colo., lost their battle against a proposed hazardous waste dump (HCN, 7/6/87). In February, residents of Adams and Washington counties in eastern Colorado signed a pact that removes the final obstacles to construction. Come spring, Last Chance is scheduled to become home to Colorado's first commercial hazardous waste dump since Lowry Landfill, east of Denver, closed in 1980. The new dump site on 325 acres will be run by Chemical and Environmental Conservation Systems International, a subsidiary of Browning-Ferris Industries of Colorado. The company says most waste will come from within the state, although hazardous material such as industrial waste is expected from other states as well, reports the *Denver Post*. Pam Wheeler, a community organizer who fought the dump at Last Chance on safety grounds, said, "We didn't give up our rights. (If they have) an accidental spill or if it does pollute the water, we've still got avenues open to us."



Native Self-Sufficiency

## Power to the tribes, panel says

After two years of investigations, a U.S. Senate panel has concluded that the Bureau of Indian Affairs is terminally ill. The panel recommends that the agency dissolve and turn over its programs and funds directly to the tribes.

"Fraud, mismanagement and corruption pervade virtually all federal Indian programs," says Sen. Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz., chair of the Select Committee on Indian Affairs Special Committee on Investigations.

The special committee found evidence of widespread theft of Native American oil and gas resources; graft and corruption in the Indian Health Service; sexual abuse in BIA schools; illegal front companies operating on reservations and other criminal acts.

"In almost every federal bureaucracy, officials knew of the abuses but did little or nothing to stop them," says committee member Sen. Tom Daschle, D-S.D. "When executive agencies are aware of the problem but refuse to act, we in Congress must question their very existence."

The committee's 238-page report, *A New Federalism for American Indians*, recommends that the nation's 291 indigenous tribes be allowed to take over all federal Indian programs, the BIA's current \$3.3 billion budget and the physical assets and lands of the BIA and Indian Health Service.

Noting that no less than 42 past congressional investigations ordered restructuring and other changes in federal Indian bureaucracies with little effect, DeConcini says, "The time for tinkering is over. The time has come to allow tribal governments to stand free — independent, responsible and accountable."

"The billions now wasted on self-perpetuating federal bureaucracies," he says, "will belong to the tribes themselves, to determine their own destiny."

The Interior Department, which runs most federal Indian programs, called the report constructive and told AP that it would "not reject (the idea) out of hand."

The Senate investigations began in 1987, triggered by evidence of massive fraud in Indian Country uncovered by a team of Anglo and Native American reporters from the *Arizona Republic*. In the course of the next two years, the Senate committee — composed of Sen. DeConcini, chair, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., co-chair, and Sen. Daschle — and its staff visited more than 70 tribes in 16 states, conducted thousands of interviews, analyzed over one million documents, subpoenaed hundreds of individuals and corporations and sent undercover agents into the field.

They documented numerous problems and crimes, including:

- "Shell" companies, set up as Native American businesses but actually owned and operated by non-Indians, drained hundreds of millions of dollars from BIA and HUD programs intended to promote Indian economic development;

- Oil and gas corporations used sophisticated techniques to mismeasure and fraudulently report the quantity of oil and gas they pumped from wells on Indian land, annually stealing millions of dollars worth of Indian natural resources. Despite numerous tip-offs and allegations from workers and Indian landown-

ers, the BIA and Interior Department officials consistently refused to investigate;

- Mismanagement and apathy within the Department of Interior's Minerals Management Service, which allowed oil and gas companies to underpay royalties to individual Indians and entire tribes, resulting in losses of up to \$85 million in the last 10 years;

- The BIA repeatedly hired teachers with prior offenses for child molestation to work in federally run schools for Indians. In many cases, the federal agency refused to investigate those teachers when parents and students complained of sexual misconduct;

- Extensive evidence that ousted Navajo tribal chair Peter MacDonald ran his tribal government "like a racketeering enterprise," bilking the tribal government and businesses that wanted tribal contracts of several million dollars.

MacDonald, the committee reports, was not unique. Other tribal officials regularly demand "bogus loans, free in-kind services and consulting contracts" as the cost of doing business on reservations. Because of gaps in federal and tribal criminal codes, they may never be fully prosecuted.

The list goes on, but the committee argues that the root of the problem is not with the tribes, but in the federal paternalism left over from the 19th Century.

"Congress has not only neglected to hold corrupt tribal officials responsible," the committee's report says, "it has instead installed a stifling and duplicative layer of federal bureaucracy... to micromanage tribal affairs, deluging struggling Indian governments with red tape and meaningless procedures."

The report says the double layer of government has created a political no-man's land, "where responsibility fluidly shifts from one entity to another ... and the American Indian citizen suffers the consequences." That framework has left Native Americans the poorest minority in the U.S.

The only way out of the morass, the special committee concludes, is to give Native Americans the same "basic freedom enjoyed by all other Americans: the right to choose their own form of government and live free from tyranny."

The committee calls for voluntary agreements between Congress and individual tribes but recommends a number of conditions:

- Only tribal governments with democratically approved constitutions could enter such agreements;

- Tribal government officials must be held fully accountable to beefed-up federal laws against corruption;

- All federal assets and annual

appropriations must be transferred to the tribes, and federal control over tribal affairs must be relinquished entirely.

Once an agreement is made, the federal government would provide each tribe with an annual Tribal Self-Governance Grant equalling its fair share of the current federal Indian budget. Grant size would be strictly proportional to population size to depoliticize the process, and the grants would be a permanent entitlement with an annual cost-of-living allowance. Last, to avoid asking the BIA to plan its own devolution, a separate agency, the Office of Federal-Tribal Relations, would be set up to oversee the process.

The report generated excitement and support among numerous tribes and from Rep. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, D-Colo., the only Native American in Congress. However, the Alliance of American Indian Leaders in Washington, D.C., criticized the proposal as naive and shortsighted.

According to the *Lakota Times*, the Alliance's co-chairs, Wendell Chino of the Mescalero Apache tribe of New Mexico and Roger Jourdain of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa of Minnesota wrote:

"While these recommendations at first appear intriguing, we fear that their implementation will result in termination of the federal trust relationship as we know it. In theory, what the Congress says it's doing is giving the tribes more flexibility, but in reality it is eliminating much of the government's responsibility to protect Indian tribes."

The Alliance includes many of the most senior and respected leaders in Indian Country, but its co-chairs were denied their request to testify before the committee. In a report to the Senate Investigations Committee, the Alliance said the federal Indian agencies should be reduced and restructured. But the current needs of the tribes must be met and Native Americans brought on parity with the rest of the country before Congress transfers its responsibilities to the tribes, the chairmen said.

The Alliance report also criticized the Senate committee's recommendation to divide the current BIA budget among the tribes according to population numbers. Funding must meet the actual needs of the tribes and fulfill treaty obligations, the leaders said.

The Senate Committee on Investigations report, *A New Federalism for American Indians*, is available from the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs, 838 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510 (202/224-2251).

— Steve Hinchman

## HOTLINE

## Blame begins to flow

Colorado Gov. Roy Romer and the Denver Water Board are to blame for federal plans to kill the Two Forks Dam, said the chief lawyer for suburban supporters of the dam. Marcia Hughes, attorney for the Metropolitan Water Providers, said officials didn't work hard enough to move the proposal through the federal bureaucracy and

implied the dam wasn't needed by asking for a 25-year federal permit. The Metropolitan Providers represent 41 cities and water districts that would pay for 80 percent of Two Forks. Speaking at the annual convention of the Colorado Water Congress, Hughes' attacks were the first public sign of differences between city and suburban backers, reports the *Denver Post*. The Environmental Protection Agency vetoed the Two Forks proposal as a violation of federal clean water law.





Indian Peaks, south of Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado

## Water for wilderness gains an advocate

A conservative Colorado congressman has weighed in on the side of reserved water rights in wilderness areas, saying, "We can't continue to stand in the rain and deny we are getting wet."

Rep. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, a Democrat who represents the western, rural half of the state, has drafted a wilderness proposal — "a proposal, not a bill" — that puts him on the side of Sen. Tim Wirth, D-Colo., and in opposition to Campbell's ideological ally on the subject of water, Sen. Bill Armstrong, R-Colo.

Wirth has introduced a bill that calls for 750,000 acres of new wilderness in Colorado. But more important, according to Campbell, is the fact that Wirth's bill affirms the existence of reserved water rights — sufficient water to keep a wilderness a wilderness.

Armstrong, aligned with the water development and agricultural communities, has a 470,000-acre bill that would strip prior wilderness areas of any claim to reserved rights and would explicitly deny water rights to the additional 470,000 acres.

Campbell, who released his proposal at a meeting of development-oriented Club 20, Western Colorado's association of commerce and industry, said, "Conceptually, I agree with Armstrong" that Congress never intended to attach water rights to wilderness areas. But, he continued at a crowded news conference, reserved rights are now the "law of the land." Not only has Colorado federal district judge John Kane ruled in favor of reserved rights, but the Western bloc of conservative senators and congressmen have lost the water fight in the political arena.

Initial reaction to the proposal was positive, with Darrell Knuffke of the Wilderness Society in Denver and Larry Simpson, manager of the pro-development Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, both praising Campbell's initiative.

Campbell, clearly uncomfortable to find himself proposing a reserved rights clause, said that he, other Western senators, and Nevada Rep. Barbara Yucanovich opposed the reserved rights clause in the recently-passed Nevada wilder-

ness bill. But the bill passed even though it was introduced into the House by a congressman from outside the district containing the wilderness areas. It was then signed by President George Bush.

Bush, he said, sent a clear message when he signed the Nevada bill over the objections of his own departments of Interior and Agriculture and many in the Western delegations.

"We fought against the Nevada water language pretty heavily, and lost."

Campbell said he then feared that if he did not introduce a bill, someone from outside his district would.

"We've always had the feeling that because we live near the federal lands, and make a living from them, we should have more say over them than other people." But, Campbell continued, the law of the land gives everyone a say in the management of federal land.

