

High Country News

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A Paper for People who Care about the West

One dollar



Dumps 'R' Us

Railroad plans garbage express

by Peter Carrels

EDGEMONT, S.D. — When a persistent real estate agent arranged for Alonzo and Robert Rogers to sell 1,200 acres of their southwestern South Dakota ranch, the bachelor brothers had no idea their land was part of a plan to build a massive garbage dump serving faraway cities.

"We didn't know anything about the garbage deal until just before they came out and paid us off," said Alonzo, who is 68 years old, 13 years younger than Robert. Facing foreclosure, the brothers desperately needed cash, so they have no regrets. They also gave the buyer an option on their remaining 1,700 acres.

While we spoke, the brothers slowly ambled through dusty sagebrush, pointing to familiar ravines and creek beds. They were comfortably layered against a chilly wind by faded overalls and worn, greasy jackets and hats. Each seemed insulated, as well, against the trends of modern society.

Today, garbage represents more than just trash. It means profits for truckers or rail lines that haul it, jobs and economic development for starving rural communities that host new dumps, and relief for urban centers anxious about bulging landfills.

It also means big dividends for landfill developers. Hugh Kaufman, the out-

spoken waste expert at the Environmental Protection Agency, says profits for dump operators are huge. "The waste disposal business," he told the *Chicago Tribune*, "is second only to drugs today in terms of return on investment."

Rural, Western states like South Dakota are being scrutinized by opportunistic rail lines, waste companies and would-be garbage barons. Two years ago, South Dakota was so overwhelmed by inquiries about landfill permits that it enacted a moratorium on such permits.

The only outfit to beat the moratorium was South Dakota Disposal Systems, Inc. (SDDS), a fledgling Colorado company headed by Hunter Swanson. SDDS is the new owner of Robert and Alonzo Rogers' ranch.

Swanson intends to turn the ranch into a "high-tech landfill" capable of handling over one million tons of garbage annually. If built and operated to such ambitious specifications, the SDDS site could be, according to one EPA official, one of the largest landfills in the nation, a mega-fill engineered to accept over one-half of one percent of all the garbage generated in the United States each year.

The proposed landfill is near Edgemont, S.D., a small town gaining recognition as an environmentalist's nightmare. There is a sense of desperation in Edgemont, with boarded-up storefronts

(Continued on page 8)

Waste kings target rural poor

by Karen Dorn Steele

LIND, Wash. — "Send us your toxic wastes ... we'll ship them back in your food," says one highway sign. "Caution: Now Entering Hazardous Waste War Zone," says another.

They were put up by wheat farmer Terry Fode in a novel act of defiance against a Seattle company's plans to erect a large toxic waste incinerator in the midst of eastern Washington's dry-land farm country. Motorists see them on Highway 395, the main interstate truck route to Portland.

"I just wanted to stir things up," said Fode, 36. He noted that farmers fighting the ECOS Co.'s proposed incinerator had been outgunned politically when they sought to derail the project in the state Legislature.

The Washington Legislature has given the nod to private industry to build such facilities, and a 1985 state law passed to get around NIMBY ("not in my back yard") sentiment removes any veto power from local communities. Sole authority for issuing permits resides with the state Department of Ecology.

An attempt by Fode's grassroots coalition to get the Legislature to impose a five-year moratorium on toxic waste incinerators while the potential risks to agriculture were studied was

defeated in the state Senate in February.

Fode's protest typifies growing fears among farmers in rural eastern Washington that a lengthening list of proposed new hazardous- and solid-waste disposal projects will threaten agriculture. They could change forever the uses of wide-open spaces in the inland Northwest and alter the politics of rural counties, where large corporations are offering tempting tradeoffs to small, cash-strapped communities.

The corporations are casting their lines across the Cascades with an attractive bait: jobs and economic revival for depressed farm-based economies.

"There aren't enough people here, and business usually doesn't come knocking on our door. We hope ECOS will just be the first," said Bill Pond, owner of Swart's Auto Parts and a member of the chamber of commerce committee that invited ECOS to town.

Near his store downtown, several other storefronts sit empty. Lind's population has slipped from 567 to 509, according to U.S. Census figures, and many here fear the town will die unless it can attract new business.

But others warn that hazardous waste isn't the kind of business that eastern Washington's small towns should be courting.

"Our research shows exactly the opposite — that many companies actu-

(Continued on page 9)

Dear friends,



HIGH COUNTRY NEWS

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Sorry, Mickey

When Jill Morrison called from Los Angeles to ask if we wanted a story about Disneyland's wastes ending up in Wyoming, our eyes danced with visions of Mickey Mouse sinking in the glop. And that's just how we asked our artist in Durango, Colo., to draw it in his front-page cartoon. In fact, David Wilson even added Donald Duck in the truck heading east from Southern California.

And you're right, discerning readers. They're not there. We took them out because of the law of copyright infringement. Also, as concerned as we are about this new onslaught on the rural West, we realized that Disney is not the enemy in this story; the company's quick efforts to resolve the mess even won a partial penalty break from EPA. So there, Mickey, you're out of it.

Thank you, Doctor

But there's more about this waste issue to tell. A photograph we particularly wanted for Karen Dorn Steele's story about incinerators in eastern Washington never came. Calls went out to the photographer, to our regional editor, Pat Ford, and of course to Karen, who was on vacation in Palo Alto, Calif. When Karen returned to Spokane, she found the photo and took it to the Federal Express office, only to learn that they wouldn't deliver in Paonia on Saturday

HOTLINE

Mountain lions on prowl

Following a rash of confrontations between mountain lions and humans, Glacier National Park has announced a new lion management plan. The park plans to relocate or kill problem lions, reports the *Billings Gazette*. Montana game managers also are urging citizens to report all lion sightings. One lion confrontation in June ended peacefully, thanks to a piece of fishing equipment. Skip Goerner held off a mountain lion while armed with only a six-foot Ugly Stik fishing rod. Goerner had been hiking around Quartz Lake when the cat came running up to him, reports *Hungry Horse News*. "I shouted, 'mountain lion!' and started whipping at him with the fishing rod like a lion tamer," he said. "He'd back up and come at me and I just kept slapping at him." Eventually, the lion tired of the struggle and walked away. As for Goerner, he decided to cut short his fishing trip. "I think we sort of lost interest," he said.

Why chasing big bucks sometimes backfires

The West's continuing attempts to lure big business may actually hurt the economies of communities, a University of Montana economist told the annual meeting of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. Quality of life is the key to economic and social well-being, said economist Tom Power. "The business climate that is important is the one created for local entrepreneurs," not the one for larger corporations, he said. Power said most of the Yellowstone area's 11,000 new jobs in the 1980s came from small-scale, local business ventures, the *Casper Star-Tribune* reported. "People care where they live. We should talk about ourselves and why we live here," he said. He then urged communities to lure residents who want to escape the polluted, crowded and high-crime areas of the country.

or on Labor Day, the day before we went to press. But with the help of our circulation manager, Kay Henry Bartlett, we zeroed in on a subscriber in Montrose, Colo., the closest place where Federal Express delivers on Saturday. T.C. Dickenson was the name. Turns out he is a doctor and gets the paper at his office, which was closed, of course. But Dr. Dickenson drove to the Federal Express office, got the photo, and had it waiting for us at his home on Sunday when we drove down to fetch it. What a subscriber.

Visitors

David King, a water engineer with the Bureau of Reclamation in Denver, stopped by on his way to climb Wilson Peak near Telluride, Colo. He was taking part in the second annual Peak Challenge, which is sponsored by the Colorado Mountain Club to raise money for the Griffith Center of Golden, Colo., which helps emotionally disturbed children. And Robert Mohler, another engineer, was here from Ord, Neb., on his way to Grand Junction, Colo. Mohler crammed in some environmental studies while at Colorado State University, and now works for one of the 23 natural resource districts in Nebraska.

We never saw Jim Grode, from Boulder, Colo. But he left a note saying he was doing some backpacking in our neighborhood before going back to school. Diane Dvorin, also from Boulder, came by with her sister, Doris Fassbender, who recently moved to Paonia.

Other Colorado drop-ins included Enoch Needham and Chris Ford of Denver; Billie Meyer and David Sears of Woody Creek; Kevin McBride, a graduate student at the Colorado School of Mines; and Elizabeth Doll and Sharon Tenney, who were up in arms about a hydraulic coal-mining operation that may reopen near their town of New Castle. They were concerned about noise, ugliness and the possibility of another boom and bust. Fritz Bachman and Maria Loe of Aspen were breezy as they cruised the area for elementary schools where Fritz might someday teach.

From farther away came Miles Henstrom and his daughter Cassie, 9, old friends of the Marstons from Eugene,

Ore. Miles is a Forest Service ecologist for the Willamette and Siuslaw forests. And just as Ken Wright's internship was ending, his parents, Dick and Jean, came to visit from Columbia, S.C. They first toured New Mexico, looking for a future home and playing some golf. Dick said a bad slice on one of his drives led them north to Paonia, where they claimed they still were looking for the ball.

Board meeting in Missoula

The board of the High Country Foundation, *High Country News'* governing body, will gather again on September 22, this time in Missoula, Mont. Items on the agenda include options for printing the paper on recycled stock, and the possible purchase and renovation of a new home for *HCN*.

All subscribers within 100 miles or so should be receiving an invitation to the potluck gathering to be held 6:30 to 9 p.m. Saturday at the Marshall Ski Area east of Missoula — but anyone who can make it is invited. Bring a potluck dish to share and table service. Beverages, company and conversation will be provided. These gatherings are a wonderful opportunity to meet staff, board members, writers and other readers. See you there.

Corrections

Paonia reader and former *HCN* staffer Carol Beth Elliott was kind enough to say that she enjoyed the last issue, and astute enough to point out an error in the "Letters" section. "While I've heard speculation that there isn't really as much gold in Fort Knox as the government would like us to believe there is," she wrote, "the fort itself is definitely in Kentucky, not in Tennessee."

Another correction, this time economic, also should be noted — especially by friends stopping by the office. Paonia's constabulary is again marking tires with chalk along Grand Avenue to enforce the town's two-hour parking limit. The last time the police bothered was before the energy bust in the early 1980s. Paonia's boomlet, from renewed coal mining and housing pressure from Aspen, is credited with the crackdown.

—Larry Mosher and Mary Jarrett
for the staff



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WESTERN ROUNDUP

Mideast furor lights a tiny oil-shale fire in the West

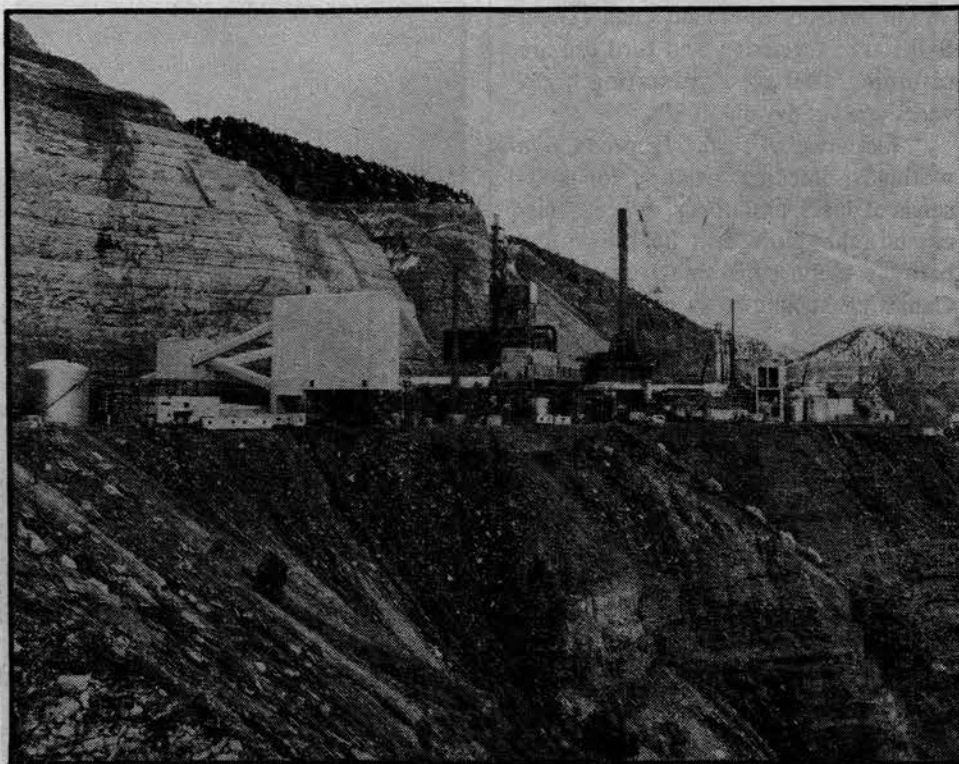
The latest Persian Gulf crisis has once again turned the nation's covetous eye on the 600 billion barrels of recoverable oil in the huge shale deposits of Colorado, Wyoming and Utah. Although oil shale's long-term future is still unclear, the Mideast oil situation will no doubt increase the flow of federal aid to the fledgling Western shale industry.

But the current crisis is not generating plans for a multi-billion-dollar shale industry, with its attendant environmental impacts, to help quench the nation's thirst for oil.

Instead, shale backers are calling for government-funded oil shale research and development. Small demonstration projects can prepare the industry and the West for the day when the nation really needs to tap its shale resources, shale backers maintain. And they would also take the booms and busts out of the shale industry, they say.

Not everyone is convinced. "Shale is a once and future turkey," said energy analyst Amory Lovins, of the Rocky Mountain Institute in Old Snowmass, Colo. Shale hasn't and won't make sense because shale plants take too much energy and money to run, making them uncompetitive in the energy marketplace, he said.

The Middle East situation, however, is providing "a tragic kind of boost for our [Colorado] oil shale industry," says Rep. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, D-Colo. Campbell believes Congress will now be more likely to finance a 1,200-barrel-a-day demonstration oil shale facility on federal land in western Colorado's Piceance Basin, now under contract to Occidental Oil Shale Inc.



Union Oil Co. photo

The retorting complex on Parachute Creek, Colorado

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior approved an \$8 million matching grant for the project before Iraq invaded Kuwait, but passage in the full House and Senate was doubtful. "There's nothing like a crisis to get Congress' attention," said Campbell. "The invasion should make it very easy to defend now."

Rising crude oil prices could also extend the life of the nation's only commercial shale plant, Unocal's 10,000-barrel-a-day operation in Parachute, Colo. The plant produced over a million barrels a year in 1988 and 1989, said

spokesman Jeff Callender. Unocal has a Department of Energy contract that guarantees at least \$45 a barrel. Higher oil prices will enable the firm to operate longer under the \$400 million contract or until the contract expires in 1996, Callender added.

Relying on oil from the explosive Persian Gulf has once again focussed attention on shale as an alternative to imported oil, Campbell said. It also has prompted speculation about the "magic price" of oil that would make shale development economically feasible. Although Unocal's plant makes a profit

at the \$45-a-barrel price, Callender cautioned against guessing when a viable market will develop for shale oil.

Lovins says there is no magic price. "Shale makes no sense when oil is \$40 a barrel, and less sense as the price rises," he argues. Higher oil prices hurt shale's future, Lovins said, because higher energy costs drive up financing and operating costs to make the finished shale product uncompetitive.

Finding ways to make oil shale pay, however, is a primary goal of the planned Oil Shale Test Facility. The facility, which would have a seven-year lifespan, will allow the shale industry to take a rational, long-term approach to researching ways to develop the nation's massive shale reserves, said Ray Zahradnik, president of Occidental Oil Shale Inc. The company received \$750,000 in matching government funds last year for preliminary environmental and design work. The facility will seek to fine-tune existing shale mining and retorting technologies, experiment with new technologies, and discover and produce profitable shale by-products ranging from asphalt to adhesives, Zahradnik said.

Finding profitable by-products will shield shale developers from "the capricious crude oil market," says Larry Lukens, chief operating officer of the New Paraho Corp. Paraho has developed a shale-based asphalt that Lukens cited as an example of a potentially profitable by-product that can help buffer the shale industry from oil-related booms and busts.

—Jon Klusmire

Idaho forest ranger catches the president's eye

Relief is in sight for Donald Oman.

The embattled U.S. forest ranger, whose efforts to improve livestock management in an Idaho national forest earned him the outspoken hostility of some local ranchers, now has an unexpected ally: George Bush. And a push by his Forest Service superiors to transfer him from his position as a district ranger in the Sawtooth National Forest has apparently run out of steam. Regional Forester Stan Tixier told the Twin Falls press last month that Oman would not be moved under pressure.

"I think it's great," said Oman. "I think we can go on and have a working relationship with at least most of our permittees, practice good resource management, and keep on improving things like we have been."

A front-page article in *The New York Times* Aug. 19 described Oman's ongoing confrontation with ranchers who graze cattle in the low mountains and desert of the Twin Falls district of the Sawtooth National Forest. Some have reportedly threatened him: "Either Oman is gone or he's going to have an accident," cattleman Winslow Whitely told *The Times*. "Myself and every other one of the permit holders would cut his throat if we could get him alone."

