

High Country News

Vol. 3, No. 6

Friday, April 2, 1971



Photo by Ernie Day

A time for rest and reflection at Saddle Creek on the Snake River. Above loom the walls of Hells Canyon, that deep gash in Mother Earth which arbitrarily separates Idaho from Oregon.

Hells Canyon is deeper than the Grand Canyon by a thousand feet, and because of that the dammers and developers want to flood its wonders and still its waters.

Dams May Still Go In Hells Canyon

For a hundred miles the Snake River churns wildly through the deepest gorge on the North American continent. This is Hells Canyon, a land of rugged and incredible beauty where game animals gaze down upon the river travelers. The vast, wild area forms the border between Idaho and Oregon.

Hells Canyon is eyed by the developers and the "prophets of progress" as a most fitting candidate for huge hydroelectric power dams. They see the great, untamed Snake River not as a thing of intrinsic value just in itself but as a tragic waste of kilowatts.

Another step in the direction of dams was taken

in late February. Then a Federal Power Commission examiner recommended that two dams be licensed. William C. Levy said that private and public power groups should be allowed to build the High Mountain Sheep Dam just above the mouth of the Salmon River and the Pleasant Valley Dam further upstream. Together, the two dams would still the Middle Snake River for all future generations.

Two groups have been valiantly fighting to stave off any further encroachments in Hells Canyon. Their efforts are aimed at protecting the great natural wonders of the canyon through congressional action.

The Hells Canyon Preservation Council (Box 691, Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401) and the Idaho Environmental Council (Box 3371, University Station, Moscow, Idaho 83843) have joined forces. They are now concentrating their efforts on companion legislation in Congress which would create a Hells Canyon-Snake National River.

Senator Bob Packwood of Oregon has introduced S. 717 and Congressman John Saylor of Pennsylvania has sponsored the companion H. R. 4249. Both bills have been modified slightly from earlier versions to include Forest Service recommendations and provide for appropriations for limited

recreational development.

Meanwhile, the Idaho Senators, Frank Church and Len Jordan, and Congressman Orval Hansen have sponsored legislation for a moratorium on dam building. The moratorium would prohibit any consideration of dams for a seven year period.

Conservationists who once supported the idea of a moratorium now agree that a national river status would give better protection. The position was well stated by Jerry Jayne of Idaho Falls, president of the Idaho Environmental Council, in a letter to Senator Frank Church. He said, in part, "To some, conservationists must

appear ungrateful for not responding more warmly toward the Moratorium, and presumptuous for denying that more time is needed to better assess the values and future use of the Middle Snake. I'd like to tell you why I feel as I do, and what I think is wrong with the Moratorium, other than the fact that it offers the opportunity of evading a political commitment

"I contend that we DO know now that Hells Canyon merits protection. If we don't then it seems that it would be very difficult to argue effectively for the continued protection of any natural area in the country. It is probably (Please turn to page 15.)

HIGH COUNTRY

By Tom Bell

The public may have its day in court next week. That is when Senator Frank Church's Subcommittee on Public Lands holds hearings in Washington on the management of our lands.

It is then that many people will have a chance to tell what is happening on the forests and watersheds and deserts of our great country. Undoubtedly, the special economic interests will also be there in force. BUT IF THE FACTS CAN BE EXPOSED, THE LITTLE PEOPLE SHOULD WIN A ROUND.

I am honored to be a spokesman from Wyoming. I have followed closely the battles over grazing fees, illegal fencing on public lands and the public fencing for special interests, antiquated laws on mining and on claiming public lands, and timbering.

It is the latter on which I will concentrate for we have glaring examples of what unleashed timbering interests can do to our lands. Here on the Shoshone National Forest and across the Continental Divide on the Bridger and Teton Forests, there is ample evidence that the Forest Service abdicated its responsibilities. What happened near Brooks Lake and on Wiggins Fork and at the head of Fish Creek and at various other sites is a disgrace to the forestry profession.

The case history of the Wind River Working Circle at Dubois is replete with evidence of the rape of a resource. Eight years ago the Forest Service came out with a Timber Management Plan. Like the Russian Five-year Plan, this one was to guide the management of that area from July 1, 1963 to June 30, 1973.

The plan detailed an annual allowable cut of 19.6 million board feet a year from all of the different sawtimber types. Cutting was to be based on a 120 year cycle for lodgepole pine and 140 years for Douglas fir and spruce-fir stands.