The second-term congressman said his proposal narrowly drew the water language. "Okay, there's a reserved water right, but you can't do anything with it, or at least not very much. I would rather write it (the reserved water rights language) than have it shoved down my throat."

Campbell said he hoped Wirth and Armstrong could adopt his proposal.

Otherwise, he said, his proposal would go nowhere. Rep. Bruce Vento, D-Minn., chairman of the National Parks and Public Lands Subcommittee, has said he will not hold hearings in the House until both Colorado senators sign off on a bill.

Campbell, a conscientious congressman who works hard to stay in touch with his constituents, also cited polls showing that 70 percent of Coloradans favor additional wilderness. The Republican incumbent that Campbell beat in 1986, Mike Strang, has announced he will run again. But Campbell, who won by a landslide two years ago over a little-known Republican, may be more influenced by changes in Washington than by his coming opponent.

Armstrong will not run again next year and the Western delegation will also lose Republican Sen. James McClure to retirement. With an environmental president in the White House and the Western delegation changing, Campbell, who worked hard in the last session to push through funding for the Animas-LaPlata water project in southern Colorado, may see the need to stay in step with the new realities.

— Ed Marston

## HOTLINE

### SIS project scrapped

Energy Secretary James Watkins has scrapped plans for a \$1.2 billion plutonium refinery in Idaho that the Reagan administration considered "time-critical and essential." The Special Isotope Separation project, a processing plant for weapons-grade plutonium (HCN, 12/19/88), received no construction funds in the 1990 federal budget. Its site preparation at the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory was to start in April of this year, with actual production slated to begin in 1995. DOE also stopped work on the environmental impact study for SIS, cancelling three public hearings in California and Idaho Falls, reports the Idaho Falls *Post-Register*. Environmentalists and peace activists applauded Watkins' announce-

ment. "We believe that construction funds for this pork-barrel relic of the cold war will never be seen in the federal budget again. The SIS program has been obsolete since day one," said Liz Paul, executive director of the Snake River Alliance.

### Bush earns D+

When it comes to public lands, "George Bush is doing better than Ronald Reagan," says George Frampton of The Wilderness Society. "But let's face it, there was nowhere to go but up." The group gave the Bush administration a D+ for continuing Reagan's support of oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve and for failing to protect the California desert and old forests of the Pacific Northwest. The society also criticized the administration for opposing mining law reform and failing to curb money-losing timber sales.

## HOTLINE



Clearcuts in the Ashley National Forest

### Is this sustained yield?

For the last decade, the Utah Wilderness Association has criticized timber cuts on the Ashley National Forest in northeastern Utah. The 1.4-million-acre forest surrounds large parts of the High Uintas Wilderness, Flaming Gorge Recreation Area and a renowned trout fishery on the Green River. Yet aggressive timber harvesting threatens the pristine recreational value of these areas, environmentalists say. In 1986, the Forest Service increased logging volume on the forest from five to 10 million board feet each year, to 26 million board feet per year. This expansion occurred despite Forest Service documents attesting to the "poor" and "very poor" timber productivity of these lands. To halt what they saw as harm to the long-term productivity of the forest, the Utah Wilderness Association and Wasatch and Uinta mountain clubs hired Randal O'Toole and his Cascade Holistic Economic Consultants in Oregon to audit what logging was doing to the forest. Although forest officials said its logging program benefited other forest resources, O'Toole found this to be false. Cutting trees did not benefit recreation, he said, because logging roads reduced the amount of hiking, biking and horseback-riding available in primitive country, and it decreased forage for wildlife and livestock. O'Toole also found that the timber program had lost over \$1 million annually since 1987. Recommendations made by UWA and CHEC call for a complete revision of the forest plan based on a sustainable yield policy and an updated timber inventory. According to UWA assistant coordinator George Nickas, Ashley forest's only response has been: "It will take us a while to respond." For more information, contact the Utah Wilderness Association, 455 E. 400 S. #306, Salt Lake City, UT 84111 (801/359-1337).



High Uintas Wilderness



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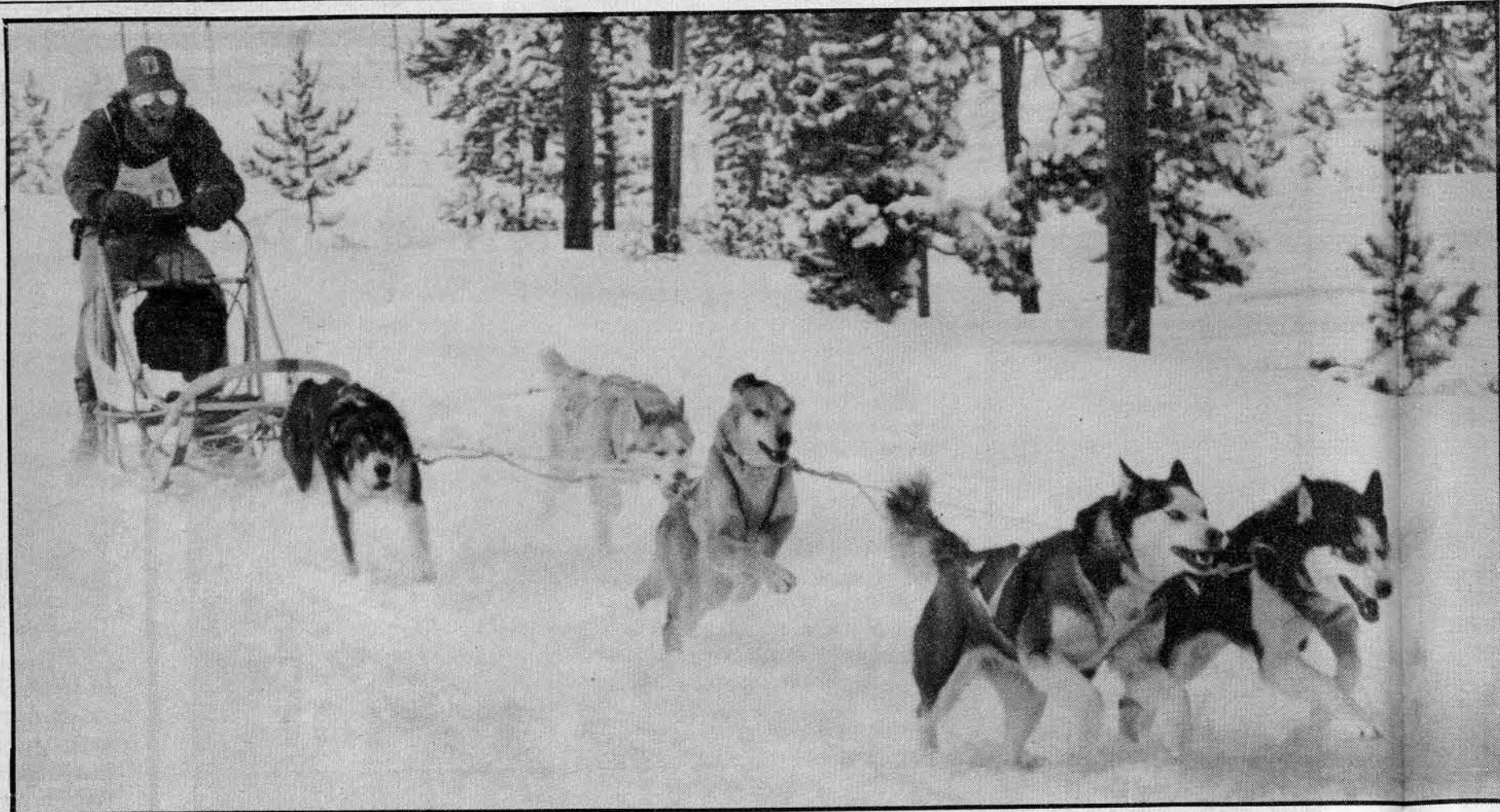
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A Siberian husky and mixed-breed dog sled team runs the course near Frisco, Colorado

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# afield

## The shock of doing unintentional harm

—by Michelle Mara

The sound of a woodpecker in a bright spring morning still makes me feel guilty about an incident that happened a few years ago in the forest near my home. A friend and I had been given permission to cut some dead pines for firewood, and although it was spring and birds were nesting, the owner of the land wanted the trees removed at once. Thinking about the woodpeckers, raccoons and martens I had seen in the area, I felt reluctant. Yet the offer of free firewood seemed irresistible, and we finally reached an agreement to proceed immediately but to leave standing any tree which appeared to be inhabited.

Our initial investigation revealed that the trees had not been dead very long, and there didn't appear to be any nesting cavities bored into the trunks. So we revved up our chain saws and began bringing them down.

Half-way through the job we stopped for a cup of coffee, and as we sat in the shade of a big Ponderosa enjoying the forest solitude, we noticed two birds exhibiting strange behavior. They were fairly large, greenish-black birds with light red feathers on their bellies and darker red on their faces.

"What are they?" asked my friend. "They're Lewis' woodpeckers," I answered, with a sinking feeling spreading over me.

The pair was flying from tree to tree, calling distressfully. Both were obviously confused and anxious. Had we somehow managed to cut down their home tree? I jumped up and ran to the downed trunks which we had been so certain contained no nest sites. And sure enough, in one of them, well hidden above two closely spaced branches, was the woodpeckers' hollowed-out living space.

I was horrified and unbearably angry with myself. How, I wondered, could a person who loves birds so deeply have made this kind of stupid blunder?

We propped up the trunk which contained the nesting cavity and left it there, hoping that the birds would return to it. They probably did not. Going back to the area later, I saw no trace of them. My only consolation was the fact that the adults had not been physically harmed, and since it was early in the season, it was possible that they chose another tree and proceeded to raise a family. But for me it was a painful lesson, well learned.