This, Oman said, caught the eye of President Bush, who ordered an investigation into threats made against Oman. Oman told the *High Country News* he was contacted by a Bush aide the day after the article was printed. "I was told he [Bush] didn't condone his employees being threatened," he said. Maurice Ellsworth, U.S. attorney for Idaho, told

The Idaho Statesman that the U.S. Forest Service is conducting an investigation and would report its findings to his office for possible action.

Oman's four-year relationship with the ranchers in his 500-square-mile district was first reported by *High Country News* last May 7. The story included an incident last Oct. 13, when Oman executed a surprise cattle count at the Goose Creek Grazing Allotment at dawn. The allotment is grazed by about 1,800 cattle owned by five ranches cooperating as the Wild Rose Cattle Association. Because he had already received threats, Oman was accompanied by an armed Forest Service marshal and another armed official. Oman's written report of the incident stated that, after an initial angry encounter with one person, it was a low-key event. *The New York Times*, however, reported that it nearly became a shooting war.

The cattle count, nevertheless, inflamed the already alienated ranchers, who aired their complaints to the press and the Forest Service. *Western Livestock Journal*, a regional industry magazine based in Denver, wrote a story titled "Gestapo cattle count in Idaho." Several Idaho newspapers ran similar stories. Oman says the Idaho Cattle Association wrote a letter to the Secretary of Agriculture referring to the "intimidation of innocent women and children by armed Forest Service bullies."

In the wake of the outcry, Regional Forester Stan Tixier told Oman he should apply for a "transfer-promotion." But Oman, who is 47 and has worked for the Forest Service for 26 years,

refused. He filed a "whistleblower" complaint with the federal government, saying he was being penalized for doing his job (*HCN*, 5/7/90).

On Aug. 24, Oman read the investigation of his complaint. He said the report found no political motives in the Forest Service's decision to move him. It also praised Oman's management of the resources. Last month, after the whistleblower investigation report was released and the *New York Times* article appeared, Tixier told the Twin Falls, Id., *Times News*, "We're not going to move him under pressure." He noted that rangers in Oman's position are normally moved every seven years. Oman said he hasn't been promised anything except that he won't be moved now.

Oman credits the press with helping his case. After the initial story appeared in *High Country News*, "things got better real fast," he says. "The chief of the Forest Service sent word down I wasn't to be moved until the investigation was over. This last month since the *New York Times* article has been a real plus for range management across the West."

Oman acknowledged that he has required the ranchers to comply more completely with the terms of the grazing permits than they had in the past, but considers his methods "fair but firm." He said he wouldn't run the cattle count any differently today: "I think everything was done properly," he said. "I think the *New York Times* article proves we were justified in having law enforcement officers there. They had their weapons, but they were very low-key and very friendly. There was no intimi-

dation of anybody. Most of the women and children didn't get there until lunchtime, and when they did get there they invited us to lunch. It was just not an intense situation."

Oman said he has heard from about 40 employees of the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management offering support. "They say, 'You're right' and 'hang in there.' And probably 10 of those people say that they're going through similar things."

—Lisa Jones

HOTLINE

EPA to monitor Aspen

Responding to local concerns, the Environmental Protection Agency has promised to monitor dust levels at Aspen's Smuggler Mountain Superfund site, and to evacuate or shut down the project if dust levels become too high. Both local officials and residents worry that dust from the cleanup could threaten the health of site residents (*HCN*, 8/27/90). In a news release, the EPA addressed community concerns by detailing monitoring procedures and offering "temporary relocation assistance" to residents. But Tom Dunlop, Pitkin County Environmental Health Director, fears the agency's monitoring efforts may be inadequate because they do not measure potentially dangerous fine dust particulates that are easily inhaled into the lungs, reports the *Aspen Times*.

HOTLINE

Prairie dog battle will continue

Even though the shooting has stopped, controversy continues over the Prairie Dog Shoot held in Nucla, Colo., July 14-15. (HCN, 5/7/90) Local residents are already planning an extended, four-weekend competition for next year. "Why not?" asks Mike Mehew, president of the Ten Ring Gun Club, sponsor of the event. Animal rights advocates answer that question by saying the hunt made "a spectacle of killing." Shari Janger of Prairie Dog Rescue says, "They're teaching their children that their problems can be solved with a gun." Opponents say they will lobby the Colorado Legislature to prohibit another prairie dog shoot.

Cactus theft up

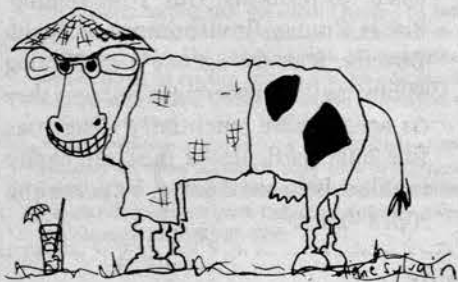
The Saguaro cactus, long considered a symbol of the Southwest, is being threatened by thieves who steal the plants from public land to sell on the black market, reports the *Arizona Republic*. While the cacti appear to be abundant, a confidential federal study says that "even the cactus thieves are becoming concerned as the healthy, commercial-quality Saguaro is rapidly being depleted." To stem this loss, the study recommends that law-enforcement efforts and penalties for theft be increased. Black market cacti sell for up to \$15,000 apiece, so many thieves discount the cost of getting caught as overhead.

Thousand Springs power project scrapped

After losing half of its corporate investors, the \$4 billion Thousand Springs power project near Wells in northeast Nevada has been cancelled by Sierra Pacific Resources (HCN, 5/21/90). The coal-fired power plant was opposed by environmentalists because of projected air pollution, reports the *Reno Gazette-Journal*. Utah and Idaho officials also were concerned about air pollution. Rep. Wayne Owens, D-Utah, said the project would have produced 60,000 tons of pollutants annually. Idaho Gov. Cecil Andrus, a Democrat, said he was glad to see the end of a project that was "environmentally and economically flawed," reports the *Idaho Falls Post-Register*. Wells Mayor George Yan, who anticipated more jobs and revenue, said he was disappointed but not surprised by the decision.

Haute cowture

A Japanese agricultural professor has designed a jacket and hat ensemble to protect cows from the sun and allow them to increase their milk production. Mosaku Sakurai said he developed the three-piece straw outfit after noticing that cows lose their appetite and produce less milk when they are exposed to the summer sun, reports The Associated Press.

**Utah wetlands revive after high waters**

In the marshes around Utah's Great Salt Lake, vegetation and bird life are returning after the devastating high-water years of the mid-1980s.

Vast areas of formerly productive wetlands, breeding grounds for thousands of ducks, phalaropes, avocets, ibises and other birds, still lie brown and briny, a moonscape smelling of salt. Canals channeling fresh water through the marshes are lined with the skeletons of salt-killed cottonwoods. But the vegetative die-off may be reversed more rapidly than anyone expected, says Tom Aldrich, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources' waterfowl program manager. In fact, he says, it may have had some benefits.

As the lake rose to an average elevation of 4,212 feet above mean sea level, it spilled over dikes separating the highly salty main lake body from surrounding brackish and freshwater marshes. The rise resulted from higher than average snowfalls in the Wasatch Mountains to the east, whose rivers drain into the dead-end lake.

Because the Great Salt Lake is quite shallow, its increase from a 4,206-foot elevation to its highest level, 4,235 feet, inundated many square miles. Some 80 percent of Utah's wetlands border the lake, many enlarged by conservation projects over the years. In all, 300,000 of the 400,000 acres of private, state and federal marshes were "pickled" by salt water.

During the high-water years, "we saw an 80-percent loss in breeding ducks and a 50- to 60-percent loss in breeding geese," Aldrich said. The habitat of Franklin's gulls and black-faced ibises vanished under salt water. Other shorebirds suffered reductions of habitat.

But several factors are helping the marshes recover.

One is that the salt did not penetrate the silty soil as deeply as feared, Aldrich said. Fresh water from the Bear, Ogden, Weber and other rivers is flushing out the salt and carrying seeds down from plants upstream.

And islands of green do remain in the barren, salt-killed marshes where natural artesian springs kept the salt sufficiently diluted. These too will provide

Forest Service may curb firewood sales

The U.S. Forest Service has for the first time agreed to study the air pollution and public health effects of its firewood sale program.

In a consent decree signed July 25 in U.S. District Court in Spokane, Wash., foresters on the Naches Ranger District agreed to consider charging the market price for firewood, limiting the quantity of firewood sold or even prohibiting the sale of firewood.

The settlement came after a clean-air group in Yakima, Wash., sued the government, saying "the burning of firewood obtained from the Forest Service constitutes a substantial threat to the public health in Yakima County."

"We have a problem in Yakima," said attorney Ray Paoletta. "We have too many people with too many wood stoves burning too much wood. The Forest Service is supplying the wood. We are asking why."

"The cat's out of the bag. The Forest Service can no longer disclaim any responsibility for wood smoke pollution," said Andy Stahl, a forester for the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, which filed suit on behalf of Clean Air Yakima.



Chas S. Clifton

A newly hatched California gull chick near Great Salt Lake, Utah

starting points for revegetation.

"There will be a lot master's theses and Ph.D. dissertations written as people study how the marshes come back," Aldrich predicted.

The salt water flooding even did some good, he said, by erasing dense stands of cattails. "Now these areas will come back at an earlier succession level with alkali bulrush and other more desirable plant species for waterfowl."

Also, while the waters still stood high, Utah began a state duck-stamp program. All waterfowl hunters must buy the stamp, which, like the federal waterfowl stamp, raises money for habitat.

With so many wetlands spoiled, state wildlife officials originally feared waterfowlers would lose interest and not buy the stamps, but that did not happen. The program has raised more than \$1.2 million for wetland restoration.

Because of its importance to bird life, the Great Salt Lake has been nominated as a Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve. To gain the designation, an area must support more than 100,000 of a bird species or else one-third of its total population, said Don Paul, a state non-game wildlife manager. He noted that the lake and its surrounding marshes and mudflats are critically important to several species of phalaropes, big-eared grebes and pelicans.

An array of other shorebirds — avocets, black-necked stilts, peeps, dowitchers, sandpipers, plovers, redknits, willets and curlews — also depend on the Great Salt Lake, he said.

The Shorebird Reserve program is administered by a collection of wildlife agencies and private conservation groups to draw awareness to key habitats and encourage their protection. Designation as a Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve would not change anything about the lake's legal standing, but it would help it gain international recognition.

Although Utah's Division of Wildlife Resources supports designation, such support is not unanimous throughout its parent body, the Utah Department of Natural Resources. Paul believes the impasse persists because Wildlife's sister agencies are unwilling to sign off until various other schemes, such as one that would dike off a portion of the Great Salt Lake to create a shallow freshwater impoundment called "Lake Wasatch," have been settled.

"Despite what uses people have in mind for other parts of the lake, it's important to recognize what its natural values are," he said. "It's the most important shorebird area in the [inland] western United States."

— Chas S. Clifton

environmental impact statement on its firewood sale program.

The district also agreed not to issue any firewood permits until 45 days after the environmental assessment is finished, and to cut off this year's firewood gathering season on Sept. 30.

The environmental assessment must consider:

- Selling firewood permits only to low-income families.
- Charging the market price for firewood.
- Lowering the per-household cord limit.
- Prohibiting the sale of firewood.
- Ending the firewood gathering season on Sept. 1 or limiting the quantity of firewood sold annually.

The Forest Service charges a minimum of \$10 for a two-cord firewood permit, then another \$5 per cord up to 10 cords. On the private market, a cord of firewood costs \$80 or more. Clean Air Yakima originally asked the Forest Service to charge \$100 per firewood permit. When the Naches district ranger turned it down, it filed the lawsuit.

— Sherry Devlin

Forest Service sues in Colorado to keep its water

Did Congress, almost a century ago, intend that national forests always have stream channels? Or does the Organic Administration Act of 1897, establishing the forest preserves, allow the stream channels on national forests to be filled in with sediment, and made unable to carry off water?

It is a large question with large implications. More than half of the West's water originates on or flows through national forest lands, and more than a century of mining, agricultural and industrial development has created a labyrinth of claims to that water.

The dewatering of the national forests has been going on for a long time. But now the U.S. Forest Service is fighting for its stream channels in a Greeley, Colo., state water court, claiming roughly half the stream flows in four national forests in northeastern Colorado. A win here by the Forest Service could set an important precedent for the agency's right to similar water throughout the West.

Justice Department attorneys argue that minimum stream flows are needed to protect the integrity of high mountain streams in the South Platte River drainage. On the other side, Colorado Deputy Attorney General Lois Witte attacks the federal suit as an attempt to severely limit Colorado's power to manage its water.

Both sides expect the case to go to the Colorado Supreme Court and then on to the Supreme Court. There may even be a confluence of such cases at the U.S. Supreme Court because similar contests are under way in Montana, Idaho and Nevada.



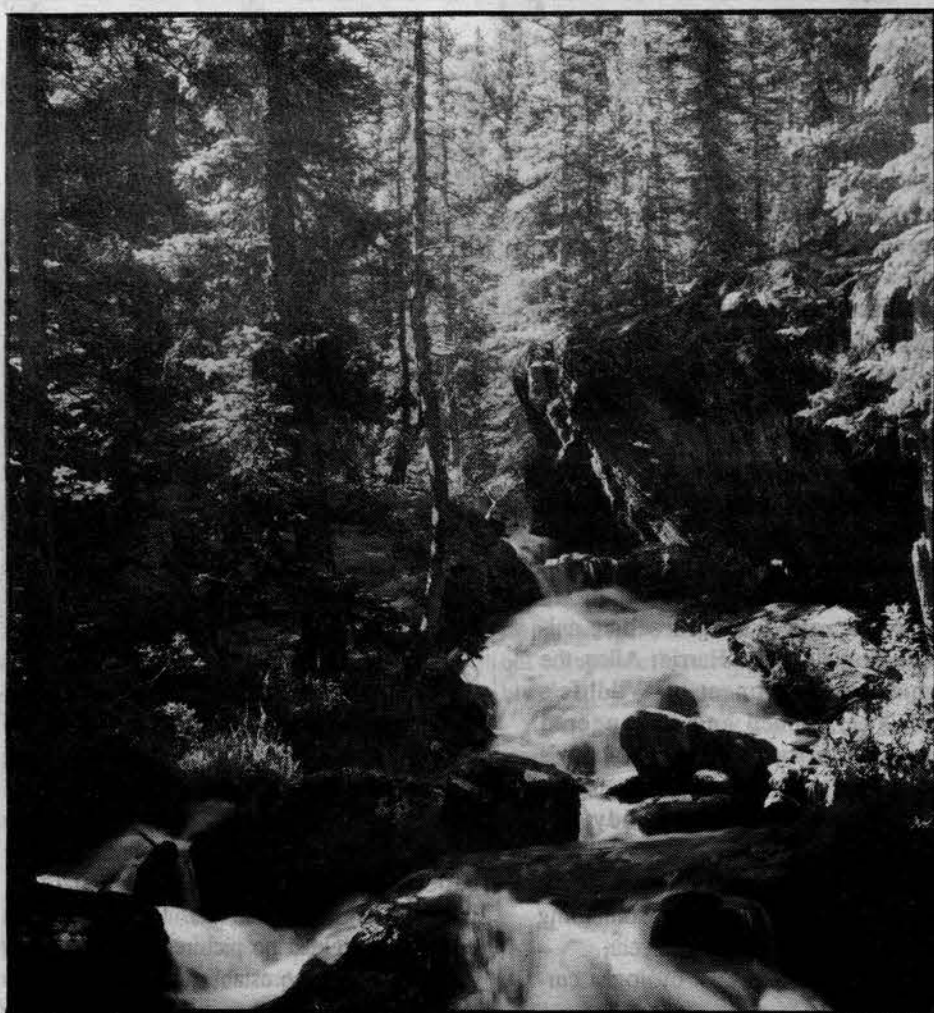
The national forest system was established in 1897 to protect water flows and to ensure a continuing supply of timber. The federal attorneys in Greeley argue that if further water withdrawals from streams in the national forests are not limited, the diminished channel capacities will worsen flooding, and the accumulated sediment will be scoured by floods and deposited downstream, causing even more trouble.

The state claims that Congress didn't expect the Forest Service to protect stream channels — that Congress intended the agency to protect watersheds by keeping trees standing in the watershed. Federal attorneys argue in turn that water diversion in the late 19th century was from downstream locations, and that lawmakers did not foresee the damaging effects on stream channels that upstream diversions can have.

Justice Department attorneys say the federal claims will not harm existing water users, because the Forest Service is not asking for the power to return streams to their pre-diversion days. According to its attorneys, the Forest Service wants to preserve channels in their present condition.

Justice Department attorneys also say that most water rights junior to those being claimed by the Forest Service can be satisfied under the claim. In fact, they have already settled with three-quarters of the more than 40 objectors, in many instances stipulating only that users continue diverting according to established patterns. Federal attorneys also say that flows being claimed by the agency would remain available for use downstream of forest boundaries.

But Witte says loss of the right to divert, store and transport water from upstream locations would hurt Colorado



Warren Martin Herr

Middle Falls of East Cross Creek in the Holy Cross Wilderness Area

water development. That is especially true along the Continental Divide, where trans-mountain water transfers, from the Colorado River Basin to the west into the South Platte basin to the east, are a fixture of the Colorado mountain landscape. Witte says those diversions would be especially compromised.