The introduction to the plan states very matter of factly:

This working circle plan is a ten-year action program directed towards meeting the long-term objectives of the General Timber Management Statement for the forest. This plan will be revised by not later than June 30, 1973. Earlier revision may be made, if necessary, to meet changing conditions. (What ironic words in view of later events!) The plan is based on timber inventory data collected during the period 1959-1960. The processed detailed inventory data is on file in the Forest Supervisor's office at Cody, Wyoming. Compartment records, analysis, map and aerial photographs are on file in the District Ranger's office.

In the summary of Results under Previous Plans, it is stated:

Timber harvesting for the past 10 years average 8 million board feet per year. This amounted to 85 percent of the annual allowable cut of 9.4 million board feet. The heaviest cut was during the past five years, with annual cuts better than 12 million board feet or an average of 12 percent above the allowable cut. This increase of cut was due to the establishment of new industry that would utilize the allowable cut. The current industry is capable of meeting the allowable cut objectives.

But the Forest Service had grossly over-estimated the resources under its administration. Industry, if not overtly encouraged, was led to believe that the forest was inexhaustible. By 1966, the U. S. Plywood mill at Dubois was capable of handling 50 million board feet per year, or more than twice the rated capacity needed for handling the available resource.

The impact was frightening and the result in some cases was utter devastation. There are clear-cut patches of up to 2,000 acres and many that run between 1,200 and 1,500 acres. At Jules Bowl above Brooks Lake the timbering went to timber line, on slopes so steep that it must have been dangerous for working. And when the timber beasts had what they wanted, they left the slash and the gouged slopes and the bare gravel.

Today, it is a different story. Thanks to a courageous district ranger who came in and said "No more!" to an avaricious industry, the forest may someday recover from the rape. The ranger was railroaded for his efforts but that is another story.

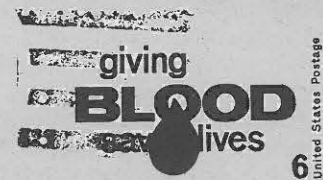
The Forest Service did indeed revise its Timber Management Plan. In October, 1970, the new plan said: The Working Circle Timber Management Plan, 1963-1973, provides for revisions to be made to meet changing conditions. This amendment reduces by 92 percent the area programmed for cut annually from 3,030 acres to 217 acres to meet the current multiple use management situation and decisions. The expected average annual yield from 217 acres in this area is 1,767 million board feet. THE AREA CONSIDERED OPERABLE FOR TIMBER HARVEST IS REDUCED BECAUSE OF UNSTABLE LANDS, STEEP SLOPES, ROCKY AREAS, PROTECTION OF CRITICAL WATERSHEDS, SCENIC AND RECREATIONAL VALUES, AND REQUIREMENTS FOR WILDLIFE COVER.

And that is the story. Multiple use was finally recognized. And it was implemented by the district ranger, a forest supervisor with guts enough to stick by his man, and a new regional forester who could see the big picture.



The long, warm days of Spring slowly but surely loosen Winter's grip on river and stream. The soft murmur beneath the white mantle will soon turn to a mighty roar as snow and ice once more return to flowing water.

Letters To The Editor



Editor:

Thank you for the Nebraska Rivers article of March 5 revealing the foolish and destructive plans of the Bureau of Reclamation. Right in my backyard and I the unsuspecting citizen.

For a long time I've had the impression that the Bureau and its Corps of Engineers bulldoze their way at will up and down our land spending taxpayers money in abandon on many questionable projects. Many of our Congressmen are part of the problem for in their political selfishness they condone even foolish spending in their areas of interest.

The High Country News is a great friend to all of us. Keep pitching.

Sincerely yours,
I. L. Dier
Elkhorn, Nebr



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Editor:

As a former resident of Wyoming for five years, I am very upset at the trend seemingly trying to be taken in your state.

No doubt industry means employment, more income and PERHAPS a more modern way of life, but for Wyoming residents you have to pay the price for so called "progress".

The area that I presently reside in has industrialized rapidly in the past ten years, much to our dismay. We are still lucky compared to so many other industrialized areas.

My children can walk to a fishing stream (but don't drink the water for it is so polluted it will kill you) and they can fish with the other ten thousand people who have their lines in the stream. We can hunt deer and maybe get one if you don't get shot first by one of the other 200,000 hunters. There is plenty of swimming areas, if you can find a place to park your car and can afford to go. Also plenty of highways to see the beautiful scenery if the billboards don't block your view, crazy drivers don't smash into you and the potholes don't tear up your automobile. Your children will get a good education if the schools can afford the space and teachers. You can still have a nice home if you don't mind the taxes increasing 400% in ten years. Oh yes, don't forget to lock your doors at night if you want your house to be there in the morning.

and modernization. Do not let this happen to your state. Let it be where you can still appreciate the beautiful sunrise and wonderous sunset.