Dead trees become ever more valuable as old-growth forests succumb to the lumber industry and as the need for fuelwood increases. Not only are they essential to woodpeckers, there are well over a hundred species of birds and mammals, plus numerous insects, which depend upon large old trees. Often it is the woodpeckers which initially chisel holes for nesting, then in subsequent years these openings are used by other tenants. Big dead trees can remain standing for several decades.

Among a group of massive ancient spruces in a national park, I encountered one towering giant that had probably been dead for 30 years or more. It had provided shelter for many generations of wild creatures. Woodpecker holes lined its gnarled trunk, owls had nested in the natural cavities where branches had rotted off. The silver-gray wood was etched with marvelous abstract designs by insects and worms. Cavities around its decaying base had doubtless been home



*A hairy woodpecker checks out a dead aspen standing a short distance from Michelle Mara's studio. The loose bark hosts insects which have attracted birds for several years.*

to weasels, shrews or deer mice. It had become the center of a whole community of woodland dwellers.

When I think back to my woodcutting incident, I am reminded that the magnificent ivory-billed woodpecker was doomed to extinction by the loss of its deep-forest habitat. Today other species of woodpeckers are in danger. Too few snags are allowed to stand until they fall naturally, to become prime habitat for birds and mammals.

Here in our Western mountains we have seven species of woodpeckers. These are the downy woodpecker, flicker, three-toed woodpecker, Williamson's sapsucker, hairy woodpecker, Lewis's woodpecker and yellow-bellied sapsucker. Farther north, in Montana and Alberta, are the pileated and black-backed woodpeckers. One and all, they live the

forests with their bright colors and delightful sounds.

I cannot imagine an April morning without the appealing call of a flicker or the staccato drumming of a home-seeker on its chosen tree. Remember, when you go to cut wood, look very carefully for nesting cavities in dead trees. When you find one, leave it! It is a home.

□

Michelle Mara is an artist in Lyons, Colorado.

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10-High Country News — February 26, 1990

Forest supervisors memos:

# We need internal reform to do our jobs right

FEEDBACK TO THE CHIEF  
FROM FOREST SUPERVISORS  
IN REGIONS 1, 2, 3 AND 4

Forest supervisors in Regions 1, 2, 3 and 4 have developed a message for you that is viewed by most of us as extremely important.

We support the results of the Forest Supervisors' meeting in Regions 5, 6 and 10; however, we felt our message would have more impact if we generated ours independent of theirs. We believe our message and those resulting from other meetings will have many similarities, which will lend strength to the need for significant changes in our actions.

We are unified in our support of the Forest Service mission — "Caring for the Land and Serving People." We are pleased with many of the changes and initiatives you have personally brought to the agency. These have been well stated by the Region 5, 6 and 10 forest supervisors.

We recognize the complex political environment at the national level and the difficulties in making significant changes.

Public values and personal values of Forest Service employees, including forest supervisors, are changing. We expect value changes to accelerate into the 1990s. New employees bring new values. Half of the supervisors will probably not be at a meeting like this in 1994, and about half of the supervisors here today were not at Snowbird.

We need to be united in a set of common goals intended to regain our status as leaders in natural resource conservation. We are here to help you in every way possible. We want to be a part of the solution, not the problem.

We use the word "public" or "publics" in our paper. We recognize there are many publics and they often have strongly conflicting views concerning national forest management. We attempt to portray our views of the "general" public and recognize the potential for misinterpretation.

Some of the following concerns and recommendations need your personal attention.

## PROGRAMS AND POLITICS

We are seeing some much needed shifts in programs led by members of your staff. The emphasis on forest plans in the 1990 RFA program is a giant step as is the direct approach dealing with capability.

Your efforts in Pilot, recreation strategy and recognizing creative employees are definitely moving us in the right direction. There are indicators that more action is necessary.

The emphasis of national forest programs does not reflect the land stewardship values embodied in forest plans, Forest Service employees and the public.

The Administration's program and congressional annual appropriations still emphasize commodity programs. We are making progress in this area as evidenced by the 1990 appropriations bill.

Program/budget testimony is constrained by Administration objectives. Program shifts contained in forest plans and public opinion are not expressed.

Public challenges to the timber program cannot be overcome by additional funding to timber management, nor by simply improving documentation of the NEPA process.

During the first half of this century, we operated in an environment of rural



values. We are now operating in an environment where about 5 percent of the population relates to a rural setting.

## Recommendations

- Field line officers should become more effective in working with local, state and national key publics and elected leaders to build support for Forest Service programs generally, and to discourage specific earmarking.
- Work with elected officials to give them a greater understanding of forest plan decisions and implementation

schedules. Provide timely briefings for forest plan monitoring and evaluation results and needs.

- Recognize and accept that public and employee values are changing. Resolve conflicts by being responsive, not by just increasing our efforts to tell our story.
- Use the NEPA process to reach decisions that are acceptable and implementable.
- Encourage forest supervisors and

(Continued on page 11)

## Is the agency "an organization out of control?"

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE CHIEF  
FROM THE  
REGION ONE FOREST SUPERVISORS  
November 1989

Dear Dale:

The forest supervisors of the Northern Region identify strongly with the mission of the Forest Service — Caring for the Land and Serving People. The success of the Forest Service in carrying out this mission is vital to all of us. A core value we share is being able to contribute to the survival of the Forest Service during these difficult times in national forest management and to contribute to the achievement of organizational excellence in our future as a natural resource management agency.

Therefore, we are grateful for the opportunity to be a part of future solutions to help you lead us into excellence in the 1990s. We welcome the opportunity to "have your ear" for some "straight talk" about the important issues we are facing in the Northern Region — issues dealing with the survival and success of the organization we love.

These are troubling times for many of us. The values of our public and our employees have been rapidly changing and have become increasingly divergent, increasing the level of controversy surrounding the management of national forests.

We are seeing a drastic increase in

the number of challenges to our land and resource management activities, challenges which are not easily overcome by throwing more money at them or working harder to educate our public or increasing the amount of documentation.

Many people, internally as well as externally, believe the current emphasis of national forest programs does not reflect the land stewardship values embodied in our forest plans. Congressional emphasis and our traditional methods and practices continue to focus on commodity resources.

We are not meeting the quality land management expectations of our public and our employees.

We are not being viewed as the "conservation leaders" Gifford Pinchot would have had us become, despite strong support of the rhetoric in our Mission Statement.

We are worried that if we don't make some major changes as an agency, our mission statement will never move from rhetoric to reality.

Despite these troubled times and the frustrations our employees are feeling, your people in Region One continue to work diligently to keep resource programs moving, to meet targets, and to serve the public. Still, there is a growing concern that we have become "an organization out of control."

Over the past two years, the Region One Forest Supervisors shared many of the frustrations coming from the ground

with our Regional Forester. He listened carefully to the concerns of Region One employees. We know he shared these concerns with you during the past year. We believe that they have been communicated clearly. Region One supervisors have also participated with supervisors in other regions and concur with the concerns and recommendations jointly developed by the Region 1, 2, 3 and 4 Forest Supervisor group.

In general, we feel that the concerns and recommendations of the joint Forest Supervisor group, to some extent, are symptomatic of a larger problem in our organization. We have become a dysfunctional Forest Service family.

The concerns for mixed messages in the Supervisor's report is an example. Another is the feeling that we just can't continue to do more with less. The Ranger District plate is overflowing and the stress on our workforce to continue to crank out more targets, work on more initiatives, work harder on more customer service projects, and work harder to resolve conflicting values at the field level, is becoming too much to ask them to bear.

The stress in the organization is serious. A "can do" attitude will not save us this time. We are spread too thin. It is time that we start dealing with our internal problems, before we crack apart at the seams. It's time to start prioritizing the work we need to do. Excellent organizations "stick to the knitting." As an

organization, we need to figure out what the "knitting" ought to be for the 1990s.

Despite our full platter and the conflicting demands placed upon us, we have been pulling together with our Regional Forester to do the best possible job in meeting these challenges at our level. We will continue to work together as a Regional Leadership Team to prioritize and implement workable strategies that bring us closer to our basic mission and to the resource objectives of our forest plans. However, we feel that it is time for some important self-evaluation as an agency. We would really like to see our chief bring us together as an organization.

We are not asking you to be our Messiah, just let us work with you to identify and implement ways we can improve our leadership for the national forests. Let us be the true conservation leadership that the President needs!

To work toward the resolution of these issues, we would like to invite you to our Region One Regional Leadership Team meeting. In that setting, we feel we could frankly discuss issues of concern and develop a commitment to work together and move ahead. We invite you to our Team meeting on Jan. 30-31, 1990.

Sincerely,  
The Region One  
Forest Supervisors



## Supervisors . . .

(Continued from page 10)

regional foresters to increase grass-roots support through the use of public work groups to help us make "better" decisions. These groups are known by various names — consensus, implementation, advisory, etc. They are often adversaries, but through our leadership they can develop solutions and provide support for programs to congressional delegations.

- Bring our retirees along with our changing program emphasis and work with them to form a national support group similar to the National Parks and Conservation Association.

### BUDGET AND ORGANIZATION

We have seen higher budgets in wildlife and fish and soil and water. We are encouraged by more emphasis on forest plans in the budgeting process, but change must come faster.

Our timber program has been 35 percent of the National Forest System (NFS) budget for the last 20 years while recreation, fish and wildlife, and soil and water have been 2 to 3 percent each.

Slightly more than 30 percent of the annual NFS budget goes directly to ranger districts. As a result, districts are not adequately financed to perform quality resource management. Their staffs are often short in necessary skills and experience. Their workload is up to 50 percent more than it should be and stress is becoming more serious.

The present four-tiered functional organization was developed for good reasons, but perhaps we have "outlived" those reasons. There are about 14,000 employees serving in functional middle management positions in the Forest Service. The historical role of these employees and their present and future role in the agency is dramatically different. We have an opportunity in the next 5 to 8 years for a significant cultural role change with the potential for 70 percent retirement. Some forests are already redefining roles of middle managers. Budgets, customer service, integrated

forest plans, efficiency, etc., all demand redefinition of employee roles as well as the four level organization.