A win by the Forest Service would shake up more than the affected water developers. It would also have a large effect on the state's system of water allocation, which dates back to the frontier. In Colorado and most Western states, a water right is established through use. The first users have the most senior claims, with subsequent users having junior rights. This doctrine of prior appropriation — or "first in time, first in right" — is easier to describe than to administer, and water claims keep busy a system of state water courts and a small army of water attorneys.



The federal claim, although it is being pressed in state court, is not based on the prior-appropriation doctrine. The Justice Department attorneys argue that when Congress creates a national forest, it also reserves the water rights needed to sustain the national forest.

This reserved-rights doctrine was established by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1908 in *Winters v. United States*. The Winters Doctrine decision, as it has come to be known, states that any lands reserved by the federal government are entitled to enough water to sustain the purpose of the reservation.

Although the Winters Doctrine enforces traditional Western water interests, it has pushed into the West's priority system. In this case, the government is claiming water rights that date to the creation of the four national forests between 1892 and 1917.

The Winters decision was used initially to obtain water rights on Indian reservations. Then, in a 1963 Supreme Court decision, *Arizona v. California*, the federal government successfully applied the reserved-rights doctrine to non-Indian federal reservations.

Since then, the Department of the

Interior has used the doctrine to acquire water rights for national monuments and parks. For example, in a 1976 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the National Park Service was entitled to water to protect a rare fish in Devil's Hole National Monument, Nev. The ruling cut off pumping from nearby wells.

But the Forest Service, which is part of the Department of Agriculture, has yet to win reserved water rights in a courtroom. And it has sustained a major setback. In the 1978 case *United States v. New Mexico*, the U.S. Supreme Court strictly limited the purposes for which the Forest Service could claim reserved rights. The court ruled that Congress had created the forest reserve system to furnish a continuous supply of timber and to secure "favorable conditions of water flow." It therefore rejected Forest Service claims that the forests had also been reserved, or set aside, for esthetic, recreational and fish production purposes. In the ruling, Chief Justice Rehnquist wrote that the Forest Service can only claim flows necessary to produce timber and to protect water flows.

According to Maggie Fox of the Sierra Club's regional office in Boulder, Colo., the initial reaction was that the court's decision would stop the Forest Service from making substantial water claims. However, the Forest Service established a team to calculate what flows were necessary to protect stream channels. The agency reasoned that maintenance of stream channels is necessary to secure the "favorable conditions of water flow" allowed by the 1978 New Mexico decision.



Now, 12 years after the New Mexico decision, the Forest Service is testing its scientific and legal logic in the Greeley courtroom. To the dismay of the West's water interests, the agency believes that it is entitled to a substantial amount of water.

The core of the case rests on fluvial geomorphology — the science of river channels. Both sides agree that stream channels are formed and maintained by the sediment and water flowing through

them. When water is removed by diversion, channels usually start to fill in because of sediment accumulation or vegetation growing in or near the channel. That reduces the stream's ability to carry water, which can worsen flooding and increase the amount of sediment flowing off the national forest and onto the land below.

Although the two sides agree on some of the theory, they differ on how much water, if any, is needed to maintain the stream channels in the South Platte drainage.

The Forest Service says that in a typical stream, the floods that occur every year or two do the most to maintain the channel capacity. The agency argues that although the larger, less frequent floods carry more sediment than the smaller, frequent floods, over time it is the small, regular events that maintain the streams.

The state's experts claim that the streams were formed by huge flows caused by the melting of the glaciers — a period that ended about 10,000 years ago. According to these experts, today's stream channels are not in balance with the present flows of water and sediment. Therefore, these experts say, the principles on which the federal government is basing its case are irrelevant, and the Forest Service is claiming more water than is needed to transport sediment under present conditions.

The state's experts also argue that the Forest Service could prevent its streams from silting up by improving its management of the land. They argue that most of the sediment filling the streams comes from the agency's poor land management — logging, road building and grazing. The state's witnesses suggest that the Forest Service spend its time better improving forest practices rather than claiming stream flows.

— Brian Collins

HOTLINE

Cooperative finds home for flock

The Ganados del Valle livestock cooperative has found a temporary home for its rare churro sheep. For the past eight years the Chama Valley, N.M., co-op has fought for grazing rights on public land; it even staged an illegal "graze-in" in a state wildlife area (HCN, 11/6/89). Now the Chama Land and Cattle Co. has agreed to let the co-op's flock use its land for a year, reports the *Albuquerque Journal*. During that time, the co-op will study the effect of sheep grazing on the elk that also live on the company's land. In its attempt to gain access to 44,000 acres of state range, the co-op has said that sheep grazing will improve the habitat for elk and other wildlife. Ganados has received national attention for its efforts to preserve the Hispanic pastoral culture of New Mexico.

Bush recognizes trailblazer

For 17 years, Gudy Gaskill worked to turn the Colorado Trail into a reality (HCN, 8/4/86). Last July her efforts at organizing volunteers to build and maintain the 540-mile trail were recognized by President George Bush, who awarded her the "Daily Point of Light Award" for volunteer effort. "I'm flabbergasted because it's just something that was not expected," Gaskill said in an interview with *The Denver Post*.

HOTLINE

Radioactive waste disposal challenged

Public interest groups are appealing a Nuclear Regulatory Commission decision to deregulate the disposal of low-level radioactive waste (HCN, 7/30/90). Twenty-nine organizations, including Ralph Nader's Public Citizen and the Western Colorado Congress, have filed suit to stop a plan to allow 200,000 cubic feet of radioactive waste a year to be dumped into municipal landfills and burned in incinerators. This amount represents about 30 percent of the nuclear industry's low-level radioactive waste. Marv Ballantyne of the WCC believes the plan targets the rural West as a disposal site for the rest of the country.

One-fourth of Montana waters damaged

Pollution or flow alteration afflicts slightly more than a quarter of Montana's rivers, streams and lakes. A survey by the Montana Water Quality Bureau concludes that 13,200 of the state's 51,200 river-miles suffer from agricultural pollution, industrial and sewage discharges, or diminished flows. The report, required every two years by the Clean Water Act, covers two and one-half times more river mileage than 1988's survey. The survey cited agricultural practices and flow changes from irrigation and hydroelectric reservoirs as the most frequent polluters. "Point sources" such as industrial and sewage discharges affected 11 percent of the polluted mileage. The survey covered only about three-fourths of the state's lake acreage because Environmental Protection Agency data does not include high-country lakes, reports the *Great Falls Tribune*.

Forest Service recycles

Now you can recycle while you camp, at least in Forest Service campsites near Aspen, Colo. A recycling program launched early this summer in the Roaring Fork Valley provides bins for glass and aluminum next to campground dumpsters. Proceeds from the aluminum, which sells at 19 cents a pound, will go to the campground host program, reports the *Denver Post*. But the bins so far have collected mostly wine and beer bottles.

Glacier's air threatened

Glacier National Park and the northern tier of the Rocky Mountains may be threatened by air pollution from three proposed Canadian power plants, says Rep. Pat Williams, D-Mont. Williams says Canadian developers want to build the coal-fired power plants within 40 miles of Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, which straddles the Montana-Alberta border. Canadian sulfur dioxide pollution standards are six times weaker than U.S. standards and do not protect air quality in national parks. Williams recently asked Secretary of State James Baker and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator William Reilly to negotiate tougher controls for the plants during ongoing pollution talks with Canada, reports the *Great Falls Tribune*. Williams also wants the higher standard set before more Canadian plants are built. Power from two of the plants is slated for export to the United States.

Wolf dens reappear in Washington

State and federal biologists are trying to radio-collar a gray wolf in Washington after the discovery of two dens there in May and June. Despite occasional sightings of individual wolves over the years, these dens are the first indication of breeding wolf packs in the state in almost a century. Gray wolves are listed as endangered in Washington under both federal and state law.

Biologists confirmed the presence of adult wolves and pups by responses to howling surveys conducted after wolves were reportedly sighted at both locations. Throughout the summer, more howls and sightings have been reported sporadically.

"It hit us a lot sooner than we expected, actually finding breeding animals in the state," says Harriet Allen, the Washington Department of Wildlife's (WDW) threatened and endangered species coordinator. "I think everybody's anxious to try to get something going on them." The discovery already has prompted the federal Fish and Wildlife Service to make funds available this year to study Washington wolves, something the agency declined to do last year.

Jon Almack, a WDW biologist cur-



Gray wolf

rently working on a study of the state's grizzly population, is coordinating efforts to photograph and radio-collar the wolves. To avoid scaring them away, Almack has kept his distance, trying to capture the animals on film using infrared-triggered cameras. These cameras have yielded no pictures yet, but if Almack is able to establish a firm loca-

tion for one of the den sites, he will call in Steve Fritz, of Helena, Mont., wolf recovery coordinator for the northern Rocky Mountains. Radio-collaring one animal, says Fritz, will allow biologists to follow the pack.

According to Harriet Allen, the Washington Department of Wildlife and the Fish and Wildlife Service have had informal discussions about the need for a wolf recovery plan for Washington "within the last year." Such plans, she says, could entail writing a separate federal recovery plan for the state or amending the current northern Rocky Mountain plan to include Washington.

The state may also write its own recovery plan. A state plan, admits Allen, would have no authority over federal agencies that manage wolf habitat, but would "establish what [the state] thinks it would take to recover the species."

"This is wolf habitat — it has been historically," says John Earnst, supervisor of the North Cascades National Park. "There's no good reason I'm aware of that it shouldn't continue to maintain wolves."

— Greg Mills

Leadville campus teaches reclamation

A small college in western Colorado has a head start on the nation in teaching reclamation and environmental technology — boom industries these days.

Colorado Mountain College offers a two-year degree in either land reclamation and water quality, or water quality and waste management. Some 30 students are enrolled in the program at the Leadville, Colo., campus. Most are in their late 20s and seeking new careers.

Nick Gerich, a 36-year-old student specializing in water quality/waste management, says he entered the environmental technology program to get out of a "dead-end" construction job.

The mission of the environmental technology program isn't surprising, considering the history of Leadville. Leadville has long been a mining town for gold, silver, lead, and, most recently, molybdenum (HCN, 9/26/88). At the peak of the molybdenum market in the early 1980s, it was home to 3,200 min-

ers. But when the market plummeted, thousands of miners lost their jobs and left town. Since then, the town has sought ways to diversify its economy.

According to Peter Jeschofnig, who heads the department's water quality program, the job market for students with a degree from the ET program has become "fantastic." "We could place two to three times the number of students we have here," he says.

Less than 10 years ago, says Rich Christmas, assistant dean, the college struggled to attract students.

These days, graduates go on to work in water and wastewater treatment facilities, government agencies and companies dealing with hazardous wastes, and as environmental consultants.

The school emphasizes practical skills. Travis Day, a 21-year-old from Meeker, Colo., says he operated an atomic absorption unit, used for identifying metals in soils, during his first year

in the program. He speculates that in a university he wouldn't get to use the \$40,000 device until reaching the graduate level.

Summer internships allow students to work with Amax Mining, in Leadville, and Domtar Gypsum, in Coaldale, on testing and reclamation projects. The Environmental Protection Agency also uses Colorado Mountain College students to work at California Gulch, a superfund site located on the edge of Leadville.

But the program isn't for everyone, Christmas says. "If they're not willing to get dirty and wet, it's not for them. It's not a clean desk job."

For information, write to Colorado Mountain College, Admissions Office, Box 10001PB, Glenwood Springs, CO 81602.

— Mark Harvey

BARBS

What you see is what you get, especially in the West.

While clouds of pollution over Denver and Phoenix may look worse than those over East Coast cities, they really aren't as bad, reports *The New York Times*. Urban pollution in the West, according to a federally sponsored study by the Santa Fe Research Corp. of Minneapolis, contrasts sharply with the clear air of the countryside, while in the East the air pollution is spread more evenly over the entire region.

And they lived happily ever after — in cages.

Spotted owls, which require old-growth forest to survive, may face a future of captive breeding. Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan told AP he is exploring that option as a way to "save" the species without sacrificing timber jobs or cuts in the Pacific Northwest. Environmentalists pointed out that California condors bred just fine in captivity, but had nowhere to go when they grew up.

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REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

The Don Oman story has a twin in the Idaho Sawtooth

From *High Country News* to *The New York Times* to the Idaho media. That is the arc traced by the news story of Sawtooth National Forest district ranger Don Oman. The story — of cows and public range, ranchers and Mr. Oman, the Forest Service and politicians — has taken place in Idaho. But except for a little local notice, it was only after *The New York Times* reported it that the Idaho media did too.

There are reasons. Idaho's news media are thin and generally lazy. Publicity is not in the interest of the ranchers, Forest Service, and involved politicians. No Idaho conservation groups called attention to the situation. The land involved is not known outside the local area.

And the larger context in which HCN publisher Ed Marston encountered Oman — bottom-up ferment and top-down political paralysis in the Forest Service — is still mostly invisible in southern Idaho. But because of the *New York Times*' Aug. 19 issue, that may now change.

But what most strikes me about this story is that it has a twin — same forest, same issue, same jockeying forces.

On the southern division of the Sawtooth Forest, Don Oman took a stand against the go-along-to-get-along style pervasive in public-land range management. A handful of ranchers went over his head to his bosses and to Idaho's senators. His agency chose not

to back him, acceding to the demand to transfer him — until the publicity stalled (for now) the attempt.

Two hundred miles north on the Sawtooth Forest's northern division, that same federal agency is trying to make the largest cut in an Idaho National Forest grazing allotment I've ever heard of. The Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA) has proposed a two-thirds grazing reduction on the Stanley Basin Cattle and Horse Allotment. The eight affected ranchers also are attempting to reverse the decision, and the outcome also is in doubt.

The land Oman patrols is used largely by local ranchers, hunters, fishermen, and firewood gatherers. Its use is growing, but few Idahoans outside the local area ever set foot in it. And fewer non-Idahoans stop or drive by; it is not a vacationland.

The Sawtooth NRA is the most beautiful and most heavily used piece of public land in Idaho. Nearly every camper, hiker, biker, floater and sight-seer who uses it drives through the Stanley Basin Allotment. Many of them camp or recreate within the allotment; it's a place to see salmon enact their spawning and death, 800 miles from the ocean. Many users are non-Idahoans. The allotment belongs to the American public by use as well as law.

Oman's ranchers have a simple goal: get rid of Oman. But the SNRA

ranchers can't get rid of thousands of recreational users, so their goal is compensation — either dollars or other forage — for the cuts proposed. However, there is no substitutable public forage nearby. Also, paying ranchers to reduce overgrazing on public land sets a precedent that would slow future reductions.

The Sawtooth Forest has written an Environmental Impact Statement on the proposal; comment from the users should endorse the cut. But the forest will hear a different message from the politicians. I expect our retiring Senator Jim McClure will slip language through Congress forbidding the reduction without compensation. And that will probably mean no reduction.

The Sawtooth NRA is, by law, to be managed for recreation, fish and wildlife first. The conflict on the Stanley Allotment between those uses and grazing is clear. It is between several thousand

other users and eight ranchers. Yet it has taken the Sawtooth's managers years to work up the courage to propose this cut.

If the pressure from above succeeds in blocking the reduction, we'll have more proof why there aren't more Don Omans looking out for the public range. Oman's case, dramatic as it is, could still end up meaning very little for the land itself. If the Forest Service can't change range priorities on the Sawtooth National Recreation Area, it probably can't do so anywhere.

— Pat Ford

The draft Environmental Impact Statement on the Stanley Basin Cattle and Horse Allotment is available from: SNRA, Star Route, Ketchum, ID 83340. Comments are due by Oct. 31. A conservation-based analysis of the EIS is available from the Boulder-White Clouds Council, 1511 N. 11th St., Boise, ID 83702.

LETTERS

REAPING WHAT THEY SOW

Dear HCN,

In regard to the nuclear waste storage problem created by Rocky Flats, I believe the costs of any project should be borne by those who reap the benefits. Local business boosters speak passionately about the importance of jobs provided by Rocky Flats to the metro Denver economy. However, the costs of plutonium trigger production, i.e. nuclear waste, somehow gets lost in the discussion. Nuclear waste is considered by business and government leaders as something to be shipped somewhere for someone else to worry about. The eagerness of state and local leaders to ship Rocky Flats waste out of metro Denver is a strong indication that the costs of the Rocky Flats project outweigh the benefits. Reaping benefits locally, the shifting costs to areas which did not share in the benefits is unconscionable.

The latest proposal to store Rocky Flats waste comes from Pacific Nuclear which proposes to construct a temporary waste storage facility near the towns of Trinidad and Aguilar in Las Animas County. As an incentive to entice county residents, Pacific Northern additionally proposes \$8 million in community improvements. The jobs provided by the waste storage project and the \$8 million gift are touted as the type of economic development necessary to alleviate Las Animas County's 10 percent unemployment rate.

This proposal by Nuclear Pacific is not desirable economic development. It is a bribe. What will happen to Las Animas County when the project shuts down in five years? Another bust with the stigma of nuclear waste attached. The ques-

tion must be asked: If nuclear waste storage is such a great economic development tool, why is the economically depressed Denver metro area feverishly trying to ship its waste off to other parts of the country?