Very Truly yours,
Tom Woodruff
Philadelphia

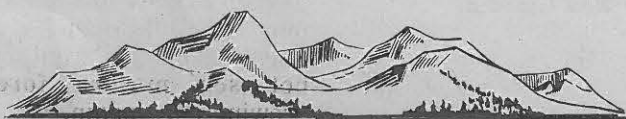
Editor:

I'm sending you a check to renew my subscription to your great paper.

I sure would miss it and the fine things it stands for. Keep up the good work and keep us readers informed on the Green River situation. I, for one, would hate to see it dammed, because they have dammed our Missouri River here passed our place and now all we have is our river bottoms flooded out, and whitetail deer population has hardly anyplace to survive. Besides, the whole riverbed is now sanded in and good for nothing. So all I can say is keep up the good work on your issues and - Give'm Hell, Tom Bell!

Sincerely,
Butch Rothschild
Avon, So. Dak.

Editor's Note: Thanks to our many readers for their great support and the pertinent comments they make on such issues as the undammed, free-flowing rivers of the country.



This is the price of progress

Hearings Hold Promise

The following comments have been excerpted from a notice of Oversight Hearings on Management Practices on the Public Lands from The Wilderness Society in Washington, D.C. The hearings are being held in Washington on April 5-6 by the Subcommittee on Public Lands of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Senator Frank Church, Chairman. The comments appear over the signature of Stewart M. Brandborg, Executive Director of The Wilderness Society. Editor.

The forthcoming Senate Public Lands Subcommittee informational hearings (April 5-6) offer a crucial opportunity for public scrutiny of the state of management and stewardship of our public lands, especially our national forests.

Public concern about problems in our forests on public lands has been growing in recent years. In confrontation after confrontation, local citizens and national coalitions have challenged the very agencies established to protect these public lands. Their opposition to parks and wilderness areas, their wedding to ugly and damaging clear-cutting, their acquiescence to destructive mining and exploration practices, their allowance of overgrazing and excessive roading and timber overcutting have increased the public alarm.

These hearings present an historic opportunity to look behind these individual confrontations to determine what fundamental changes in structure, programs and practices of our public land agencies may be required in order to assure proper and balanced management of the public's resources.

The hearings will not directly consider any new legislation; rather they will help implement Congressional responsibility

for oversight and evaluation of public land and resource programs. They are intended to develop the facts that will permit a thoughtful analysis of the problems of our national forests and point the direction for needed change.

The contribution of your knowledge of local situations on forests and public lands familiar to you is essential if

these hearings are to prove useful. Only hard knowledge from specific cases will give the Congress, the Executive Branch and the people full perspective on the nature and scope of the problem. Your further information and ideas are indispensable to give depth and objectivity to this investigation.

In an era of growing

demands on the whole range of public land resources, a new public awareness of environmental issues has aroused deep concern over forest management practices on these lands, most particularly on the national forests. Many good people in the Forest Service share this concern.

Case after case has

developed in recent years to demonstrate inadequate management, poor operating practices and an overall lack of balance in administration and use of these resources. Serious over-cutting has far exceeded the best, balanced capabilities of the land itself. A general over-commitment to timber harvesting exists. (Please turn to page 4)



The Snowy Range looms above the block clear-cutting in Wyoming's Medicine Bow National Forest west of Laramie.



Photos by Bob Gorsuch

Extensive blocks of clear-cutting cover thousands of acres of the Medicine Bow National Forest in Wyoming. Many people question whether this type of cutting can long be sustained by the forests of the West. Lodgepole pine is normally slow growing and difficult to regenerate in many high-altitude forests.

Timbering!

by Tom Bell

Striking photos with a striking impact on the land. The geometric patterns of clear-cut timbering are eye-catching, laid upon the landscape. But the scene from the ground is entirely different than that from the air. There, close at hand, you get the full impact of straight lines and unnatural blocks, of the heavy hand of man with his eye on lumber and nothing else, of the waste and the destruction.

The scene from the air does give a better perspective of the roads and road systems which must be built to get the timber out. And it is these road systems which have nearly as great an impact on the forest ecosystems as the timbering itself.