Funds are inequitably distributed between regions and forests.

Employees and the public are dissatisfied with the quality of today's resource management. They strongly support our mission statement, but they do not believe we are living it.

The Data General (DG) system appears to be out of control in terms of line officer involvement and providing benefits and efficiencies at the ranger district level. The DG system has been a great communication technology and time saver in many ways. However, as more and more people have discovered additional uses and applications, the burden on ranger district personnel has increased disproportionately. The rapidly increasing number of data bases, systems, application programs, bulletin boards, etc., rely increasingly on input, maintenance and debugging from district personnel.

### Recommendations

- Commission an in-depth study of the operational efficiency of the Forest Service.

- Support the Jordan Committee's efforts to resolve budget allocation inequities between regions and forests. Accelerate study so it can be used for the 1991 allocation process.

- Fund ranger districts first in the allocation process taking inflation and forest plan unit costs into account.

- Evaluate decisions and management of the Data General System, especially impacts and benefits to ranger districts.

- Gain support from Congress and the Administration for the principle of quality resource management as defined by standards and guidelines in forest plans. Outputs may vary with budgets, but quality should not.

### LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATIONS

We are pleased and excited about the leadership in areas such as Pilot,

Beyond Pilot, various initiatives (Rise to the Future, etc.), Change on the Range, and partnerships. We believe we have many opportunities facing us in the areas of leadership and communication.

Many members of the public and many of our employees no longer view us as leaders in environmental conservation.

Past and present forest practices do not meet the high quality land management expectations of the public and our employees. For example — clearcutting, riparian management, water quality and a large percent of western rangelands are in poor condition after 80 years of management.

All organizational levels are not taking a consistent, proactive approach with Congressional delegations.

We continue to maintain strong relationships with commodity groups, often at the expense of developing and improving relationships with other groups.

The allowable sale quantity (ASQ) issue will continue to be a problem for us and some supervisors feel our ASQs are unrealistic even with full funding.

Internal communication needs improvement as we have heard about your decisions from the public before getting them through normal channels. You have a mailing list for all forest supervisors which gets very little use.

### Recommendations

- Develop a strategy to become well known leaders in environmental conservation. We want to help develop and implement that strategy.

- Lead the effort to develop the Administration's environmental program.

- Use RPA and forest plans to define realistic outputs that vary with budgets. Send the message that quality management will not be compromised, regardless of the budget.

Develop a process to explain the concept of standards and guidelines and minimum management requirements to Congress, the Administration and publics.

- Provide direction that forest supervisors will use the first 5 years of plan implementation to reevaluate their capability to meet allowable sale quantities and amend plans if necessary.

- Reactivate the environmental education movement. Include programs in urban school systems where we do not have a presence.

- Evaluate your internal communications process and utilize the DG for more direct sharing with forest supervisors.

### WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

Your commitment to workforce diversity is visible and understood. The situation in Region 5 is being communicated to other regions.

The reasons to actively promote and work toward a diverse workforce may not be well defined and articulated. We may be focusing on avoiding a consent decree or "just because you said it is important."

No one will openly admit to not being committed to workforce diversity but we may not reach our goal by 1995.

We are making progress, but we need to do more. We are presently competing with each other for candidates already on board and that is not a good practice. Our present work environment and culture may not encourage retention.

### Recommendations

- Concentrate efforts and rewards on recruiting new employees and outreach for the future. Reduce the competition between forests and regions for currently employed diversity candidates.

- Improve the work environment and develop a vision for the workplace of the future.

- Focus on the many positive aspects of having a workforce that is diverse in race, gender, age, lifestyle and philosophy, and bring as many people as possible into the solution.

We all have a place in the workforce of the future and some are feeling they have no future.

## LETTERS

### FALSE IMPRESSION

Dear HCN,

I have greatly appreciated the service accorded by HCN in presenting your recent special issues on the West's fouled waters. One of the articles in particular, however, could create false impressions and be used to justify further destructive forest management practices.

The story on vegetative management (Bringing Back the Range, HCN, 12/4/89) presented a limited and imbalanced view of only the so-called benefits of tree-cutting and grazing for increasing water yields. On larger scales, vegetative management is shown to be impractical and damaging, creating a cycle of diminishing returns through flooding, erosion, regrowth and advance of phreatophytes, siltation, retreatments and costs. The concept has been extensively studied, and according to national forest hydrologist Robert Ziener in his paper, "Water Yields from Forests: An Agnostic View," "There is every indication that management of vegetation for increased water yield will continue to be impractical."

Arizona's forests are presently under assault and faced with the spectre of intensive "treatments" (clearcuts, chainings, burns and herbicides) to

enhance run-off to Phoenix and the Central Valley, which still resist facing the facts and living within environmental constraints. Arizona's Department of Water Resources is presently presided over by former Bureau of Reclamation water buffalo, Bill Plummer, who characterizes water conservation as a "short-term solution!"

According to Ziener, the failure of vegetative management has been related to overstated goals and benefits, unrealistic assumptions, political naivete, and the emergence of new interest groups. The naive and imbalanced presentation in your article, which avoids technical and historical discussion of the variables and caveats involved, will certainly be exploited by the water establishment to bypass conservation for the doomed science fiction of "water augmentation." "Success stories" are appreciated, but they must be tempered in proper context.

Bob Lippman  
Flagstaff, Arizona

Dear Bob Lippman,

Jim Stiak's article was about the restoration of flows in small creeks by cutting some trees. It never mentioned water augmentation on the scale you are writing about. Blind pessimism is as damaging as blind optimism.

Ed Marston

## ACCESS

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## OTHER VOICES

### New Mexico is threatened by the possibility of peace

As peace breaks out around the world, and the smiles of eastern Europeans light up the television screen, New Mexico wears a dour expression.

The fact is that the relaxation of tensions between East and West signals the imminent end of the state's long love affair as the darling of the defense establishment. But rather than seize the moment of opportunity and turn its attention toward creative economic development, state officials are seeking ways to soften the landing that promises to jolt into painful reality those who thought the defense trough would never run dry.

What does it say of a society that prides itself on the platitudes of freedom and democracy yet sees peace as a liability?

National newspapers are talking about the "peace panic" that hit the stock market when the Berlin Wall collapsed and when Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney ordered \$180 billion cut from the military services budget over the next three years. Stocks like Raytheon (missile system and radar — dropped \$6.75 in one day, Martin Marietta (MX missile and helicopters) dropped \$4.50, and General Dynamics (F-16 fighters and M-1 tanks) dropped \$4.87.

On his way out of office, former President Dwight Eisenhower sounded the warning to beware the military-industrial complex. Thirty years later, his words are more prescient than ever. Since the end of World War II, America has been in the greedy grip of self-serving fear mongers who have persuaded our leaders to finance their every whim.

While our stockpile of useless weapons and fruitless research has grown, we've mortgaged our future with dizzying debt and saddled the next generation with bills it won't be able to pay. Our infrastructure is crumbling, our bridges and roads are rotting and our scientific brainpower has been squandered on creating ever-more sophisticated instruments of destruction.

While our manufacturing capacity has withered from within and our automobile and electronics industries are directed by the Japanese, our schools hold bake sales to finance education, Americans are living hungry in the streets, our health care system is in crisis, our crime rate is skyrocketing, and our country is plagued by a drug epidemic, we have federally financed the largest cache of useless military hardware in history.

All over the country, people have been making lots of money off the cold war. Are our leaders so morally bankrupt that the arrival of peace comes as a threat? A threat to whom? Certainly to the giant corporations that have grown fat and happy feeding at the defense budget's smorgasbord; perhaps to the banks and utilities whose bottom lines have remained solvent while they merely pay lip service to supporting a diversified economy; and no doubt for the scientists, safe and secure in their warm and fuzzy laboratories while making this world a far more dangerous place.

But the man in the street, the average wage ear-

ner, has no cause to lament. Defense spending has only hurt him. In the Land of Enchantment, where the per capita defense appropriation is one of the highest in the country, the average income is \$12,488 a year. The state ranks 46th in health coverage and 51st (behind the District of Columbia) in prenatal care. We're ranked 42nd in business competitiveness, 46th in available financial resources, and 49th in business support efforts.

When will our leaders pull their heads from the desert sand? In the last decade, when thousands of oil, gas and mining jobs evaporated, our elected officials redoubled their efforts to keep the state at the head of the defense handout line. But the pay window is closing, and even the skilled maneuvering of well connected senators won't be able to keep it open much longer.

To rely on defense is to hope for war, or at least instability throughout the world. Perhaps that explains why a leadership so tied to defense is callous toward its own population. It's no wonder our human services are woefully inadequate and our education system a scandal.

Relying on defense requires we depend on forces beyond our control to dictate the course of our state's future, leaving us perched on a precarious foundation.