The logical solution to the Rocky Flats nuclear waste problem is to store it where all of those jobs have been created. Permanently store the waste in the Denver metropolitan area, and perhaps more citizens will become concerned about the type of business activity occurring in their community.

John Norton
Denver, Colorado

THE SORROW OF DOLORES

Dear HCN,

I spent a summer weekend camping below McPhee Reservoir outside of Dolores, Colo. The Dolores River has truly become one of sorrow and sadness in keeping with its name.

No longer a vital, living ecosystem, the Bureau of Reclamation dam and irrigators' unquenchable thirst have reduced its spring flow to a trickle: 20 c.f.s. It's a further sadness that the Division of Wildlife, Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and Trout Unlimited have all signed off on these minuscule flows in the name of science ... an experiment to see how quickly they can kill a living entity. That is lousy science.

Finally, it strikes me as absolutely outrageous that the federal project of this magnitude — \$350 million plus interest — does not take into account the minimal requirements of this fine river. Three hundred fifty million bucks to suck another river/soul dry. Damn.

John B. Benjamin
Redlands Mesa, Colo.

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Garbage express

(Continued from page 1)

and many houses for sale. Jobs are hard to find in this remote place perched on the plains at the southern edge of the Black Hills.

To stabilize their community, Edgemont's leaders have unabashedly courted businesses unable to find friends elsewhere. Uranium milling was a cornerstone industry for many years. As that faded, the town sought a low-level nuclear waste dump, but a statewide ballot initiative blocked that plan. More recently, a scheme to recycle sewage ash brought 300,000 tons of incinerated sludge to Edgemont's back yard. No recycling device materialized, and the project's instigators left, with unknown profits, (HCN, 8/1/88).

The sewage-ash episode proved a national embarrassment, but the community of 1,200 residents apparently hasn't flinched. It gave SDDS an enthusiastic welcome.

While the promise of jobs and business activity had town leaders interested from the outset, SDDS offered an additional enticement: The company promised to pay Edgemont \$1 for each ton of garbage its landfill receives. That could mean an extra \$1 million yearly to a town whose typical annual budget is less than half that.

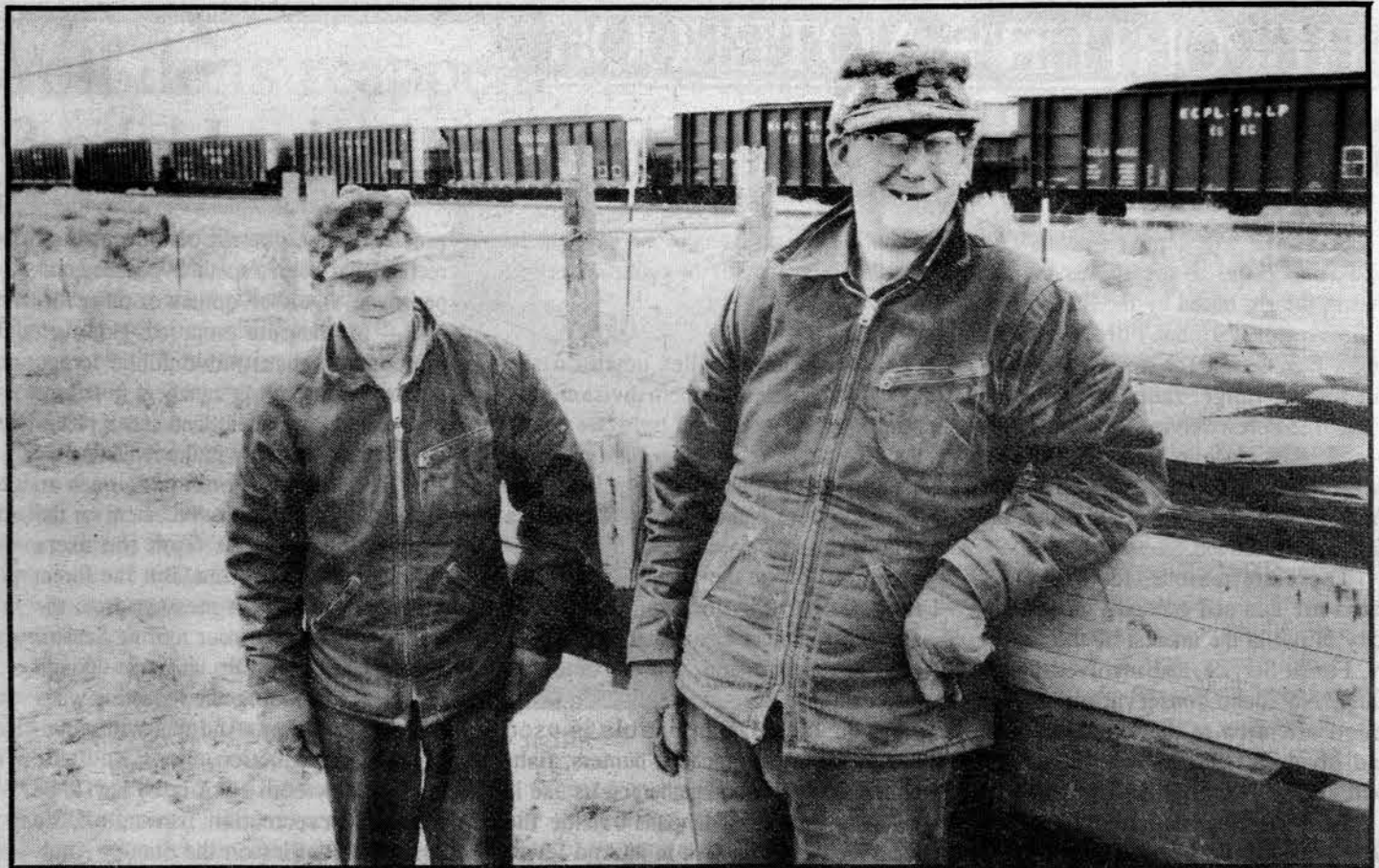
Edgemont offers more than vocal support for the SDDS project. Since 1905 it has been a major connection for the Burlington Northern Railroad. On an average day, 30 coal trains and eight freight trains pass through on gleaming rails. In terms of tonnage, no other stretch of track in North America is as busy.

Heading east from Wyoming's prodigious coal fields, the coal trains feed their cargo to electric generators and then return westward, empty. Those empty freights rumble through the former Rogers ranch. If SDDS has its way, those acres could provide curbside delivery for a significant share of the nation's garbage.

Hunter Swanson and his partners recognized the garbage-hauling potential of the trains, and Burlington Northern recognized the value of SDDS. When Swanson approached the president of Burlington Northern, the railway responded by lending SDDS \$300,000 to develop the project.

Swanson is a Texas native who taught for 10 years at Colorado School of Mines. His connections to Texas remain strong. In addition to the help from Burlington Northern, a Fort Worth, Texas conglomerate, he has secured generous backing from other Fort Worth investors.

In September 1989, despite vigorous opposition, South Dakota granted SDDS



Peter Carrels

Burlington Northern can provide rail service to a dump planned for Robert (left) and Alonzo Rogers' former ranch

a one-year permit to begin developing its project. Environmentalists retaliated by appealing the precedent-setting permit in court and circulating petitions calling for legislative approval of large landfills and incinerators. The permit process is currently handled by a board appointed by the governor. The initiative will be voted on in November.

Deb Rogers, who directs the Technical Information Project (TIP), a Rapid City, S.D., environmental research group, has been a leading critic of SDDS. Rogers is no stranger to the Edgemont area. She helped stop the nuclear waste dump and predicted the sewage-ash debacle long before state officials recognized the danger. Her group initiated the legal action against SDDS and will contest the company's upcoming request for a second permit.

Rogers is worried about the company's integrity and experience. "SDDS is only a shell, only a piece of paper," she warned. "The company is a bunch of Texans and they've never operated a landfill before."

If built, the controversial landfill will be a terraced structure designed to accommodate garbage delivered in tightly compacted three-foot bales, with a clay liner beneath the bales to prevent moisture from escaping into the environment. The design has drawn fire.

The Environmental Research Foundation of Princeton, N.J., argues that all liners will eventually leak. "No liner can keep all liquids out of the ground for all time," the foundation reports.

TIP warns that the clay liner is a "bare-minimum approach, far from state-of-the-art." The group says other landfills use a multiple liner system.

Complicating the debate are disagreements about the suitability of the site's geology. SDDS claims the shale found there is ideal for a landfill. Deb Rogers disagrees. "It is fractured shale, by and large," she said. Rogers worries that leachate can migrate laterally through fractured shale to a nearby stream.

SDDS engineer Rick Baker counters that the landfill's design meets EPA standards. "All we can do," he said, "is apply the best technology and then add safeguards."

Meanwhile, Hunter Swanson and his colleagues are hard at work soliciting garbage for their unbuilt landfill. Though Swanson refused to discuss details or contracts, SDDS has listed 13 states as possible garbage sources, among them Washington, New York, New Jersey and the heavily populated states along the Great Lakes. SDDS reportedly also has sought a garbage contract with Montgomery County, Md., which borders Washington, D.C.

South Dakota's governor, George Mickelson, has repeatedly rejected any notion that his state would become a center for large landfills. When Mickelson recently became chairman of the Western Governors' Association, he immediately announced that protecting the West from an influx of eastern garbage would be a priority of his one-year term. But the association has taken no stand against imports into the region.

In 1988, South Dakota officials considered banning out-of-state garbage but

were confronted with a Supreme Court decision declaring garbage an interstate commodity protected by the commerce clause of the U.S. Constitution. In other words, solid waste cannot be barred from crossing state lines.

That snag is being addressed in legislation now under consideration. Sponsored by Michigan Democratic Senators Don Riegle and Carl Levin, the measure would make it unlawful for any person to transport more than 100 pounds of waste across state lines unless the receiving state grants permission. Enactment of the bill would provide Western states with a weapon to restrict garbage.

Environmentalists say that Governor Mickelson's speeches against outside garbage contrast with his pro-SDDS and anti-environment appointments to regulatory boards. Mickelson is seeking a second term and calls himself an environmentalist.

The garbage initiative figures to be a key political battle. Passage of the initiative will shift responsibility from appointed officials to elected lawmakers. It also offers dump opponents a contingency tactic. By circulating petitions, legislative approval of any large landfill could be referred to a public vote.

But as important as the initiative election is, it is unlikely to resolve the issue. The campaign marks the first real public discussion about garbage policy in the state. And that is vital, because South Dakota and other Western states are now at a crossroads. They must begin to decide what role they will play in a trend to use the rural West as the nation's dumping ground.

Peter Carrels is a free-lance writer in Aberdeen, South Dakota.

Disneyland's toxics end up in Wyoming

by Jill Morrison

LOS ANGELES, Calif. — Over a two-year period, 14,000 gallons of paint thinners and cleaners that kept the happiest place on earth bright and shiny were illegally disposed of in Wyoming. The idea of toxic waste lurking behind Mickey Mouse seems almost un-American, but the Environmental Protection Agency's announce-

ment of a record \$950,000 fine against Disneyland for the illegal shipments shattered the wholesome image of the Magic Kingdom. Disneyland and other California companies sent a total of 1,200 tons of hazardous waste to the Wyoming site.

"It was a very hard spanking for the nature of the indiscretion," Disney's vice president for environmental policy, Kym Murphy, said. Murphy

admits that Disney did break the law, but says, "None of us believed for one second that we had done anything wrong. But when we reviewed the data it became obvious that we goofed."

Disney goofed by incorrectly assuming the company trucking their wastes was disposing of them legally. But it violated the Resource Conservation Recovery Act, which makes com-

panies accountable for their hazardous waste "from the cradle to the grave."

The California waste went to the Mountaineer Refining and Equipment Co. outside of LaBarge, Wyo. The town sits on an open plain about 100 miles south of the majestic Grand Tetons, over the largest natural deposits of crude oil in the United States. Home to about 500 residents, LaBarge houses a transient population that rises and falls with the boom-and-

(Continued on page 10)



Waste kings

(Continued from page 1)

ally leave an area if a hazardous-waste facility moves in," said Suellen Mele, a board member of the Western Washington Toxics Coalition in Seattle.

"Polluting this food-producing region with even one hazardous-waste disposal site could condemn eastern Washington's future to no other use," said Patrick Zimmerman, an atmospheric scientist with the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colo. Zimmerman, who grew up on a farm in eastern Washington, says toxic emissions from an incinerator could permanently damage crop production for more than 100 miles downwind of the facility. With less than 10 percent of the earth's surface suitable for crop production, "our food supply is more vulnerable than we would like to believe," Zimmerman said.

The farmers have been put in the unfamiliar position of being environmental activists in a fight that often pits them against politicians and small businessmen in their communities.

"These tiny towns are so depressed — anything that comes along, they'll take," said Greg Beckley, 41, who with his family grows wheat on 9,000 acres near Benge, a small town near Lind. Beckley is a leader in the Citizens Hazardous Waste Coalition, a grassroots group formed last year to oppose incineration in the region and encourage reduction of toxic wastes.

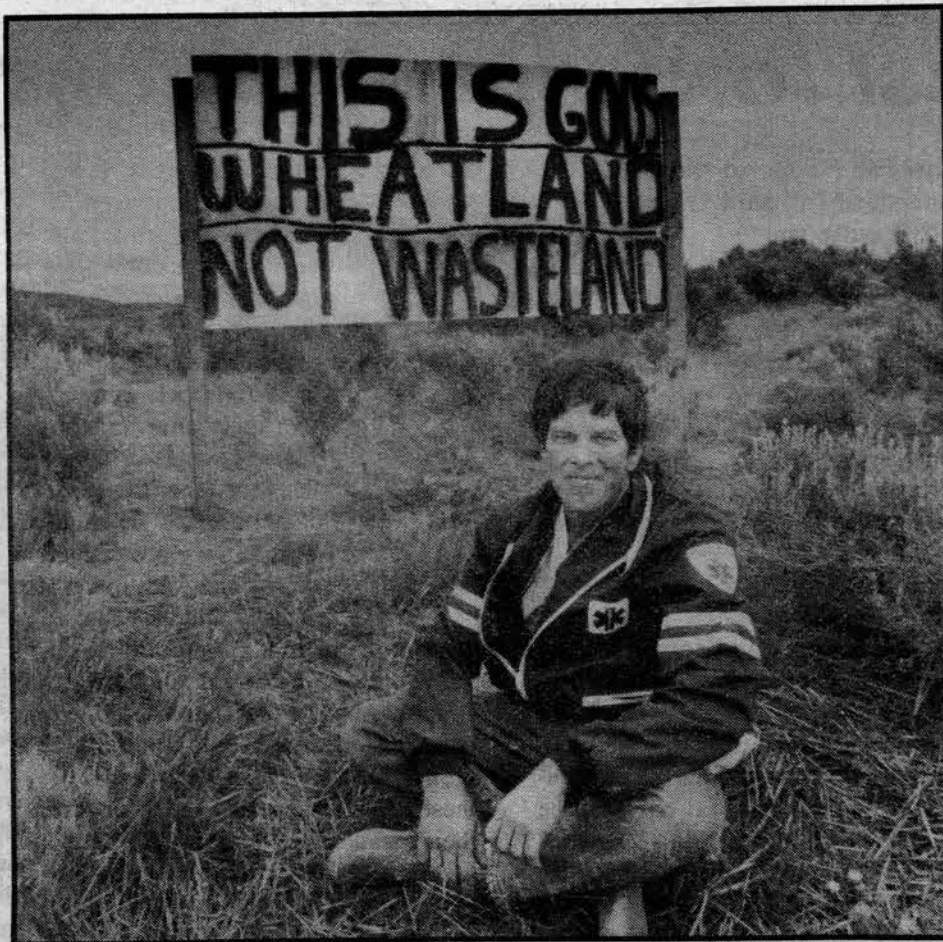
ECOS, a partnership of Burlington Northern and Seattle millionaire David Sabey, has promised a state-of-the-art facility that won't harm agricultural products. The company has offered an array of incentives to its "partner community," including college scholarships for high school students and hiring preference for local people.

The proposed facility would burn about 36,000 tons of hazardous wastes each year, including oil, solvents, paints, wood preservatives and pesticides. It would also have an adjacent landfill capable of burying 80,000 tons a year of wastes and 25,000 tons of incinerator ash on a 640-acre site. The complex will cost \$40 million to \$50 million and produce 60 permanent jobs, said ECOS spokeswoman Eileen DeArmon.

Rabanco, a private Seattle company that has dominated that city's garbage business for years, is ECOS's competitor. Rabanco is proposing a similar toxic waste incinerator and landfill near Vantage, in Grant County, on a sagebrush-dotted patch of land about a half-mile from the Columbia River. Like the ECOS project, it has encountered significant opposition from area farmers and ranchers, who at a hearing in Royal City in April 1988 threw cucumbers at regulators from the Washington State Department of Ecology.

"That was a first for me. They were really angry," said the Department of Ecology's Tim Nord.

Hazardous-waste disposal projects have proliferated dramatically in the past few years. Factors contributing to this growth include a federal edict to the states to develop "capacity assurance" plans for disposing of their hazardous wastes or face losing Superfund cleanup funds. Every state is not required to have a hazardous waste treatment center. But because Washington produces 85 percent of the approximately 260,000 tons of toxic wastes generated each year in a four-state region that includes Oregon, Alaska and Idaho, there is considerable pressure on the state to open a facility within its own borders.



Lind wheat farmer Terry Fode with his sign

Kit King

In addition to being wooed for toxic waste facilities, the small towns east of the Cascades are increasingly seen as places to solve the solid-waste crises experienced by many urban areas in the Northwest.

Running out of space at their established landfills and faced with Superfund problems from dubious past disposal practices, cities now face highly controversial decisions. They must either establish new landfills nearby or find alternative solutions, including garbage-burning incinerators or regional "mega-landfills."

Waste companies are actively competing for the lucrative and growing business of long-haul garbage disposal in the Pacific Northwest. Starting next year, Rabanco will haul 377,000 tons a year of raw garbage from Snohomish County more than 300 miles to its new regional landfill near Roosevelt. Rabanco also is negotiating with Spokane for a 30-year contract to haul ash via Burlington Northern rail lines from the city's new garbage incinerator to a special ash-disposal cell at the Roosevelt site starting in late 1991.

The ECOS project has proved to be the most controversial in the region. When ECOS first came to eastern Washington in 1987, the company promised that it would not locate where a town didn't want it, despite the state law preempting local authority over the project. At first, more than a dozen small towns showed interest, formed advisory committees and held meetings to discuss the nature of the project and the benefits that the company could provide. An ECOS videotape appealed to the communities' can-do spirit, referring often to farm chemicals as part of the problem and inviting the communities to be part of the solution.

But soon doubts crept into the meetings — fear of chemical emissions, about priorities that might place profits over protection, frustration over a lack of details from the company about the technology to be used and the nature of the wastes. There was also skepticism about the government's ability to protect the health of people living nearby.

Many of the people evaluating the

risks and benefits of the ECOS project had lived downwind from the Hanford Nuclear Reservation for decades. In 1986, they learned from regional newspapers that they were secretly exposed to radiation from Hanford in the course of nuclear weapons production during the Cold War. On July 12, the U.S. Department of Energy admitted for the first time that the emissions were bad enough to cause cancer in people who were exposed as children to the heaviest releases.

The Hanford revelations have undermined these citizens' trust, they said repeatedly at ECOS public forums. "We've already been Hanford downwinders for almost 50 years. We don't want to be downwinders again," said Carl Beckley, 71, Greg Beckley's father, who has worked 57 harvests in the Benge area.

After the town of Ritzville turned down the ECOS proposal in January

1989, ECOS closed its office there and moved to Lind, 15 miles south. A majority in Lind voted to continue talks with ECOS. But when community opinion shifted and Lind citizens voted 285-231 against the project in August 1989, ECOS officials stayed put. The company bought a 19,000-acre ranch nearby and filed a notice of intent with the state to pursue a license. This summer it conducted detailed site studies.

Although the farmers' coalition was unsuccessful in obtaining a moratorium against the proposed incinerators, it did get the Legislature to study the possible risks to agriculture before allowing a major facility in an agricultural area.

Mike Jernegan, an analytical chemist with the Union Carbide Co. in Moses Lake, said he was alarmed to discover that incinerators disperse dioxins, heavy metals and other hazardous materials into the atmosphere. "I didn't call myself an environmentalist before, but I do now," Jernegan said.

To fight the waste disposal and incineration projects, the farm coalition has enlisted the help of nationally prominent activists, including Hugh Kaufman, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency official who blew the whistle on Superfund scandals in the Reagan era, and Paul Connett, a chemistry professor at St. Lawrence University in New York.

Kaufman has advised eastern Washington towns to "just say no" to ECOS and Rabanco because incinerators are too risky in farm areas and because the communities are vulnerable. "The Northwest is the last to fall into place in terms of the issues and is still easily conned," Kaufman said.

Connett also has warned people in the region not to be too eager to accept the long list of proposed waste-disposal projects. "National companies will know this is a dumping ground, and they will move trash and hazardous waste over here," Connett said. "It is the wrong kind of signal to give that eastern Washington is a sacrificial area."

Karen Dorn Steele is a reporter for the *Spokane Spokesman-Review*.

Dumps Checklist

The proposed and established projects in Washington and Oregon include:

1. The ECOS toxic waste incinerator project southwest of Lind.
2. The competing Rabanco proposal for a landfill and incinerator near Vantage.
3. A major new regional garbage landfill near Roosevelt in south-central Washington, owned by Seattle's Rabanco Regional Landfill Co., a subsidiary of Rabanco. The 385-acre landfill, which has a 40-million-ton capacity, will open this fall.
4. A competing mega-landfill at Arlington, Ore., across the Columbia River from the Rabanco site. It is owned by Oregon Waste Systems Inc., a subsidiary of Waste Management Inc., the nation's largest garbage handler. The landfill already is accepting garbage from Portland and is negotiating now for a contract to haul Seattle's trash.
5. A regional landfill near Boardman, Ore., under development by the Finley Buttes Landfill Co., a subsidiary of Tidewater Barge Lines of Vancouver, Wash. The company is searching for garbage contracts.
6. A proposed regional landfill near Ritzville in Adams County that would accept garbage from Washington, Oregon and Idaho. Officials of Washington Waste Systems Inc. of Redmond, another Waste Management subsidiary, have signed a letter of intent with the Adams County Commission and are searching for a site south of Ritzville near Highway 395.
7. A waste-to-energy garbage incinerator in Spokane that represents the first toehold in the West for Wheelabrator Environmental Systems, a company that has built similar trash burners on the East Coast and hopes to build another one in Pierce County near Tacoma. Waste Management Inc. owns 55 percent of Wheelabrator.



— K.D.S.

10-High Country News — September 10, 1990

Indians resist toxic incinerators

by George Hardeen

DILKON, Ariz. — Native Americans are discovering that their reservations make perfect sites for the hazardous waste industry.

All the right elements are here: high unemployment, low educational levels and a general unawareness of the potential harmful health effects from incinerator emissions and ash disposal on the land.

Indian reservations also are attractive to the waste industry because of inapplicable or unenforceable state regulations and the industry's freedom to contract directly with tribal governments. In exchange for these advantages, the industry is offering jobs and special "placement" payments to their tribal hosts.

"The movement of hazardous and municipal waste onto Indian lands is probably one of the most important issues going on in the U.S.," said Pat Costner, research director for Greenpeace USA's Toxic Campaign. "We're already seeing moves in Congress to stop the movement of hazardous waste to Third World countries. But here we're doing the same thing within our own borders."

But hazardous-waste representatives resent being labeled as the tricksters and manipulators they're so frequently portrayed as by their opponents, like Greenpeace, here in the Southwest.

They say a huge environmental problem is waiting to be solved. Not only are they the ones who can do it, they say, but they can do it cleanly.

The small Kaibab-Paiute Tribe of northern Arizona, 60 miles north of the Grand Canyon, is now considering allowing a hazardous waste incinerator to be built on its land. Waste-Tech Services of Golden, Colo., says that its facility will be 99.99 percent efficient, leaving nothing behind but a harmless ash that will be buried.

The company, a subsidiary of Amoco Oil, is currently negotiating with 15 tribes around the country for the siting of incinerators. Waste-Tech's Roberta Andersen said Indian people are fully capable of understanding the business aspects of building an incinerator on their land.

"Anybody who believes that you can sneak in and put something over on some gullible Indians knowing that you're faced with a ponderous federal law [the Resources Conservation and Recovery Act] is pulling somebody's leg," Anderson said. "They're not dealing with the facts."

But that's just what Navajos in Dilkon, Ariz., accused Waste-Tech of attempting to do two years ago, when the company tried to place one of its \$40-million hazardous-waste incinerators in that rural community, set among the red buttes and mesas of northern Arizona.

A handful of the small community's educated people quickly organized their neighbors, thwarted attempts by their local tribal council representative to sneak approval through the local chapterhouse, and kicked Waste-Tech off the reservation before it gained a foothold.

"You can't interpret hazardous

waste into Navajo so the elderly can understand it," said George Joe, a Dilkon native and member of the grassroots environmental group, called CARE. "They are only told that it will bring jobs for their children and grandchildren."

Anderson says toxic wastes are accumulating at the rate of a million tons a minute across the country, and that conscientious companies like hers are part of the environmental solution, not the problem. "If [wastes] continue to accumulate, the environmental cost will be much higher and much more severe," she said. "You would be promoting the continuation of illegal practices such as midnight dumping." She added that the incinerators proposed for both the Navajo and the Kaibab-Paiute would not burn radioactive, medical or military wastes.

Dilkon became the site of the first Native American toxic-waste conference this July. The conference, called "Protecting Mother Earth: The Toxic Threat to Indian Lands," was sponsored by CARE and Greenpeace USA. It

attracted grassroots organizers, Indian religious leaders and officials from 23 tribes from across the country. The underlying message to the 200 participants was that they, too, with a few resources and information, can protect their communities from unwanted toxic dumpers if they choose.

"Dilkon is an example of a very proud community that won, that was actually able to stand up against the multi-million-dollar toxic-waste companies that lied to them," said Bradley Angel, a Greenpeace Southwest coordinator. "The people around here aren't rich, but they knew that to let these companies in would be to sacrifice their traditions and their land forever."

Native participants at the conference stressed the importance of remembering their native teachings and religious beliefs about stewardship of the land as a guide for environmental protection. "In the beginning, the Creator put us here to be landlords," said Frank Billie, a spiritual leader from the Independent Seminole Nation in Florida. "We were put here to protect the earth, not destroy it."

Along with reports of various corporations that wanted new access to



Indian land came stories of the disastrous environmental legacies left behind by past corporate operations. James Ransom, a member of New York's St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Council and the tribe's environmental director, told of the PCB poisoning by General Motors of the St. Lawrence River flowing through his reservation, which straddles the U.S.-Canadian border.

In 1983, the area on the 28,000-acre reservation was declared a Superfund site. The government is now proposing a \$138-million cleanup project, the largest PCB cleanup in Superfund history for a private company, Ransom said. In this case, the Mohawks were able to set their own tough PCB cleanup standards for reservation soil, sediment, water and air that were later recognized and accepted by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Other tribes are not so lucky. Most, in fact, struggle for information about environmental hazards on their land. Isolated locations, shortages of trained technicians and an inability to get and understand technical information make them a vulnerable target.

George Hardeen covers Navajo news from his home in Tuba City, Arizona.

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Disneyland's cooperation won it a penalty reduction from \$950,000 to \$550,000

Disneyland

(Continued from page 8)

bust cycles of the oil and gas industry. Twenty years ago Don Thayer left the Southern California traffic jams and moved to LaBarge. He built his home and business on 80 acres just outside of town. Locals jokingly called him "the mad scientist."

Thayer says small refineries like his were hurt when a slump hit the industry, so he turned to recycling waste oil. He soon began tapping the huge reserves of waste oil in California, and that eventually brought the EPA to his door.

Thayer claims he didn't realize he was receiving hazardous waste. "I was surprised when the EPA came in. I thought I'd been had," he explained. "I thought we could try to get into the industry of California, but we got caught. I guess they gave us a sucker punch. If I had to do it over again, I probably wouldn't trust a Californian."

EPA descended on Thayer's place after a tip from the California Highway Patrol about a trucking company called Ken's Oil, which was

shipping wastes to LaBarge. EPA found what they call a "sham recycling" operation and ordered Thayer to stop burning the wastes. The agency decided the hazardous wastes were not capable of producing enough energy to justify the operation, and concluded that they were being burned mainly for disposal.

John Works, an RCRA enforcement officer for EPA who inspected the facility, believes there is groundwater contamination at the site. "The unlined pond where Thayer stored the wastes in his refining process is only about 300 to 400 yards from a creek, and water is only 15 feet below the surface," he said. EPA, which is still conducting tests, is concerned about dioxins that may have been released when the wastes were burned. The compound, tetra-chloro-di-benzo-dioxin or 1, 2, 3, 4 TCDD, is extremely toxic.

Pam Chapman, the former refinery operator, remembers many breakdowns at the plant after it started burning the "California crude." "When we ran this stuff through the system it kept breaking down, so we set up the California plant," she recalls. This consisted of a tank where the wastes were first stored,

a small aluminum shed where they were heated for distillation, and an unlined pond where residue was dumped. Now she is angry and scared.

"I was coming home with headaches and I was irritable, but I was never told I was working with hazardous waste," she said. "Now I worry about getting cancer or something."

Chapman quit after the EPA arrived and she learned that hazardous waste was shipped to the site. Although Thayer claims he didn't know he was receiving hazardous waste, Chapman believes he knew. "It was plumb greed and he had no concern for his employees," she said.

Greed may be one reason the waste got to Wyoming in the first place. California industries that export hazardous waste pay a fee that is roughly half the fee charged to dispose of waste in-state. The companies that shipped waste to LaBarge got a bargain. They paid \$118 to dispose of 55 gallons at the LaBarge facility, according to EPA. The same amount costs \$750 to dispose of in California.

Jill Morrison is a free-lance journalist in Los Angeles.

The selling of Adams County, Washington

by Natasha Jernegan

Washington state is bisected by the Cascade Range, the so-called Cascade Curtain. The coastal western side, which includes Seattle and the state capital of Olympia, is home to most of the people and industry. It projects an image that is urban, upscale, professional and environmentally conscientious. One result of its rapid growth and industrialization has been the need to dispose of large quantities of hazardous and solid waste produced in the area.

Eastern Washington presents an entirely different picture. Larger than its western counterpart, it is a semi-arid grassland, partially irrigated with water from the Columbia River. Its sparse population is scattered in small farming

COMMENTARY

communities and a few larger cities like Spokane. To the south is the Hanford Nuclear Reservation. Farming is the primary industry. Potatoes, onions, hay and fruit trees thrive in the irrigated areas; farther to the east, vast tracts of wheat subsist on natural rainfall.

Through Washington's century of statehood, the two sides have been at odds. As early as 1908, a move was afoot to establish a new state called Lincoln, which would have included parts of eastern Washington, eastern Oregon and northern Idaho — areas that even at that time felt politically disadvantaged.

Very little has changed. As environmental awareness has increased, as old landfills contaminate aquifers, as populations expand and pressures to find "out of sight, out of mind" solutions escalate, eastern Washington repeatedly finds itself being called upon to provide a regional solution to a growing waste-disposal problem.

At first glance it would appear that urban folks choose to dump their wastes on rural areas simply because it's convenient and politically expedient. But the thinly veiled social engineering that permeates decision-making does not originate with the citizens. Its source is the waste management industry, committed to maximizing profits with no regard for moral or ethical considerations.

The choice of a prospective dump site is anything but arbitrary. In 1984, the California Waste Management Board paid a Los Angeles consulting firm, Cerrell Associates, half a million dollars to define the types of communities least likely to object to dumps. This report, titled "Political Difficulties Facing Waste-to-Energy-Conversion Plant Siting," reads like a how-to manual. It describes in elaborate detail the characteristics to look for in choosing a "host community."

The report provides a "personality profile" of people who would be "least likely to oppose facility sitings." They live in the rural West and South, are older, less educated (no college), blue-collar and lower-income earners, are politically and economically conservative, and lack a history of activism. This description fits a typical eastern Washington community to a T. Having identified the type of community to target, the Cerrell Report goes on to describe a step-by-step process for siting the dump.

In 1986, a dozen communities in

eastern Washington were identified as having these characteristics, and were approached by a company called ECOS, newly formed in the hopes of siting a commercial hazardous waste landfill and incinerator. The approach used by ECOS mirrored the Cerrell Report format, but the company denies using it.

People with a history of involvement in public issues were identified, as were potential activists fitting a specific profile. Physical scientists, Californians and housewives were particularly suspect.

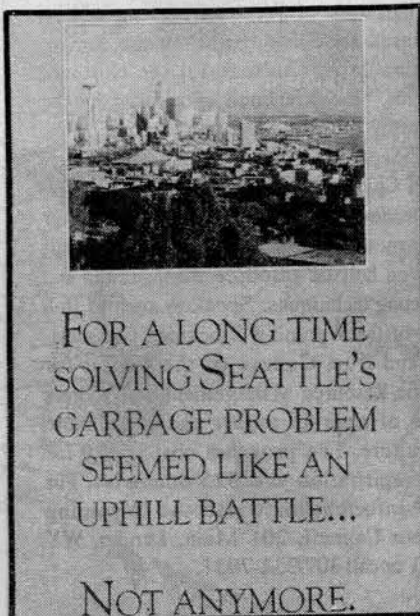
At a retreat held in advance, community leaders who could be counted on to support the project were also identified, and a number of them were installed on the local Citizens Advisory Committee. They represented a cross-section of the community: city and county government, education, business, the religious community, the medical establishment, and the press. As recommended in the Cerrell Report, ECOS focused its "education" on the members of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and used them to disseminate the information to the rest of the community. As grassroots opposition to the proposed dump grew, a few of its leaders were invited to join the CAC as a minority voice. Attempting to function in this controlled setting diminished their effectiveness, but those who refused to join were labeled "radical," "emotional" and "unreasonable."