We've had years to develop a new economic base of indigenous New Mexican small businesses which

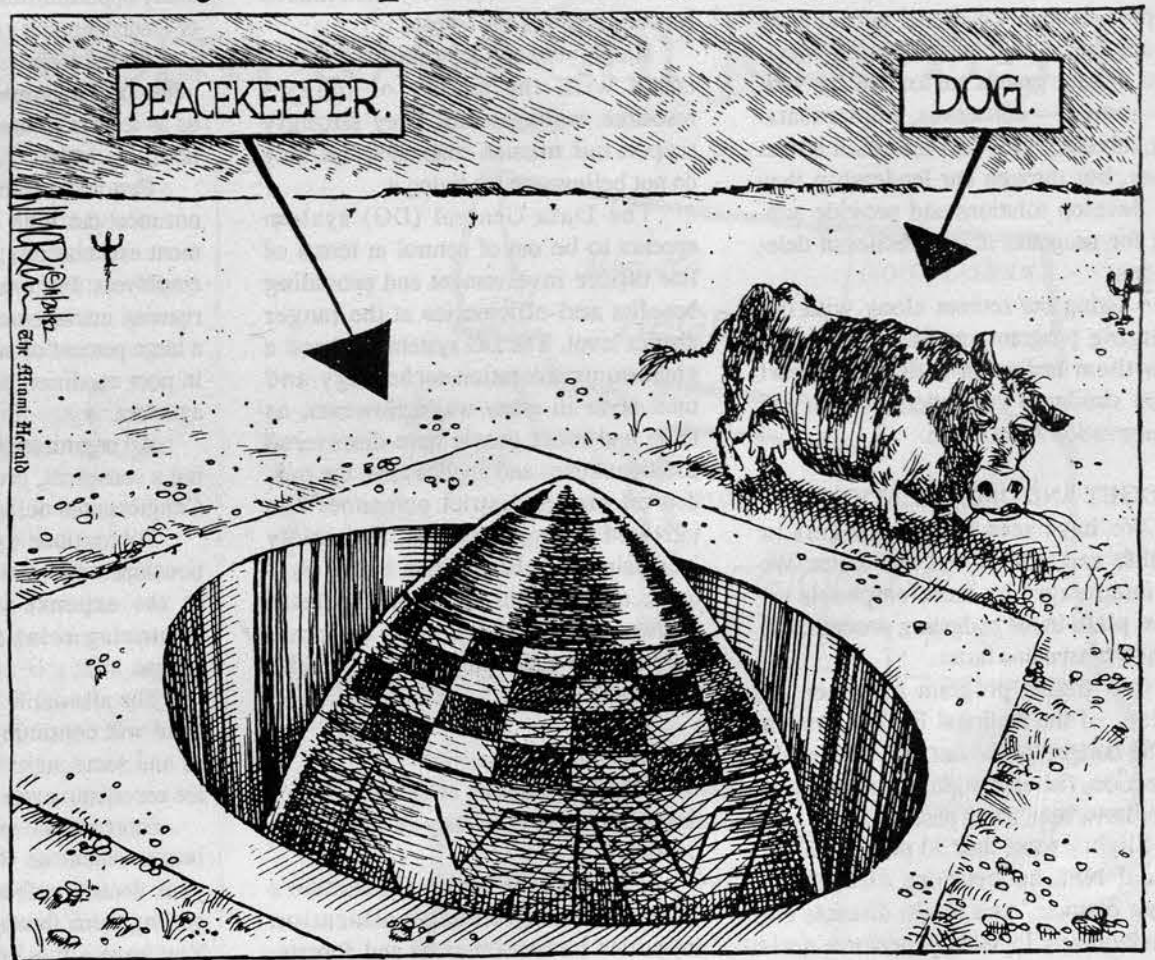
want to take the next step. We've ignored the opportunity to support the talents, resources and obvious job-creating potential of a grassroots economy. We've refused to develop support for our entrepreneurs, for product development, for marketing New Mexico products, for building industry identification around manufacturing Southwestern food, fashion and furniture in the "style" we've created. We've ignored the vast new markets for agriculture, the potential of solar energy, the immediate rewards of motion pictures.

The power of denial in this state knows no bounds. Sen. Pete Domenici has made it crystal clear that he expects defense-related spending to drop 40 percent over the next 10 years, a figure that may prove conservative, is anybody listening? Is anyone planning for tomorrow when the heady days of unbridled defense spending are but a memory?

There is no turning back. We've got to do more than hope that either war will break out or that oil and gas will come back soon enough to save us.

— Jerilou Hammett,  
Kingsley Hammett

For four years until January 1990, the writers published *New Mexico Business Opportunity News*, a monthly. They now plan to develop a New Mexico association for the wood products industry.



## OTHER VOICES

### Will Nevada ever learn to just say no?

Why us?

Why is Nevada so often the target when somebody wants to dump something hazardous, smelly or just plain grubby?

Why do we get so many offers to sell our souls (or at least our health and land) for a little extra dough?

The question arises once more now that a Boise, Idaho, company has offered to build a new landfill in Elko County, at lower rates, if only the county will let the company import solid waste, including asbestos. The company, called Environmental Services Group, says the dump cannot work financially unless it takes in 1,000 tons of solid waste each day — hence the asbestos and other stuff.

This is four to five times the amount of garbage that Elko generates on its own. In return for a little financial savings, Elko can become the garbage dump for a passel of communities. What an offer.

Why don't these other states handle their own asbestos? The answer — we suspect — is that nobody

else wants asbestos because it's dangerous. But if nobody else wants it, there's always Nevada, the once and future sucker — beg pardon, benefactor — for the fastidious West.

If Elko officials have any sense of self-respect, they will give this offer the heave-ho.

But — again — why is Nevada the dumping ground for the nation, for low-level nuclear waste, high-level nuclear waste, asbestos, metal plating, oils, solvents, contaminated soil and assorted chemicals?

One answer is that Nevada contains a huge amount of vacant land, which in the minds of some people just aches to be filled with something useful. A lot of states are running out of room, and those wide-open spaces offer respite for junk-weary citizens.

But that is only part of the answer. Other Western states also have vast tracts of land, including Idaho. So what's so special about Nevada?

Simple. When you've been a whore most of your life and you finally say no, people just don't believe you. They keep flapping those twenty dollar bills in

your face and expect a positive response.

For years Nevada invited waste because Nevadans thought the state could make a buck out of the deal. This was especially true of rural Nevada, which sometimes would accept almost anything to promote industry — any industry. Even when we didn't invite waste, we usually ignored the stuff that came in. What the hell. It's just a desert, right?

Even now that attitude has not totally disappeared. Despite recent strict regulations to prevent Nevada from becoming the nation's dumping ground, the 1989 Legislature passed a bill to allow up to 50,000 tons of hazardous waste to be burned each year in Lincoln County in order — of course — to save its economy. That incinerator would be burning today if Gov. Bob Miller had not vetoed the bill.

So if out-of-town gents don't believe that the old whore has reformed, who can blame them?

This editorial is one of a series on the subject appearing recently in the *Reno Gazette-Journal*.



## OTHER VOICES

# Outfitters in Idaho are getting special attention

by Ron Cordes

Recent promotions by outfitters in Idaho to the effect that they are out there "voluntarily" cleaning up the wilderness smack of a classic Madison Avenue attempt to pull the wool over the eyes of unsuspecting readers.

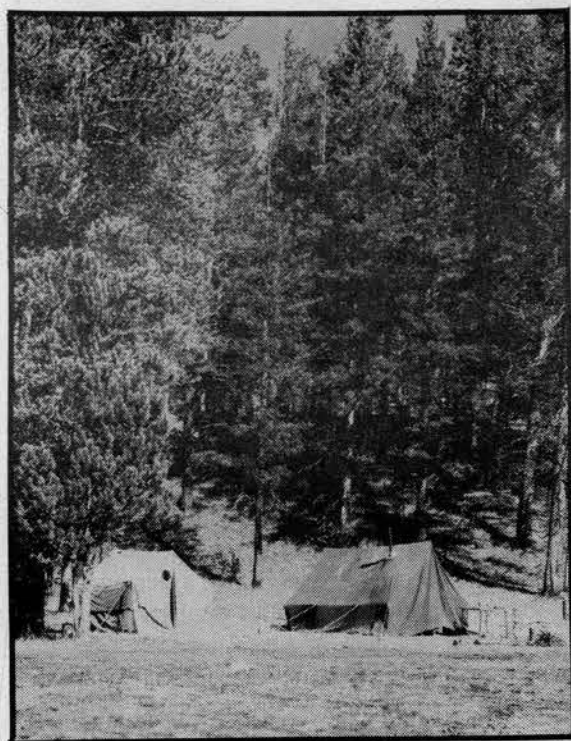
In fact, it's a lot like a person who is found guilty of some misdoing and forced to perform some public service, going out and promoting what a great guy he is because he does public service! He carefully neglects to tell you the consequences if he doesn't perform the public service.

Now don't get me wrong. I don't like the idea of anyone leaving behind their refuse in our wilderness areas, outfitter or not. And I'm pleased that the outfitters are carrying out the trash. But what disturbs me is the outfitters' deliberate attempt to mislead the public.

Outfitters are given unique privileges in our wilderness, and, as a result, they have a special duty to the public, a special standard to uphold as stewards, in a sense, of a cherished resource. So, let's look at the recorded facts and you can draw your own conclusions.

Over 100 of our very best campsites in the Frank Church River Of No Return Wilderness have been and are being reserved for commercial outfitters. After 25 years of mismanagement by the Forest Service and abuse by the commercial outfitters, most of these campsites now resemble mini-dumps. Attempts by the Forest Service to require the outfitters to clean up these camps have been less than successful. For example, in 1985 regional foresters directed outfitters to clean up the reserved camps and to phase out their permanent structures, including storage facilities (caches). The Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association appealed these directives, claiming that their practices were traditional, notwithstanding the fact that they were abusive. In 1986, then-Forest Service Chief Max Peterson denied the IOGA their appeal and the outfitters were again directed to clean up the reserved campsites.

In 1987, 11 outfitters filed a lawsuit against the Forest Service claiming, among other things, that to comply with Forest Service regulations would cause irreparable harm to their livelihood and their enjoyment of the area. They stated that if caches and other permanent structures were prohibited, their property would be adversely affected and they should be



Outfitters' wall tents

allowed to continue to use permanent structures since they were "traditional."

In January 1988, Forest Service Chief Dale Robertson settled the outfitters' lawsuit "out of court" by agreeing to appoint a task force to study the issue.

In December 1988, the task force reported the following with regard to caches:

- They are unnecessary;
- They do not meet established Forest Service regulations and policies or the requirements of the 1964 Wilderness Act;
- They are inconsistent with Forest Service and outfitter industry promotional materials highlighting "minimum impact," "no trace," and "pack it in, pack it out" principles.
- Caches would encourage larger camps, which would result in more impact on the vegetation;
- They would leave the wilderness impaired for future use and enjoyment as "wilderness."
- They tend to give the outfitters the appearance of ownership of the best campsites.