The people targeted to receive the dump were not the only ones being manipulated; responsible, ethical people had to be convinced that it was OK to dump their garbage in someone else's back yard. In Seattle, known nationwide for its environmental consciousness, this task fell to Waste Management, the nation's largest waste hauler, which had for several years been working to "establish a beachhead" in the Pacific Northwest.

Like many urban areas, Seattle was running out of space to dump its garbage. Having contaminated the groundwater with its last two dumps, the city considered burning trash in an incinerator, but Seattle's environmental community rallied to defeat the proposal, and then turned its attention to aggressive recycling as a way to reduce the waste stream. Unable to agree with the county on a price for use of the existing landfill and afraid of future liability, the city looked to other options. Waste Management's new dump in eastern Oregon presented one such option, the so-called "long-haul alternative."

The pitch was simple. Seattle's garbage, buried locally, threatened health and environment once it leached into the soil. A dump located in an arid area would produce less leachate, therefore less risk. Seattle had no arid areas, but that was not a problem for Waste Management. They already had a mega-dump under construction in eastern Oregon, and offered to build a new dump for Seattle's garbage in the heart of eastern Washington. Articles began to appear in the Seattle papers, celebrating the fact that the garbage that posed such a threat to the good citizens of Seattle could be transported guilt-free over the Cascade mountains, where it would be magically transformed from a toxic, unwanted substance to "economic development." In fact, Seattle would be doing eastern Washington a favor, because there were people out there who wanted their garbage.

Well, people are pretty much the same wherever you go, and rare indeed is the community that wants tons of someone else's garbage buried in its back yard. But Waste Management lost no time in producing representatives of just such a community — Arlington, Ore., the site of an exist-



Waste Management brochure

ing Waste Management hazardous waste dump as well as an under-construction 2,000-acre solid waste dump. As a "host community," Arlington receives a per-ton tipping fee, and over the years has become addicted to the toxics revenues it receives.

"Going for the Garbage" ... "Residents Like Site," trumpeted the headlines of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, announcing that Waste Management had been selected as Seattle's garbage hauler. Scarcely mentioned in the article was that although the residents who "liked the site" were in Oregon, the garbage would actually go to Adams County, Wash., for the bulk of the 30-year contract.

No one had bothered to ask the citizens of Adams County for their opinion. In denying several demands for a vote, Adams County Commissioner Dean Judd said he thought Waste Management should go out first and educate the public. Another commissioner suggested that a citizens advisory committee might be appropriate. Anything to avoid a vote of the people.

The citizens of Seattle knew nothing about this. The promotional materials targeted for the Seattle area mentioned only that Arlington citizens supported the existing landfill, and that Waste Management planned to build "another equally safe landfill in Adams County, eastern Washington." Waste Management arranged carefully orchestrated tours of the as-yet empty dump at Arlington. Press people, politicians and environmentalists were escorted through the site. Although it had yet to hold a single sack of garbage, Seattle Mayor Charles Royer stated, "This is probably the best landfill in the nation." It was also the one that offered Seattle protection from future liability for the inevitable contamination it would cause.

Mike Ferro, chairman of the solid waste committee of the Sierra Club's Cascade chapter, was among the environmentalists who visited the site. After his visit, he wrote to the Seattle City Council on behalf of the Sierra Club, praising the operation's "outstanding character," the "environmental credentials of project staff," the "fair assignment of risks" and the "project's high quality." He strongly urged support of Waste Management's selection as the disposal company for Seattle's waste. He made no mention of Waste Management's extensive history of criminal convictions and environmental violations, nor did he mention that the Sierra Club itself has been the recipient of grant monies from Waste Management's environmental fund.

The ink was hardly dry on the letter before it was on its way to eastern Wash-

ington, addressed to Waste Management's project manager and vice president of Washington operations, Greg Forge, a Seattle-area attorney and former journalist. Personable, bright and well versed in corporate doublespeak, Forge effectively used the letter and Seattle's endorsement of Waste Management to reassure local decision makers that it was prudent to allow Waste Management to bury 300,000 tons of garbage a year for 30 years in the soil and fractured basalt that overlies Adams County's only drinking-water supply.

Unlike the average citizen, Washington state's Seattle-based environmental community was aware of the situation in eastern Washington, yet unwilling to take a stand against the very option that had released Seattle from the need to build a trash burner. Committed to a goal of 60 percent recycling, several environmental leaders took jobs with the Seattle Solid Waste Utility and developed excellent recycling programs. Waste Management distributed a flyer that talked about the pride they took in having "helped Seattle become one of America's top recycling cities." The Cerrell Report had recommended that the best way to distract environmentally concerned citizens from opposing a dump site was to put them in charge of recycling.

Siting new dumps is still a difficult and lengthy process because citizens insist on getting involved. But Washington state has taken several steps to make siting easier.

A law passed in 1985 gave the Washington State Department of Ecology sole authority in the siting of hazardous-waste facilities, preempting all rights from citizens and local government. The state is not held liable for any pollution resulting from permits they issue. Presently Washington state has no hazardous-waste siting criteria.

Having discovered this, Adams County citizens attempted to use the right of local initiative to bring some of these issues to a vote and make some changes. They were appalled to discover that Washington state has two classes of citizens: those who live in so-called charter counties (with an initiative process), and those who do not. Not one charter county is located in eastern Washington.

To give the appearance of democracy, numerous state and local processes have been developed to channel input through hearings, workshops, advisory boards and committees. Their purpose is to provide a pressure-relief valve for local frustration and to give the impression that environmentalists and people in the affected areas are participating.

But in order for there to be democracy, there have to be options rather than predetermined outcomes. These hearings and workshops are no different from the Citizens Advisory Committee in the Cerrell Report. Their purpose is not to determine whether or not a facility should be built at all; they exist to gauge the amount of pollution the community will tolerate.

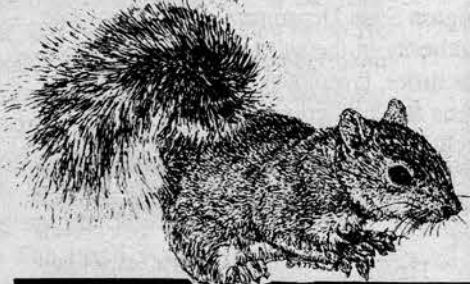
The citizens of Adams County persevere, armed only with their First Amendment guarantee of free speech that allows them to tell the truth, amidst all the lying. The sides of the highway that wind through the rolling wheatfields are dotted with toilets, placed there to symbolize the tragedy that has befallen this area. A sign reads WELCOME TO ADAMS COUNTY. DUMPS 'R' US.

Natasha Jernegan has helped lead local opposition to a regional landfill and toxic-waste incinerator proposed near her community of Ritzville, Washington.

BULLETIN BOARD

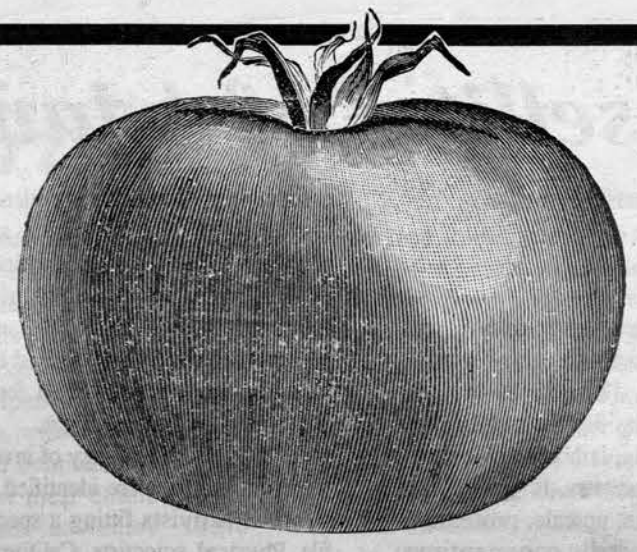


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FINDING FLORA
Colorado's Eastern Slope hosts a variety of plants, ranging from Southwestern cacti to Siberian annuals. Now William A. Weber's new guide, *Colorado Flora: Eastern Slope*, helps the botanist identify these and over 2,000 other plants. A companion guide to *Colorado Flora: Western Slope*, this new book discusses plant geography as well as special features of the mountains, basins and plains.
University Press of Colorado, P.O. Box 849, Niwot, CO 80544. Cloth: \$32.50. Paper: \$19.95. 396 pages. Illustrated with sketches and color photographs.



BACK HOME ON THE RANGE
The future of Western grazing will be discussed at "Back Home on the Range: Sustainable Agriculture for the Northern Rockies," a conference sponsored by the Wyoming Outdoor Council in Sheridan, Wyo., Sept. 29. Charles Wilkinson, University of Colorado law professor and authority on Western natural resource law, will deliver the keynote address. Panel discussions will focus on holistic resource management and marketing techniques. Speakers such as Bob Budd of the Wyoming Stockman's Association and Kurt Gadzia of the Center for Holistic Resource Management will address topics of riparian repair and sustainable agriculture. The program cost is \$20 for early registration and \$25 otherwise. For more information write the Wyoming Outdoor Council, 201 Main, Lander, WY 82520, or call 307/332-7031.

YOU CAN FIX IT
The author of *The Mountain Bike Repair Handbook* says his book is different from all the others because it's designed only for the mountain biker, and it is written for the mechanically inept. Unfortunately for the mountain biker, the many different assemblages of derailleurs, index shifters, brakes, bottom brackets and the like make it impossible to put everything you need to know between two covers. That has not stopped Dennis Coello from trying his hand, although he readily admits that this guide will probably need companions on your bookshelf. He begins by introducing the essential tools needed, then guides readers through all parts of bicycle anatomy that need maintenance and repair. But even for something seemingly simple as determining the proper length of a chain, Coello advises "consult your owner's manual." The handbook is full of useful photos and exploded-out diagrams of a bike's more intricate components.
Lyons and Burford Publishers, 31 W. 21st St., New York, NY 10010. 150 pp., illustrated with photographs and diagrams. \$12.95 paper.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT
For those interested in sustainable living practices for arid communities, Central Rocky Mountain Permaculture offers a 12-day intensive permaculture design course at Jerome's Organic Garden in Basalt, Colo., from Oct. 19-30. The objective of permaculture design is to produce food in an efficient and environmentally sound manner. Instructors are Michael Pilarski, founder of Friends of the Trees Society, and a teacher of permaculture since 1981; Jerome Ostentowski, a permaculture consultant and high-altitude mountain gardener; and Dan Howell, a desert homesteader. Central Rocky Mountain Permaculture can be reached at Box 631, Basalt, CO 81621 (303/927-4158).

GREAT LAKES, GREAT LEGACY
Lake Erie is no longer dying and the Cuyahoga River no longer catches fire. But according to this book — one hesitates to damn it by calling it a study — the Great Lakes are still in great trouble. That trouble has called forth this readable but still scholarly account of the Great Lakes basin, which is home to 35 million North Americans and contains 20 percent of the world's fresh surface water. The basin also contains only one-third of the wetlands it had before the bulldozing and filling started, and many of its nearly 80,000 lakes are dying from the effects of acid rain. But the reason for a review here is not to discuss the Great Lakes but rather to suggest that the regions of the West could profit from the approach authors Theodora Colborn, Alex Davidson, Sharon Green, Tony Hodge, Ian Jackson and Richard Liroff have taken in this joint publication of The Conservation Foundation of Washington, D.C., and the Institute for Research on Public Policy of Ottawa, Ontario. The book achieves an overview and scholarly tone without hiding its passion or concern, and that passion and concern make the book readable. A similar overview of the West would be most welcome. *Great Lakes, Great Legacy?* is available for \$20 plus \$2 postage from The Conservation Foundation, PO Box 4866, Hampden Post Office, Baltimore, MD 21211 (301/338-6951).

WILDERNESS EDUCATION AWARD
Do you know someone who has made a significant contribution to the field of wilderness education? If so, you may wish to offer nominations for the second annual National Wilderness Education Award, presented by the Izaak Walton League of America and the U.S. Forest Service. The award recognizes creativity in wilderness education materials and long-term excellence in education programs. The deadline for nominations is Oct. 15. For more information write National Wilderness Education Award, c/o George Asmus, Recreation Staff, USDA Forest Service, Box 96090, Washington, DC 20090-6090, or call 202/447-2196.

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JOB SEARCH. OBJECTIVE: Searching for employment in western environmental organization. **EDUCATION:** Master of Arts degree, Boston University, 1990. **CONCENTRATION:** Environmental Policy Analysis. **INTERESTS:** National forests, national parks, public lands, wildlife refuges and related policies. Please call James Knight at 617/489-0694 (home) or 617/570-6683 (work, Mon.—Wed.). (2x16p)

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TO PROTECT MOTHER EARTH

"You cannot talk to these people. They look at the land, and all they see is dollars and cents. They don't look at human values," says Carrie Dann, describing the United States government. Dann and her sister, Mary, are the focus of *To Protect Mother Earth*, an hour-long film examining the plight of the Western Shoshones, who are embroiled in a legal fight over land the Dannels' people have inhabited for untold generations. The government, which wants the land for mining, livestock grazing and nuclear testing, says the Shoshones are trespassers on the 24 million acres to which the 1863 Treaty of Ruby Valley gave them sovereignty. The Shoshones' rights were "extinguished," the Supreme Court ruled, when in 1972 the Department of the Interior acted as the Shoshones' trustee and sold itself the land for \$1.05 an acre — 1862 prices. But the Shoshones never accepted the sale or the money. The land, Mother Earth, is what matters for the some 10,000 Western Shoshones still living traditionally, hunting, gathering and ranching in and around the Ruby Mountains of Nevada. This film's emotional strength lies in its stark contrasting of the combatants in this modern Western, the traditional Western Shoshones and the bureaucrats of Washington. It does this by sitting in where these battles are fought: the negotiating table, the Supreme Court and the land itself, where the Dannels' nephew is arrested for subsistence hunting out of season. Director Joel L. Freedman lets you watch these two forces in action, and it hurts to see the "gobblygook," as the Dannels' lawyer calls the bureaucratic jargon, win out. The film, narrated by Robert Redford, is Freedman's second on the Western Shoshones' plight. The film is being shown on a limited basis around the country and is not yet available in video stores. It is available for schools, public libraries and groups from Cinnamon Productions, 225 Lafayette St., Suite 1104, New York, NY 10012.

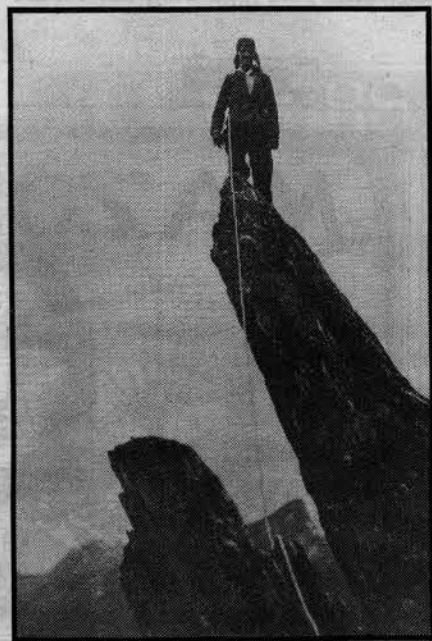
—Ken Wright

A UTAH MANIFESTO

The intrinsic value of species that are not hunted is the subject of *A Utah Wildlife Manifesto: A Report and Recommendations for Nonconsumptive Wildlife Management*. Prepared by environmentalists and some federal land managers, and written by Dick Carter of the Utah Wilderness Association, the report examines changing attitudes about wildlife as more and more people choose to observe and not shoot. The report cites a 1985 U.S. Fish and Wildlife study that reveals a growing percentage of non-hunters who say they enjoy nature in benign ways. The manifesto recommends establishing a wildlife license for those who do not hunt or fish but who still want to help pay for management of wildlife; creating non-hunting preserves; increasing education about the environment; developing more wildlife viewing areas; starting a depredation fund to compensate farmers and ranchers for crop or livestock loss; and allowing greater citizen representation on state policy-making boards that regulate wildlife and wildlands. The report is available from the Utah Wilderness Association, 455 E. 400 S., #306, Salt Lake City, UT 84111 (801/359-1337).

THE AUTUMN EYE

The spectacular fall scenery of the San Juan Mountains will be the focus of Western Photo Workshop's "The Autumn Eye," a photography seminar that will run Sept. 23-29 at Telluride's Skyline Guest Ranch. Instruction will be provided by Sam Abell, Sarah Leen and Michael Yamashita, all former *National Geographic* photographers. While the workshop will emphasize fall color, participants will also have the chance to shoot action, still-life and portrait photographs. Cost of the program is \$950. For more information contact Western Photo Workshops at Box 968, Telluride, CO 81435 or call 303/738-3727.



OUTDOOR WOMAN

"Most canoes are designed for large male paddlers and are too big and heavy for most women," says a new newsletter called *Outdoor Woman*. In addition to information about sporting equipment, the 12-page monthly profiles women outdoor enthusiasts, reviews books by women (and often about women) and lists extensive resources for the woman outdoor enthusiast. Published in Nyack, N.Y., by Patricia Hubbard and Gentian Mountain, Inc., *Outdoor Woman* also previews upcoming events nationwide. Subscriptions cost \$30 for a year. For more information, contact *Outdoor Woman*, 14 Fourth Ave., Nyack, NY 10960 (914/358-1257).