The task force went on to recommend that the commercial outfitters' caches be removed and prohibited without further delay.

In April 1989, Robertson ignored the recommen-

dations of his own task force and made a personal "interim" decision allowing the outfitters to construct and use caches! In his settlement agreement, Robertson admitted that his task force had observed and documented unsightly dumps of trash and waste materials at many of the outfitters' reserved campsites. The task force also documented the existence of permanent corrals, tent frames, water system, toilets and storage structures that had been in place for years and which were, according to task force members, obvious and obtrusive to other visitors.

Given the recent flurry of federal mismanagement by such agencies as HUD, among others, I guess it should come as no surprise that after 25 years of mismanagement by the Forest Service, Robertson's solution would be expressed as follows: "... with a little time and understanding, the issues and conditions could be resolved in the field by the district rangers, outfitters and guides, and interested members of the public."

Chief Robertson's "partnership agreement" with the commercial outfitters apparently requires the outfitters to clean up their reserved campsites.

If IOGA members are sincere in their stated goal to "tread lightly on the land" and to serve as examples to the public for the "pack it in, pack it out" philosophy they should start by complying with long-standing Forest Service regulations and congressional mandates, including the ones that prohibit permanent structures! Better yet, if they really are to serve as examples to the public, they should comply with the same set of rules and regulations that are imposed on the public. I think you can see that the efforts of the outfitters are hardly voluntary.

What's happening is that they are being given an easy out. In reality, given the special privileges the outfitters have and their particular relationship with the wilderness and the Forest Service, one would have expected them to be holding up what should have been their exemplary, spotless operations in comparison to the messy public. That it didn't turn out that way may be rather revealing. But in the meantime, at least a little honesty with the public would sure be refreshing.

R.A. Cordes is a manager for EG&G in Idaho Falls, Idaho. He is also a fly fisherman who has written two books on the subject.

## LETTERS

### HE WON'T MISS MCCLURE

Dear HCN,

I would like to comment on my perception of Idaho Sen. James McClure, which differs slightly from Rocky Barker's (HCN, 2/12/90).

I'll miss McClure like I'd miss tuberculosis. It nauseates me to hear praise of a politician whose major contribution has been to support an industry that poisons the earth and has left its wastes in the ground for future generations to deal with.

If anything, McClure has practiced public disservice, not service. Perhaps if McClure wanted to make amends for the contributions he's made to poaching, denuded watersheds, lost wildlife habitat, and a poisoned Snake River aquifer, he could volunteer on some environmental rehabilitation projects.

I'm sure numerous environmental groups in Idaho could help Jim do some honorable work for a change. Moreover, a good project for McClure would be to work with some handicapped and AIDS victims, and meet some real people besides the obnoxious rich folks he likes to share cocktails with.

I could go on and on because I have followed McClure's actions in the Sen-



Idaho Sen. James McClure

ate since I came to Idaho 15 years ago. He's in the same class as Ollie North, and like North he's got a convincing smile and good public relations folks bolstering his image. But like North he's dangerous, cunning and doesn't respect his constituents unless they're rich, conservative and ignorant.

If the wildlife or anadromous fish could tell their story of Jim McClure, McClure wouldn't be being praised by Rocky Barker.

Grant Wiegert  
Eugene, Oregon

### DICTATES OF FASHION

Dear HCN,

While perusing the "Bulletin Board" (HCN, 12/18/89), I noticed an item titled "Save the Jemez." In it Tom Ribe claims strip mines in the Jemez Mountains are the only source for the "stone" in "stone-washed" jeans. Mr. Ribe is incorrect.

There is at least one other site, located in the Coconino National Forest just north of Flagstaff, Ariz. In 1987, I was involved in archaeological excavations at a prehistoric site in an area of proposed strip mining activities within the Coconino forest. Existing operations were to expand and a direct result was an increase in the demand for stone-washed jeans. Prior to stone-washing of jeans there was little use or demand for the volcanic tuff mined from the Coconino forest. Although the threat to the Jemez is no less severe, it is not the only public land being "managed" as a consequence of the dictates of fashion.

Mr. M. Zyniecki  
Tempe, Arizona

### THANKS TO HUNTERS

Dear HCN,

While I am adamantly against poachers and think they should be dealt

with harshly, I feel your story, "Driving wild things to extinction," was somewhat misleading. I know of no animal in the mountain West that is threatened mainly because of poaching. Species such as mountain lion and eagles have increased their numbers in recent years. Elk are probably more numerous today than at any time in the last 75 years, and due to transplants and protection the Rocky Mountain bighorn is found today in areas where herds had been extinct.

The credit for this success story goes to state wildlife agencies, and even more so to the legitimate sport hunters that support them through hunting license sales.

Also I would like to make a point about your article about the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation which purchased the OTO Ranch near Yellowstone Park to be preserved as winter range (HCN, 12/18/89). This organization is mainly composed of legitimate hunters that care very much about our wildlife resource and are very willing to contribute both time and money to preserve it.

Let's not forget that by far the greatest threat to our wildlife heritage is loss of critical habitat.

John Awve  
Pinedale, Wyoming



14-High Country News — February 26, 1990

## OTHER VOICES

*The politics of Western water have changed forever*

by Dan Luecke

In 1977, when President Jimmy Carter unveiled his water projects "Hit List" of federal dams he had targeted for deauthorization, the political fall-out left him stunned and despised in the West.

Virtually every elected official west of the 100th meridian, including members of his own party, attacked him savagely for his failure to understand western water and the political realities of a semi-arid region.

In retrospect, we see that Carter understood western water better than his critics. His problem was timing. Today, a water projects hit list would still raise eyebrows but there would be no firestorm of criticism. The politics and economics of western water have changed.

The "good old days" of western water development lasted from the turn of the century through the 1960s. During that time, the Bureau of Reclamation managed massive transfer payments from the federal treasury to dam sites in western river valleys. With the money, local sponsors of water projects, federal engi-

neers and congressional representatives concocted grand schemes for turning rivers into quiet and cooperative pools that stair-stepped up the river beds.

The passage of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in 1970 changed this situation. Dam builders now had to give some consideration to nature. And the public was involved in the review process the law created. Under the old rules, beneficiaries had been limited to those with a direct or indirect interest in water. Now, new players were elbowing their way to the table.

To accommodate nature, the public, and the federal government, "mitigation" — measures to avoid, reduce or compensate losses due to water projects — was invented. Mitigation quickly became a process of negotiation between the dam builders and all those who purported to speak for river protection and natural systems. Theoretically, there was a hierarchy to the mitigation measures — avoiding insults to nature was preferable to replacing, in a new location, what was lost. In practice, however, compensation or replacement were the only options given serious consideration; negotiations usually boiled down to counting

picnic tables, parking spaces and outdoor toilets. Everybody grumbled — the developers about the costs and the nature lovers about what was lost.

Despite the grouching, the new process worked, particularly for those who saw progress in dams, through most of the 1970s. Then certain economic realities set in. These included a slowdown in the growth of U.S. industrial productivity, an erosion of the U.S. share of world markets, an increase in the rate of inflation, and an expansion of the share of the federal budget going to those programs known as "entitlements." The economy was seen as weak, and the federal government was stretched thin.

These circumstances, along with the ideological stance of the Reagan years, took some of the money out of the hands of western dam builders. The Bureau's exit from the dam building arena was accelerated by the unprecedented deficit spending and the resulting enormous federal debt. By 1984, the Bureau no longer had a mission.

Local dam builders were now on their own. Their loss of a sponsor and funding was further aggravated

(Continued on page 15)

## The EPA was right: Kill the Two Forks Dam

**Editor's Note:** In a surprise move Feb. 5, former President Gerald Ford urged President Bush to kill the 615-foot Two Forks Dam, as proposed by the Denver metro area. The letter, which was released by the Environmental Defense Fund, is reprinted below.

Dear George:

Recently, your Environmental Protection Agency Administrator, William Reilly, became involved in a Colorado dam debate when he initiated a review of the Corps of Engineers' permit for the Two Forks Dam, a project on the South Platte River designed to supply water to the Denver metropolitan area. I have been closely following this project because of its potential impact on the West Slope of the Colorado Rockies where I have maintained a home for the last 22 years. I write to support Mr. Reilly's decision to begin the permit veto review and to offer, for your consideration, my views on the dam project.

During the years I have spent in Vail and Beaver Creek, I have become particularly sensitive to the role that water plays in the process of working out a balance between the protection of our unique natural environment and economic development. Sometimes the scales tip one way or the other, but there is a constant struggle to maintain equilibrium. Many disputes revolve around the construction of dams, especially those that involve the diversion of water from one river basin to another.

On the West Slope, particularly in the headwater counties where Vail and Beaver Creek are located, a substantial amount of employment and commerce is dependent upon the continued availability of water and the associated scenic and recreational values of that water. As I am sure you are aware, Vail and Beaver Creek are among the most popular ski resorts in the world and this area has also distinguished itself as a summer recreation area and conference center. For the past 10 years, Vail has even served as the home of the World Forum, a conference of world leaders that I host in June of each year. I look forward to and would greatly appreciate your participation in this year's event.

As President, I became acutely aware of the economic and recreational

importance of natural streams when I considered legislation to designate the Eagles Nest Wilderness Area, a high mountain reserve to the north of the Town of Vail. There, as with Two Forks, the dispute centered around transmountain water diversions proposed by the Denver Water Board. I was intensely lobbied to veto the bill. The Congress had concluded that reasonable alternatives were available that avoided infringement upon wilderness boundaries. I concurred with the Congress and signed the bill in 1976.

I was quite disturbed to learn recently that Denver designed Two Forks to provide the storage necessary to accommodate future diversions from at least two projects that would infringe upon the Eagles Nest Wilderness boundaries. It seems to me that this runs directly counter to actions taken by the federal government to protect this area.