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BRING BACK THE BIGHORN

Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep once roamed Utah, disappearing in the 1930s as sheep and cows took over their historic range. Efforts to restore the animal have led to some 300 bighorns living in a few select areas. Now, a report from the Utah Wilderness Association proposes restoring the bighorn to the 900,000-acre Desolation Canyon and Book Cliffs area of eastern Utah. The report, the *Desolation Canyon-Book Cliffs Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep Recovery Plan*, explores what led to the original extirpation of the bighorn in Utah, and the reasons behind the failure of many recent reintroduction efforts. The conservation group recommends eliminating current grazing allotments for domestic sheep; studying the effects of competition from cattle grazing; protecting adjacent areas from human impacts through designating these areas wilderness study areas; designating the Desolation-Book Cliffs area wilderness; allowing some carefully managed hunting and recreation within the area; and developing coordination between the Bureau of Land Management, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Utah Department of State Lands and the Ute Tribe to protect bighorn habitat. For a copy of the study, write to Utah Wilderness Association, 455 East 400 South #306, Salt Lake City, UT 84111 (801/359-1337).

PIECES OF LIGHT

Early in *Pieces of Light: A Year on Colorado's Front Range*, Susan J. Tweit describes what she believes it takes to understand natural history: "Knowing a place must involve having a working knowledge of the facts about it ... but those facts are only a framework, a pencil sketch with no shading or color. The emotional experience, the sensing of a place, is what fleshes out our knowledge of it, gives it life and sound and breath and soul." In *Pieces of Light*, Tweit merges the two sides of understanding. Through poetic prose and her strong background in natural science, she takes us beyond the fabricated face of a city to the hidden *place* within, recording walks and sights around the city combined with detailed but smooth-reading natural history. The city reveals itself as one short-term layer of a landscape flowing on a geologic time scale, a rich habitat for thriving non-human populations. Although this book is about Boulder, Colo., it will change the way a reader sees any city. It reminds us that whether we see our cities' coinhabitants or not, they are there, like the elusive screech owl that taunts Tweit from dark trees. It also reveals the joy that can be found from making the effort to look. The book costs \$19.50 and is available from Roberts Rinehart, Inc., P.O. Box 666, Niwot, CO 80544-0666.

—Ken Wright

WE'RE LOSING

Humanity is losing the battle for clean air, concludes a recent Worldwatch Institute publication, *Clearing the Air: A Global Agenda*, which sells for \$4. Our efforts have been little more than technological Band-Aids, inadequate and negated by growth, researcher Hilary French says. We must instead prevent air pollution by restructuring the energy, transportation and industrial systems that generate pollutants. Recommendations include improved public transportation and an end to subsidies that keep fuel prices low, discouraging fuel efficiency.

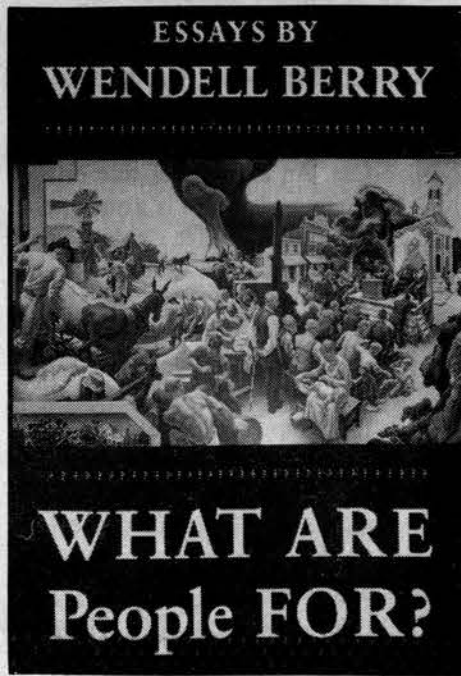
Worldwatch Institute is at 1776 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036.

WHAT ARE PEOPLE FOR?

In his recently published collection of essays, *What Are People For?*, Wendell Berry further develops ideas that have made him one of the country's most controversial thinkers. But the essays are so clear, rational and eloquent that it is easy to forget how eccentric their writer is. Continuing the themes expressed in *The Unsettling of America*, the Kentuckian writes of the moral fabric of the family farm and what he sees as the dissolution of urban, technological society. "Some of my best friends have computers," he writes. "But I do say that in using computers writers are flirting with a radical separation of mind and body." The collection also includes previously published book reviews, character reviews ("A few words in favor of Edward Abbey") and essays that reflect Berry's visions of regionalism, ecology, art and theology. Within the elegant simplicity of his vision lurks an occasional disturbing twist. Berry's neo-Luddite utopia is a world in which traditional family and labor structures can stifle novelty, humor and the creativity of women.

North Point Press, 850 Talbot Ave., Berkeley, CA 94706. Cloth: \$9.95. 210 pages.

—Florence Williams



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ESSAY

Strange tales along the Powwow Highway

by David Seals

There have always been white Americans who were "Indian lovers." The love-hate relationship European colonists have had with the Arawaks and Inuits and Maoris has been and still is a fusion of guilt and self-interest. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and James Fenimore Cooper made a cult of romanticizing the Red Man, and, incidentally, made a lot of money for themselves and their publishers.

Some generals often spoke up for the "brave Red Man" when they weren't busy killing the "noble Cheyennes and Apaches." Some of the Pilgrims in Connecticut thanked the Pequot Indians for the first Thanksgiving; but most of them, 17 years later, burned alive 500 of those same gentle people, declaring them to be "godless and half-naked."

Helen Hunt Jackson got a book published in 1870 titled *A Century of Dishonor*. It only made Theodore Roosevelt mad. This scion of Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln, whose patriotic social-Darwinist face graces Mount Rushmore today, said:

"To consider the dozen squalid savages who hunted at long intervals over a territory of 1,000 square miles as owning it outright necessarily implies a similar recognition of the claims of every white hunter, squatter, horse-thief, or wandering cattleman."

There have also been a lot of friends of the Red Man in the churches and universities. Even though phrases like "bloodthirsty heathens" were heard from almost every 19th-century pulpit and self-respecting professoriate in the land, today we hear a lot about Christian Charity and Intellectual Sympathy on the reservations. Churches pimple the landscapes wherever Navajos and Chippewas live. And Indian Studies curricula are being added at a few of the great bastions of learning.

The advent of the 20th century also brought even newer, and greater, friends to help us share the wealth and glory of our cultures. Thomas Edison's inventions opened up rich natural resources. Cattle barons and oil magnates had long been sucking the power out of the flesh and marrow of the earth. Now, thanks to Edison, great communicators on the coasts could make movies about it. Profits from wagon trains and cattle drives doubled. Indians could be slaughtered all over again. It was too good to be true.

Hollywood defines reality

History twisted back around and over itself, so that not even Hollywood understood that it was replacing theology and truth, and that the movies had become America's real churches and classrooms. An example of this blithe schizophrenic revisionism is a statement in the 1948 film from 20th Century Fox, *Fort Apache*, in which Colonel Henry Fonda complains to Captain John Wayne:

"Custer is up north in Dakota Territory winning all the glory in the big fight against the Sioux, and we're down here in the desert with a few savage Apaches." With that, General John Ford comes in for an ironic closeup of the Duke's all-knowing, craggy face, setting the standards for American religion and history — with the

stereotypes that are killing more Indians than ever today — in public schools. This is what every American school child is taught: that Custer is still a hero.

Meanwhile, back at the Warner Bros. ranch, Ronald Reagan, president of the Screen Actors Guild, was re-creating his 1940 role as Custer in *Santa Fe Trail* by rounding up Commies for the House Un-American Activities Committee.

American Culture reached its golden zenith in these films of the 1930s and 1940s, or so say the arbiters of culture and history in the colleges. Custer/Reagan adopted the regional tactics of genocide used against the Sioux Indians and successfully applied them worldwide. They tried to bankrupt other enemies' economies with the same manifest destiny employed a century earlier to decimate the Indians. Destroy the economy of Nicaragua, and you will prove to the world what a bunch of naked savages they really are. The victims and geography had changed, but the tactics remained.

Those are the Old Custers of convention — the proponents of upward mobility and free enterprise. But what I want to talk about here is the do-gooders who think they are helping Indians, whereas most of the time they're hurting us as much as our enemies.

I'm talking about the liberals. I'm talking about the intellectuals who were persecuted during the witch-hunts conducted by Sen. Joe McCarthy in my field of show biz. Dalton Trumbo and Herbert Biberman were two of the notorious Hollywood Ten who went to prison for their leftist ideology. But in the films they wrote they showed no more sensitivity toward Indians than did their right-wing persecutors. When it comes to Indians in America, everybody is stupid.

A sanitized whitewash

Take for example, a feature film production based on my novel, *The Powwow Highway*. It is an irreverent pastoral romp across contemporary America, from the Cheyenne reservation in Montana to the fabled *acequias* and *el caminos* of Santa Fe, N.M. *The Powwow Highway* was written from the point of view of today's Indians, and I don't mean noble savages like

Hiawatha or Uncas. I mean guys who have no respect for anything. Indians loved the book; America tried to ignore it; academics hated it.

George Harrison's Handmade Films bought a cleaned-up screenplay version and made a movie, and mighty Warner Bros. distributed it in 1989. Sheila Benson exulted in the *Los Angeles Times* that the lead character was "the most endearing screen presence since E.T.!" The semi-divine *New York Times* said this was a story of "a Cheyenne mystic who transmutes bitterness." *Newsweek* rejoiced, and the film won awards at festivals in Canada and Germany, as well as at Robert Redford's festival at Sundance, Utah. Clearly, the do-gooders had won one.

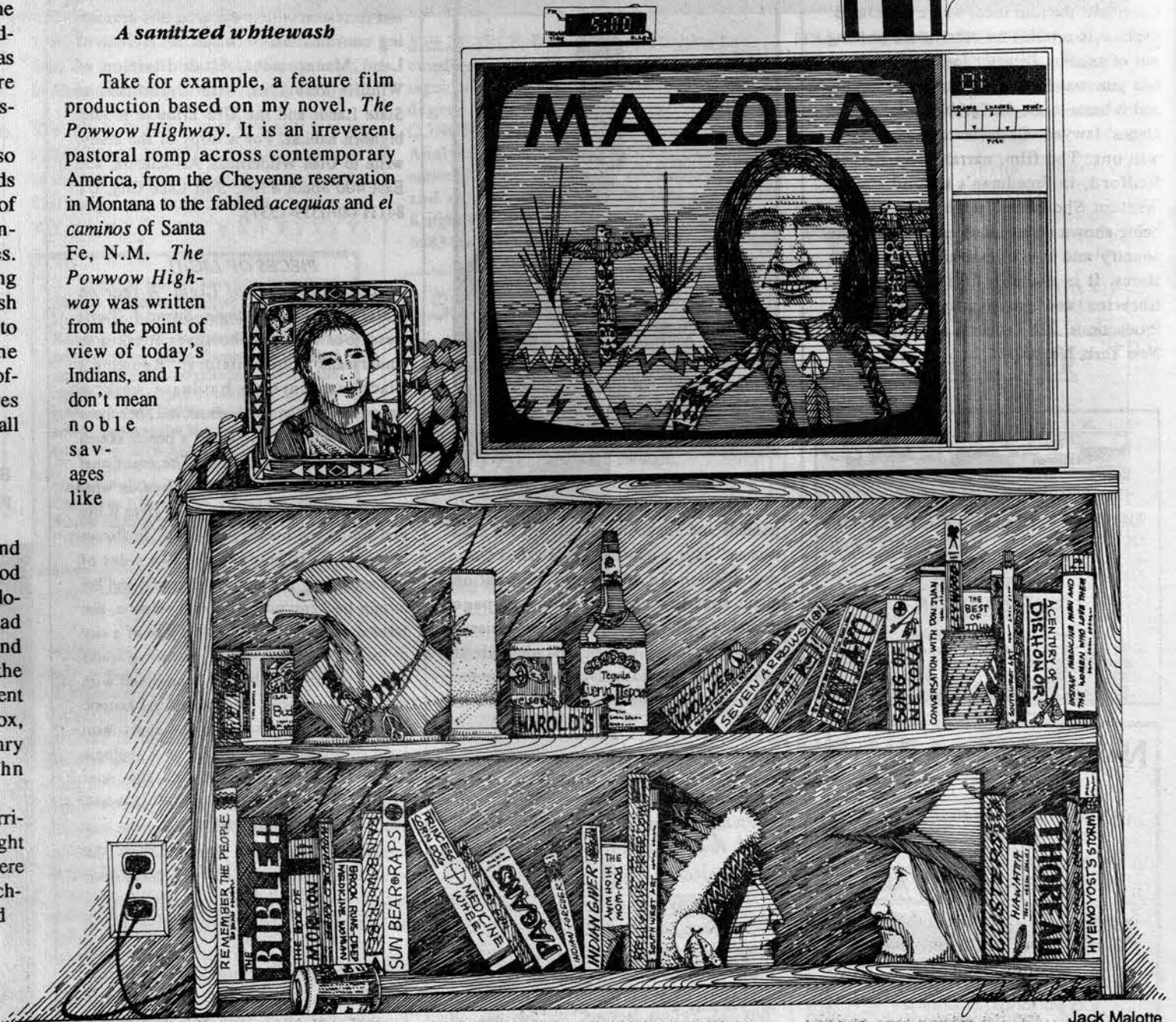
But the Indians had not. The movie wasn't *The Powwow Highway* anymore. It was a sanitized white-wash in which drunken loudmouths had become clean and serious. Instead of real people with real problems and plenty of lust and irreverence, these new Indians only smoked a little dope, only shot up a few towns and only wrecked a few bars. Instead of getting down and dirty, the characters were getting sweet and good.

And I was furious. Siskel and Ebert gave it two thumbs up, and *McLean's* ran a big feature about "The Highway of Dreams." The Californicators had turned what was good about being a godless, half-naked savage into the same old moralistic value judgement: that there is something wrong about being a nature worshipper. Fertility rituals are bad, and so the movie omitted them. Native American culture heroes, such as Sweet Medicine of the Cheyennes, with magical powers regarding nature, are

turned into truckers jabbering New Age cant on the CB radio, with a few winks toward Jesus and Moses so that stupid-ass American audiences will know that under it all, "we are all one."

The whitewash covers over the fact that there has been a profound religious war going on in this hemisphere ever since Chris Columbus brought his Black Robes to slaughter and enslave the Carib Indians almost 500 years ago. The massacres of 10 million Indians in what is now called the United States and Canada, the 20 million Indians killed in Mexico, and the 50 million buffalo slaughtered were just part of the ongoing genocide that began thousands of years ago in the Mediterranean. Anti-nature patriarchal God-worshippers have been killing "pagans" everywhere, and whenever they could.

We are dying today in droves while liberal Americans profit in the billion-dollar-a-year New Age industry, which sells overpriced and artificial Thunderbird shields and sexy doeskin dresses to bored, rich cosmopolitans. We



Jack Malotte

are starving to death while Shirley MacLaine conducts seminars about our great spirituality for \$300 an hour. Books by Lynn Andrews and Sun Bear and Hyemeyohsts Storm (called Chuck by his adoring groupies in Oxnard, Calif.) make millions while we are homeless. You can see the genocide flowing in the wake of the well-intentioned hippies walking around Indian Country claiming to be "apprentice medicine men," and charging \$500 for a pipe ceremony, \$1,000 for a sweat-lodge ceremony and \$2,000 for a sun dance.

You can also see it in the movie version of *The Powwow Highway*, of which the reviewer for the *Denver Post* said astutely, "I smell a phony." The phony he correctly smelled was directed by Jonathan Wacks, best known as a co-producer of the cult favorite, *Repo Man*. And, of course, George Harrison of the beatified Beatles was the executive producer who put up the money.

Why did this happen? Why did *The Powwow Highway* get so bad? Why aren't people such as Shirley MacLaine and George Harrison more sensitive to the damage they are causing Indians? Why are Indians sicker than ever, poorer than ever? Why does the 19th-century slaughter continue in this new, 20th-century cultural form?

We scare Americans

My personal experiences as a mixed-blood "breed" following the strange trail of *The Powwow Highway* do not seem as important as the starvation and suffering of hundreds of thousands of indigenous peoples within the borders of the richest country in the world. But they are indicative of the whole malady. The California attitudes that stripped bare the flesh and bones of the characters in my novel, in order to make them understandable and palatable to the mainstream population, are symptoms of the national psychosis. Indians are still seen as not quite human. We are barely perceptible. We are foreign. We scare most Americans. And there has been a blackout of information about us in the schools. We are not acknowledged because that would mean recognizing what we stand for.

Indians are the dark and dirty secret of America, like the East Bloc's secret police. If Jonathan Wacks, a good liberal, felt he had to change Cheyenne myths to reach his audience, then that says as much about the world as it does about Wacks, although it also says a lot about Wacks' artistic integrity, about Wacks' willingness to pander to his audience.

Wacks is convinced in his heart, to this day, that his intentions were good. George Harrison also meant well; he probably genuinely cares about Indians. Shirley MacLaine cares. A number of legislators and church groups care. They genuinely deplore the suffering of Indians, the racial and economic injustice, the lies and frauds of history.