Local political leaders on the West

Slope have recognized that Front Range cities including Denver will continue to grow and may need to develop additional West Slope water. Their goal has been first to encourage these cities to minimize their dependence on West Slope water through conservation, reuse, and development of cost-effective East Slope water sources. Second, local officials have asked that future transmountain diversions be designed in cooperation with Western Slope water users so as to minimize and mitigate adverse environmental and economic impacts. I concur with these fundamental planning principles and I believe that our local officials are correct in their conclusion that Two Forks fails to comply with this approach.

The plans to build Two Forks Dam date back to the turn of the century — long before the Vail and Beaver Creek resorts existed and long before we realized the ecological and economic benefits of natural streams. The project has

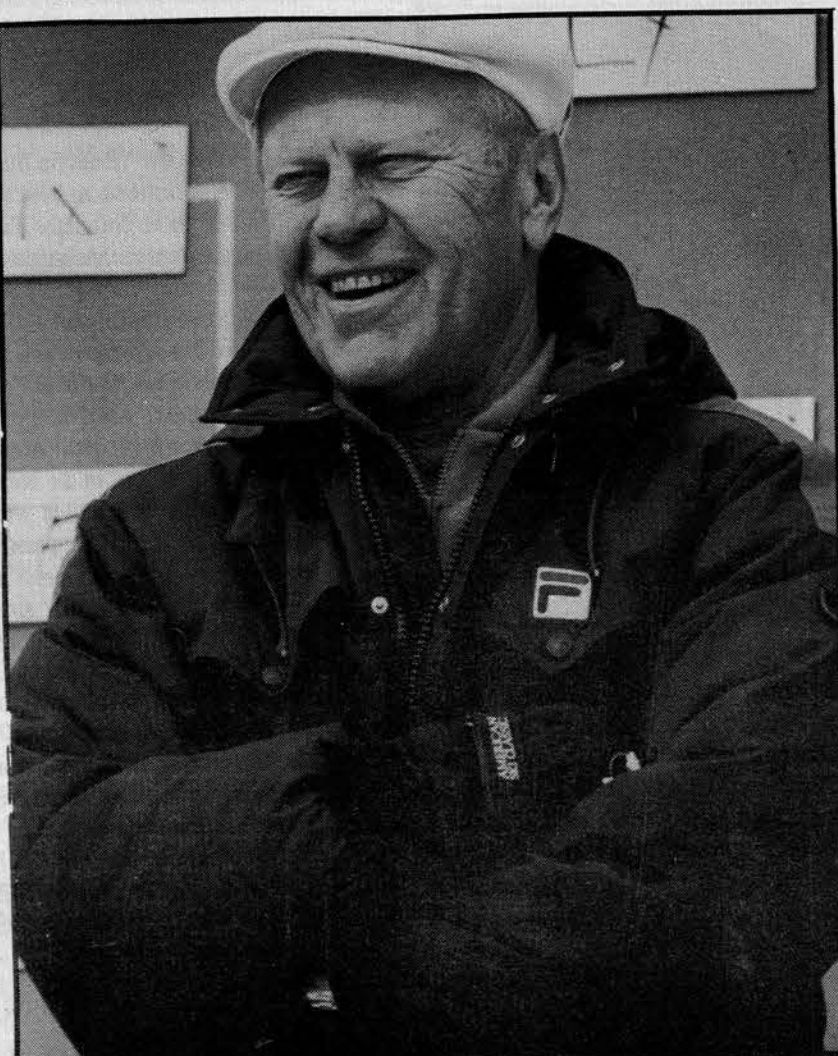
always generated fierce opposition because of its significant fiscal and environmental costs. In fact, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) study (Final Environmental Impact Study or FEIS) concludes that Two Forks, at a cost of \$550 million, would be more damaging to recreation, threatened and endangered species, vegetation, wildlife, aquatic life, water quality, and to visual and cultural resources than any of the other alternatives under consideration. These impacts would be felt in both the Colorado and Platte river basins.

Were Two Forks the only option for supplying water to Denver, the citizens of the region and the federal permitting agencies would face a dilemma — massive environmental destruction or a future water crisis. Fortunately, the dam is not the only water supply option available. Rather than the construction of a large, costly and environmentally damaging project, Denver could choose to invest in the implementation of an effective and efficient conservation program, the construction of small projects that have broad-based support, and the development of management techniques that would allow systems to be operated more efficiently to deliver larger quantities of water to the metropolitan area. According to the material I have seen, EPA has reviewed and validated the technical feasibility and cost-effectiveness of these approaches. One of the alternative projects, the proposed Muddy Creek Dam near Kremmling, Colo., is currently moving through the federal permitting process and has the support of both West Slope and environmental interests.

I am sure that Mr. Reilly's decision to intervene in the Two Forks permitting process has led to efforts to involve the White House more directly in the decision. When feelings run high, balance is not easily maintained. From my perspective, Mr. Reilly made the right decision when he initiated the veto process. The citizens of Colorado on both sides of the Divide are well served by his actions, as are all citizens who care about protecting the natural habitat of the Colorado and Platte rivers.

Sincerely,  
Gerald R. Ford

Vail Trail photo by Mike Rawlings



Former President Gerald R. Ford



## Western water...

(Continued from page 14)

by federal efforts to turn back to state and local governments programs that until then had been Washington's responsibility. At the same time, the states were beginning to realize that the upkeep of large capital systems built with federal money, such as wastewater treatment plants, was theirs. As a result, local tax dollars were squeezed and the public was increasingly wary of expensive new projects.

Just as financial resources were shrinking or vanishing, dam builders were faced with more and more expensive projects. The inexpensive, cost-effective dams had been built first. The remaining sites were losers — projects that were costly, environmentally damaging and, often, only marginally useful.

Not that all the earlier projects had been absolutely necessary. Longstanding policies had often encouraged profligate use, or waste, of water in order to create demand for dams. Using water projects and their water efficiently had very low priority in the water development community. Efficiency, to water developers, meant less dam-building.

Environmentalists saw a way to use the dam builders' past construction successes against them in this new, penny-pinching era. With the flow of both local and federal tax subsidies to dam builders shut off, environmentalists could now get to the heart of the issue: what projects were really needed, which, if

any, were cost-effective, and what were the alternatives? This approach, a switch from defense to offense, has been very successful.

Dam builders who ignore the new reality do so at their peril. The Denver Water Board has learned an expensive and bitter lesson in Two Forks Dam on the South Platte River. The Sandstone Dam in Wyoming will eventually fall of its own weight, as will the Clear Creek Dam, the Union Park project and the Collegiate Range project in Colorado. The unfinished portions of the Central Utah Project are in serious trouble and, in California, the Auburn Dam has been shelved and Pam Dam is on the skids.

Large dam construction, the twentieth century equivalent of pyramid building, is too expensive to command much public support today. Over time it has resulted in lost opportunities by diverting capital. The real economic benefits of dams have been limited, especially if we count the energy and political capital that has gone into coaxing the funds out of Washington.

Now, capital intensive water projects have to compete with a host of other community needs for resources. Given their dubious benefits, few dams are likely to stand up well in contests played on level fields. Both the environment and the economy will be better for the struggle.

But questions remain about whether the water management institutions in the West, which dominated the region's economy for so long, can themselves adapt to the new realities. In *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity and The Growth of The American West*, histo-

rian Donald Worster suggests that the West, a hydraulic society and a colony within a nation, has fought a long, fierce battle to "get out from under" by expanding its resource base through dam construction. But instead of rising above colonial dependency, Worster writes that the West has been ensnared in its own "hydraulic trap," creating a rigid political, economic and social system that could lead to stagnation.

This inflexibility is to a large extent institutional, a characteristic that environmentalists have long recognized and one that some elected officials are beginning to recognize, too.

As Colorado Gov. Roy Romer observed recently in remarking on the lessons of Two Forks, the state has changed profoundly since its system for planning and developing water was designed. As a result, he said, its institutions are "out of step ... with the values of its citizens and in need of 'reform or overhaul.'"

But recognizing the hydraulic trap is one thing, escaping is another. In his review of the historical record of societies that have relied heavily on water development to sustain themselves, Worster sees plenty of reasons for pessimism. But he also points out that the environmental movement and its willingness to question established authority offers evidence "that the old obedience" ... has begun to crack.

The writer is a hydrologist with the Environmental Defense Fund in Boulder, Colorado. He has been very active in the Two Forks Dam issue.

## BULLETIN BOARD



Bureau of Reclamation photo by Tom Fridmann

In 1983, heavy spring runoff almost took out Glen Canyon dam. Here, workers in the dam's left spillway check damage to the concrete liner.

### GLEN CANYON DAM HEARINGS

The Glen Canyon Dam environmental analysis has finally gotten under way. Bureau of Reclamation officials — who say it is the largest and most complicated EIS the agency has ever undertaken — have re-set seven scoping hearings across the West for March and announced the specifics of the study. Alternatives considered are (1) no change; (2) operating the dam to optimize electrical power (peaking power); (3) operating the dam for base-load power; and (4) operating the dam to benefit specific resources such as trout, beaches and wetlands and rafting. The EIS will take two years to complete as it investigates impacts to endangered species, trout, beaches and wetlands, electricity production and prices, and water conservation. It will not study the Navajo Generating Station in Page, Ariz., Lakes Powell or Mead, or other units of the Colorado River Storage Project. Scoping hearings will be held: March 12 in Salt Lake City, 7:00 p.m. at the Salt Lake City Hilton Downtown, 150 West 500 South; March 13 in Denver, 7:00 p.m. at the Denver Sheraton at Stapleton Airport; March 15 in Phoenix, 7:00 p.m. at the North Central Phoenix Sheraton; March 16 in Flagstaff, 7:00 p.m. at

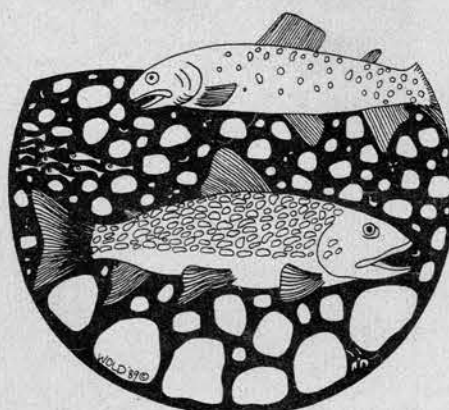
the Flagstaff City Hall City Council Chambers; March 20 in Los Angeles, 7:30 p.m. at the Airport Marina Hotel; March 21 in San Francisco, 7:00 p.m. at the Fort Mason Conference Center, Landmark A Building, Leguna and Marina Blvds.; and March 27 in Washington, D.C., 1:30 p.m. at the Interior South Building. Copies of the Glen Canyon Dam EIS Workbook and Background Papers are available from Dave Wegner in the Bureau of Reclamation's Salt Lake City office (801/524-3097).

### NEW GRAND CANYON WATCHDOG

As the Glen Canyon Dam EIS begins, a new coalition has formed to watchdog the process. The Greater Grand Canyon Ecosystem Coalition, a mix of environmentalists, rafters and scientists, hopes to organize pre-scoping meetings, work with local environmental and rafting groups throughout the West, distribute information to the public and oversee the environmental impact statement process. The coalition has organizers in each city where there will be scoping meetings. For more information, contact Fran Joseph at the Grand Canyon Trust, Rt. 4, Box 718, Flagstaff, AZ 86001 (602/774-7488).

### THE LAST BEST PLACE

What will the final decade of the 20th century hold for the West as power lines, strip-mines, nuclear dumps, and condominiums rapidly engulf the wild frontier? A University of Colorado at Boulder-sponsored symposium, "Inhabiting the Last Best Place: Limits, Opportunities, and the Future of the American West" addresses this question. Co-moderators of the March 8 event are CU-Boulder professors Charles Wilkinson and Patricia Nelson Limerick. Topics to be discussed range from artists' to economists' views on Western expansion. Speakers include author Bill Kittredge, photographer Richard Misrach, and former Arizona Gov. Bruce Babbitt. There will also be readings by Terry Tempest Williams, author of *Coyote's Canyon*, and poets Ed Dorn and Peter Michelson. For more information contact Dodie Udall, University of Colorado at Boulder, Campus Box 401, Boulder, CO 80309-0401 (303/492-1876).



### TALKING ABOUT WILDLIFE IN DENVER

Wildlife and resource managers from across North America will migrate to Denver March 16-21 to discuss subjects such as restoration of wildlife populations and conservation education. The five-day conference, "Resource Management for the '90s," features John Turner, director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Cy Jamison, director of the Bureau of Land Management, Sen. Robert Kasten Jr., D-Wis., and Harry Hill, executive director general of Canada's National Soil Conservation Program. Over 1,500 participants representing private conservation organizations, universities and state and federal agencies are expected. Sponsored by The Wildlife Management Institute and The Wildlife Society, the 55th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference will be held at the Denver Sheraton Tech Center. Registration is \$75. For more information and a copy of the advance program contact the Wildlife Management Institute, 1101 14th St. NW, Suite 725, Washington, DC 20005 (202/371-1808).

### REVEGETATION IN HIGH PLACES

If you want to know more about how to repair damage to fragile, high-altitude vegetation, a good place to start is the Ninth Biennial High Altitude Revegetation Workshop March 1-2 at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colo. "Mission Impossible: The Colorado Mountain Scar Commission," and a talk on roadway aesthetics along Colorado's Glenwood Canyon, are just two of the presentations set for sessions on water quality, tailing and mine wastes, microbiology and reclamation. Speakers include William R. Jordan III, editor of *Restoration and Management Notes* and a leader in the new science of restoration ecology, and James Scherer, EPA Region VIII administrator. For more information, call the Colorado State University Office of Conference Services (303/491-7501).

### TRUCKS AND THE PARK

Bison, elk ... and trucks carrying hazardous wastes. The last would be banned from U.S. Highway 191 in Yellowstone National Park if the park's preferred alternative is adopted. Commercial use of national park roads normally is prohibited, but U.S. 191 in the northwest of Yellowstone is unusual because it is a regular highway not intended to carry tourists to destinations within the park. Trucks on 191 carry hazardous petroleum-related products as well as cargoes of combustible liquids and corrosive materials. The park's proposal comes from a draft environmental assessment prepared by Yellowstone and regional planners; other alternatives are to eliminate all commercial traffic or to leave commercial traffic regulations unchanged. Written comments on the proposal may be sent by March 2 to Superintendent, PO Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82109.





16-High Country News — February 26, 1990

Crystal Images



Summer wildflowers, Rocky Mountain National Park

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK CELEBRATES 75

Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado celebrated its 75th birthday Jan. 26, but a somber note was sounded at a party for 350 park employees and well-wishers that night.

Park Superintendent Jim Thompson warned that if development near the park boundaries continues without concern for its effects on wildlife, "We will have permitted the irreversible erosion of recreational use, natural conditions and scenic beauties."

There are problems within the boundaries as well, Thompson continued. Park improvements for visitors have not been funded since 1970, although the number of visitors to the park each year continues to grow. In 1989, 2.6 million people visited the park.

Thompson noted that the number of rangers has not increased; instead it has been cut back to 96 permanent employees, who are helped by 25 volunteers.

But Rocky Mountain National Park has not been completely forgotten in Washington, D.C. On Nov. 30, 1989, President Bush signed a bill that clears the way for 465 acres to be added to the park's existing 265,193 acres. There were no indications that an extra ranger would be thrown in to help patrol the new territory.

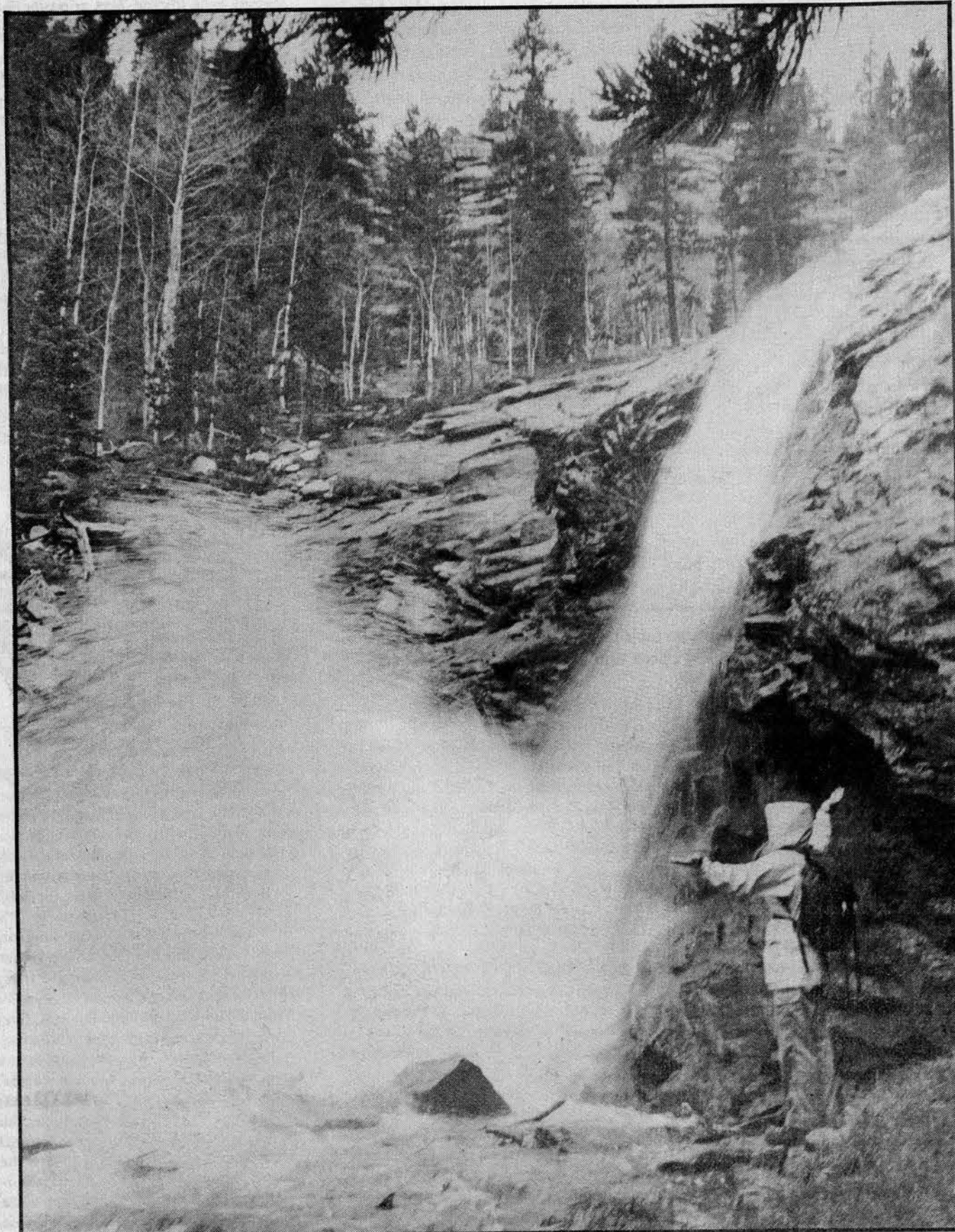
That the park exists for all of us is due primarily to Enos A. Mills, a naturalist, writer and conservationist. He began a campaign for preservation of the area in 1909, and his years of hard work gave him the nickname "Father of the Park."

When the Rocky Mountain National Park Act was passed in 1915, just 31,000 people dropped in to enjoy looking at Long's Peak, the park's fragile tundra and its spectacular meadows.

— Diane Sylvain



Denver Post front page Jan. 20, 1915



Kent and Donna Danner

Bridal Veil Falls, Rocky Mountain National Park