So why — given this caring — are things worse than ever for Indians? Why is fetal alcohol syndrome epidemic among Indians? Why is the average age of death for Indian men 44? Why are most college graduates utterly ignorant about Indians?

The arrival a year or so ago of another Hollywood movie company in South Dakota, where I live, can throw light on these questions. Kevin Costner was the big star and director of this film, *Dance with Wolves*, and he came with \$16 million in his pocket. Everybody, Indian and white, lay down at his feet and worshipped him. Me? I read the screenplay, and it looked like another



white success story, along the lines of *A Man Called Horse* or *Little Big Man*. It was set in 1862, and was about a white man who goes to live with the Indians and, of course, becomes a great warrior and, of course, falls in love with the sexy squaw in her tight-fitting doeskin chemise.

That was the bad part, and it was very bad. But a lot of Indians were getting work as extras. And what harm could there be in a little moolah pumping into our devastated economy? There was also a lot of publicity from Costner about how hard they were working to be "authentic"; they were using the Sioux language, Lakota, wherever possible, and a lot of Indian actors in it were trotted out to say how good and true it was.

Me? I've never been able to find one historic instance where a white man lived with Indians and became a great warrior and married the sexiest babe around. And a lot of my Sioux friends began telling me they weren't using authentic Lakota, and that they were making up ceremonies, costume designs and other cultural appurtenances.

To make a long story short, I wrote an article in the *Rapid City (S.D.) Journal* criticizing *Dance with Wolves* and was vilified, in turn, as having gone off half-cocked and ill-informed. I had dared challenge the liberals. And believe me, there is nothing more nasty than a liberal, as George Orwell knew when he said: "It is the liberals who fear liberty and the intellectuals who want to do dirt on the intellect."

What is happening here? What has brought the Reagans and the Costners and the Harrisons and the MacLaines together

under the same New Custerism banner, some to fight with bullets and starvation and some to fight by changing and distorting what Indians believe? It is a hidden Victorianism, and this Victorianism is dedicated (unconsciously, perhaps) to subverting the old Indian Way, and turning our wild, natural devotion to Goddess Earth into some sappy blend of New Age pap and the Judeo-Christian traditions of moderation and respectability.

In their different ways, the New Custerites are arrayed against our spiritual tradition that obeys only one law, the law of nature, and that does not advocate moderation or respectability. If we ever truly returned to the old Indian Way, there would be a helluva lot of preachers and teachers and scientists out of work. A lot of filmmakers would be standing in welfare lines, replacing the non-whites and women there now. At the least, John Ford would not be America's history professor.

For starters, movies about Indians would be made by Indians, and they would naturally reflect Indian success stories. They would be about the most basic of all Indian beliefs — individual freedom, denigrated as anarchy by the clean-cut crowd. They would show how a lot of Indians overcome the despair and hopelessness that cause alcoholism, and how many Indians are learning the correct linguistic and spiritual values of their cultures. They would show the matriarchal values which, of course, would require that women write, direct and star in their own stories. This is what would happen, and these are things you can still be burned at the stake in Hollywood for saying out loud.

I prefer obscurity

For myself, I prefer to stay poor and obscure with the fullbloods out here in the Siberian wilds of South Dakota rather than face the hounds of Hollywood and the New York publishers again. I would like to see Sitting Bull's relatives lay this New Custer in his grave with one final anecdote — the kind of story warriors tell around the campfire.

As background, you have to understand the character of a full-blooded Indian. He is generous and would give the shirt off his back. He would never charge you more than a cup of coffee to tell you the secrets of the universe. David Bald Eagle is just such a pure-blooded Sioux elder. He lives on a South Dakota ranch with the rest of his exiles and refugees from civilization. Richard Tall Bull is another, a Cheyenne. As is Joe Flying By, poor as dirt, and living on the Standing Rock Reservation where Sitting Bull was assassinated.

"It is not the old Indian Way," Bald Eagle concluded seriously, "to put people down with words like 'honky' or 'wasichu.' In the old way, we welcomed everyone. I am helping a new drum group here to learn the real old songs the right way."

With a twinkle in his eye, his dark auburn face (unpolluted by any but Indian blood) alive and mobile, he played a tape for me of the new drum group. He told me they had done the proper old drum ceremonies and prayers first, in Lakota. He asked me how I liked the lead singer. It sounded great, I said; a chant right out of the rhythms of the world. They were singing truly authentic songs; old, old songs. It was beautiful.

Dave grinned: "That lead singer," he said. "He has blond hair and blue eyes."

David Seals currently works with the Bear Butte Council in South Dakota. His new book, *The Powwow Superhighway*, will be published in November.

LETTERS

COW POLLUTION

Dear HCN,

I can imagine the splendor of a not-so-distant past when Westerners could drink from streams without fear of giardia or other water-borne illnesses. But now, whether it be drinking from an alpine lake, a Rocky Mountain waterfall or a canyon creek, that opportunity has been lost due to indiscriminate cattle grazing in and around our riparian areas. As a result, our waters have been contaminated by what the Natural Resources Defense Council has termed "poison runoff": nutrients, bacteria and sediment, to name a few.

The issue of nonpoint source pollution, a major byproduct of western "cow-scapes," was mentioned only briefly in HCN's very informative March 12 issue about West-wide grazing. Nonpoint source pollution could continue to have serious impacts unless citizen groups begin to participate in planning and enforcement of recent amendments to the Clean Water Act.

In Arizona, grazing is the leading cause of nonpoint source pollution which has contaminated over 90 percent of the state's surface waters. The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality reports that sedimentation resulting from grazing activities in the Salt River watershed "will gradually eliminate much of the current reservoir capacity which provides a dependable water

supply to the Phoenix metropolitan area."

In Utah, more than half of the high priority nonpoint source watersheds identified by the Utah Department of Health suffer from the adverse impacts of excessive loadings of salt, nutrients and sediment due to grazing.

In 1987, Congress provided citizens with a potentially useful hammer in the nonpoint source amendments to the federal Clean Water Act (Section 319). Concerned citizens should take advantage of the opportunity to learn about and participate in the process of promulgating and enforcing Best Management Practices.

Effective enforcement of these amendments through implementation of rigid state programs could provide useful benefits to riparian areas, wildland recreators and downstream water users dependent upon high quality flows. In addition to the useful laundry list provided by Joe Feller, section 319 statutes should become a useful tool for those concerned not only about the deleterious effects of grazing in our sensitive ecosystems, but for those who want to replace exotic cow-scapes with native landscapes.

Ken A. Rait
Tucson, Arizona

BOMBS AWAY

Dear HCN,

I am responding to J. David Brunner's letter (HCN, 3/26/90) defending

the role of the Saylor Creek Bombing Range expansion work group.

For objectivity's sake, it should be noted that Mr. Brunner's wife was the BLM's head "facilitator" for the work group. The task force was scheduled to visit two bombing ranges, one in Arizona (basin and range country) and one in Florida (flat as a pancake). Neither site has any geological similarity to Saylor Creek, a plateau area sliced by extremely steep-walled spectacular canyons, that would make for very different management problems.

After finding out about Fallon and other bombing ranges where simply keeping live armaments inside the range boundaries seemed to be impossible, I don't think our armed services have a snowball's chance of keeping the Bruneau Canyons, Jarbidge Canyon, and Sheep Creek Narrows from becoming our country's most scenic bombcatchers. Let's just hope the expansion proposal stays a long-shot, because all it takes is a very few unexploded bombs skipping into a 1,000-foot-deep canyon to cause some real big problems for anybody or anything on the ground.

Brian Schaeffer
Boise, Idaho

The writer is environmental protection representative for the Multiple Use Advisory Council of the BLM's Boise District.

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Nice waves but no 'soft space' in La La Land

by Peter Shelton

I'm gonna see the folks I dig! I might even kiss a Sunset pig! California, I'm coming home.

— Joni Mitchell

I took the girls to the Corona del Mar main beach on a trip to see family and old haunts. It is the beach where I learned about waves, about sets and back-washes, tubes and tides. It is where I learned first to body surf, then to stand up on a surfboard. A major piece of my soul, as well as a good part of my body — that corporeal sea that is mostly water — is there.

The girls took to the waves like otters. That part had not changed. But even though it was a weekday, they could scarcely navigate their boogie boards to shore through the hordes of other bathers.

As we threw down our towels in a bare patch between bodies, a young man with spiked hair and a wristwatch on his ankle called out: "Dude! D'you make that board?" I was carrying a skimboard, a wood and fiberglass disc for skimming the beach on the retreating foam of a wave.

"Yes," I said, a little taken aback. And then, subtracting in my head, "25 years ago."

"That's okay, man," he reassured me, as if I looked stricken. I suppose I was. The place was mobbed. It hummed with human energy — enough, it seemed, to drown the ocean's own steady palpitation.

There were glorious sand castles, but they'd been built by teams of adults from architectural firms around Orange County. Out in the surf when something slimy nuzzled up to my leg, it wasn't a jellyfish but a plastic bag. When I tried to skim a few waves on the old board, a lifeguard appeared in a blink and told me to stop. No hard objects allowed on the beach.

Southern California itself feels like a hard object to me now. There is no soft space, no non-human rhythms, no breathing room. Three times in our stay, we drove from the beach to my actor brother's place in Glendale, which is about as close as you can get to old-timey, downtown L.A. The air is bad there, opaque beyond half a mile, and the politics are similarly choking — Glendale refuses to recognize Martin Luther King Day — but an actor in L.A. is grateful for a roof.

We took no fewer than seven freeways to go the 60 miles: Corona del Mar Fwy (73) to the San Diego (405) to the San Gabriel (605) to the Santa Ana (5) to the Golden State (also 5) to the Glendale (2) to the Ventura (134) and off. My brother warned us in advance not to attempt it during either rush hour, 6:30-10 a.m. or 3-7:30 p.m. "And watch out," he said, "there's a mysterious new jam-up at noon. I don't understand it, but it's there, especially on the Golden State."

Sure enough, we hit the noon rush. The 70-mph river lurched suddenly to 30 mph, then 20, then nothing. No accidents, no construction due to road work. Gridlock. Nor did it free up completely on our return that night at 1:30 a.m. The beast was still roaring: bright lights and shiny metal on both sides, front and back, take your lane change when you dare, the whole swirling mass rushing purposefully, incomprehensibly into the night.

We talk about growth here in southwestern Colorado. Ha! We are a mite on the dog of the continent. We are a speck in the Milky Way which, of course, you can't see in the Southern California night sky. California has gained 10 million residents in the last 15 years, and expects another 10 million by the turn of the century. Where will they all live? How will

they navigate the miles to work? With what will they wash their cars?

Water is, of course, the key. Southern California has always taken what it needed. But now the Colorado River is all spoken for. The Owens Valley is about dried up. And Northern Californians are justifiably reluctant to sign away their precious resources. After all, they're growing almost as fast as the South.

Californians don't like to show it, but water, a thing you cannot pick up in bulk at the Price Club, a thing you cannot ultimately control, is beginning to worry them. A long drought is now making a deadly point. Without water, a development insider told me, the once endless merry-go-round of growth might come to a screeching halt.

Lying there on the sand, I thought heretical thoughts for a native son. I thought, Come on drought! Hum baby! As it is, all sense of natural proportion, of human sensibleness and reason, have been overrun by the mad rush to this coast. (My dad plays a game at intersections. While he's stopped he looks around, and if he doesn't see a Mercedes, he loses the game. He hasn't lost one in years.)

If it takes an equalizer like severe drought to wake them up, then bring it on. I don't think the earthquake would do it. People would just say: "Phew. That's done. Let's go to the beach."

No. I say, bring on the drought, even a longer one, whatever it takes. I say this out of compassion for the place, the land, the air, the ocean. I still love it. I feel like I'm trying to talk somebody out of suicide.

Peter Shelton is a free-lance writer in Ridgway, Colorado.

Fly fishing, friends and Super Renegades

by Dennis G. Bitton

I went fishing this summer, a lot. I learned a lot, too. I love fly fishing. I took lots of friends fly fishing with me this summer, in my big McKenzie River drift boat. It's maroon and white and has three seats.

Early this summer, two guys came out who wanted to go fishing. It was too early. The rivers and creeks were full of muddy water. I told the guys, but they said, "We're going to be there for a meeting anyway, so just take us to the best place you can." I tried, but we had to leave my boat home.

When we got there, the guys said, "Where the blankety-blank (they actually said something else) did all this sagebrush come from? I've never seen so much sagebrush in my life!"

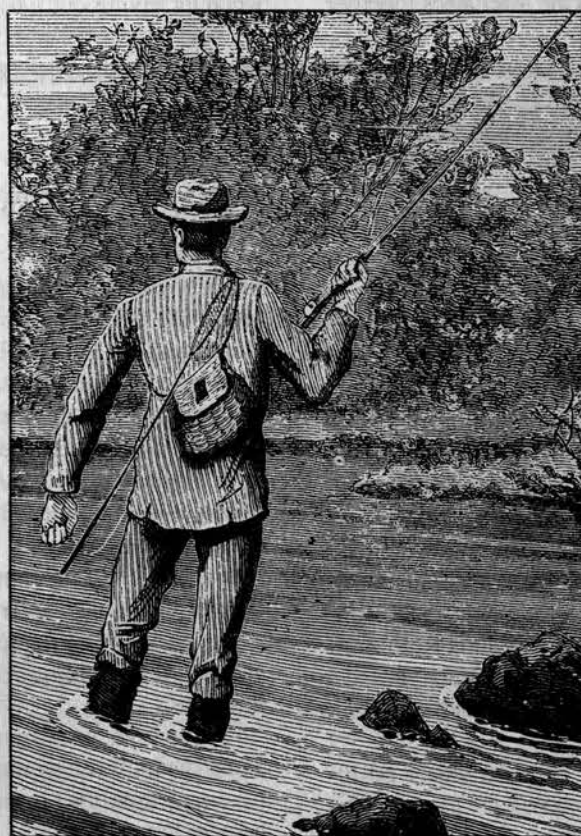
It was kind of hard to find the creek down there in the bottom of the valley after we'd driven three or four hours out across the desert. But the mountains were where they were supposed to be, and much bigger than the mountains these guys were used to looking at, so all in all I think they had a good time.

Some of my other friends got to ride in the boat. Four couples came, and that means a guy and a gal. The gals sat in the back mostly and said they were more comfortable there. Some read books and took naps. Some fished. And the fishing was always good. Well, not *always*, but most of the time.

But we got rained on once — no, twice. It was hard rain, too. Sort of soaked everything and everyone in the boat. Have you ever noticed that when you try to entertain friends, the ones that are the most important, the ones you really want to impress, that they always get rained on? I think they bring it with them. It was fine before they got there.

I learned that good fly fishing friends don't care if they catch fish or not. They're happy just to see the scenery and enjoy the outing. That's what they say, and I believe them. I must admit that after we'd done half a day, or a day and a half, without fish, that some of the guys said, "There you are, you S.O.B.!" when they finally hooked a fish. (You know what "S.O.B." is, don'tcha? It means they were excited!)

I learned this summer that fly patterns make a



difference. I told some of the guys and gals that the fish were getting picky; they only wanted #20 Lt. Cahils. The guys brought #16 Elk Hair Caddises and Parachute Adamases. I told them I'd supply the Super Renegades. Most of them said they didn't care.

But when we were on the stream, and the Super Renegade had caught a fish or two, most guys said, "Let me have a look at that blankety-blank fly" (they really did). Then they'd tie it on. Then they'd catch a fish. Then they'd shake their heads and say some more funny words, and then they'd cast another fish, and then they'd say some more funny words, and then they'd cast the fly again, and ... it just went on like that all day long, it seemed.

I told the guys I had a few #20 Lt. Cahils from my friend in Florida. They borrowed them until I got selfish. I fished them until they were all gone. And it

made a difference. It's surprising what a fish can see.

I learned that not everyone follows directions. We told people where to stand and where to fish, and they'd try it, but turn your back on them, even for a second, and they'd be standing where they should be fishing.

Another funny thing happened. One lady, who obviously had her act together, declared to me and her boyfriend, "Gentlemen, I don't know or care what else is going on right now up and down this rocky shore, but right here, for right now, this is my potty; turn your backs!" We did. She joined us later and we fished some more. I thought it was one of the most original solutions to a long-time problem with guys and gals on the river.

There are no real potties (you know, toilets) on the river. I think somebody should build some and make people use them.

I learned this summer that not everyone has seen an 18-inch cutthroat. They say funny things like, "Oh my! Oh my!" or "Isn't that just beautiful" or "That is nice, that is really nice!" And they always yell something when a nice one comes up and is on for just a half-second or so. I don't think they mean to scare everyone on the river, but they just can't seem to help themselves. I never could figure out what they were saying.

It couldn't have been much, because it was usually just one short, loud word, and then it was over. The guys' faces looked funny for a while longer, though.

I learned that most of my friends are getting older. They have bad backs or knees, or hypoglycemia, or bad hearts, or twisted joints. I don't think I took one person fishing who was normal.

I've got to start looking for some younger friends; guys or gals who can row a McKenzie boat. My friends are wearing out their parts. But maybe we can still have one more good summer next year. I hope so.

Dennis Bitton is editor and publisher of *Fly Fishing News* in Idaho Falls, Idaho.