The roads are often built by a man on a bulldozer who appreciates only the brute strength of his machine. Steep hills, sharp ridges, mountain meadows, and clear streams mean nothing in terms of the vibrant parts of the whole functioning ecosystem. Entire mountain ranges, or even one mountain, were not meant to be tampered with in such unwitting, cavalier fashion.

The single-minded emphasis on timbering has violated not only the sustained-yield principles of good resource management, but also the policies of multiple-use. Clear-cut timbering in some areas becomes mutually exclusive of all or part of the other multiple uses.

This becomes most evident on clear-cut areas where creeks are silted and clogged with debris from the slopes, where elk have disappeared from the scene, and where desolation greets the eye instead of pleasant forest stands. The irony of it all is amplified by vast areas where there has been no forest regrowth in the 10, 15 or 20 years since cutting has taken place.

Many of the high-elevation western forests are on thin, poor soils where precipitation is often sporadic during the growing season. That, combined with low rainfall for optimum forest regrowth makes regeneration difficult if not impossible, under the conditions imposed by some clear-cutting.

Where regeneration is possible, forests do not grow back to maturity in less than 30 to 100 to 150 years. Where clear-cutting has taken place in many areas of the West, our grandchildren - and maybe their children - will not see mature forests growing once again.

Hearings Hold Promise . . .

Other resources and values - watershed, wildlife, scenery and wilderness - are sacrificed. These are symptoms of "something gone-wrong" in the programs and perspective of our public land management agencies.

Long-term protection and true management have been increasingly overshadowed by the dictates of doctrinaire policies and economic pressures. The most pervasive has been timber, and industry that has stripped the private forests, exports logs, yet now demands more allowable cut from YOUR public forests. What suffers is the basic public resource itself - the land, its productivity for a wide range of values, and its capacity to continue a sustained yield of those many values for the future.

These problems have brought on heightened public concern and action. At the same time, archaic bureaucratic patterns, a false aura of so-called professional finality in decision-making, and a pervasive disregard by agencies for the true involvement of people in setting the course of management have forced heated and usually unproductive confrontations. The public, fired by a realization of resource values and its right to be listened to, is colliding with the leadership of agencies. The agencies are all too ready to take a hard line, closing

ranks to protect narrow agency and industry interests, as opposed to the broad public interest.

What we are faced with, it is becoming increasingly clear, is not a succession of unrelated problems and issues, but rather a need for fundamental change, based on careful analysis, in the stewardship on lands nationwide.

The pressures of short-range economics and narrow, special interests are a part of the problem. So, too, are the symptoms of poor management we can now see. But fundamentally the problem is one of establishing new policies, structures, and perspective under which the public's lands are to be managed. There is a major issue, too, of REGAINING REAL PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT in the management of the public's trust.

Excellence in forest management - in land management - can be achieved and sustained, but a number of factors presently operate to downgrade excellence in the management of public (and private) forests.

First of all, a clear distinction needs to be drawn between the forest as a BIOLOGICAL AND ECOLOGICAL ENTITY and the forest viewed only as a TREASURY OF ECONOMIC RESOURCE. If the dollar



The waste of wood is almost unbelievable in most clear-cut timbering operations. The destruction of ground cover and the disturbance of fragile soils contribute to soil erosion, silting of streams, and an unsightly mess. This photo was taken on the Teton National Forest at the head of the Gros Ventre River in Fish Creek.

view prevails, it will surely sacrifice environmental values and ecological integrity to short-term demands. To the degree management has turned away from a firm and dominating ecological foundation, we believe it has gone astray.

Second, a similar distinction needs to be drawn between managers who take an ecological, public-interest outlook and those whose perspective overemphasizes

economic values. A forester, after all, is not a purely objective "professional." Unfortunately, a major segment of forestry education - and an overwhelming part of on-the-job forestry experience - is economics-production-oriented. It has only shallow ecologic roots. It is also highly compartmentalized into specialties. Thus, the seeds of conflict are sown. The fundamental need to start on an ecologic base, to work with

nature, is submerged. All the emphasis is on how man and his machines can MANIPULATE the forest, its flora and its fauna.

Many of the decisions involved in forest land management are NOT professional, expert resource decisions at all. They are, rather, value judgments, a matter of choosing between various levels of intensity of management and possible uses of lands which could be used in several ways, but not all of those ways together. Expertise in plant-animal-land relations is an essential starting point. The "right" answer is ultimately a value judgment, but it is destined to fail if it is ecologically unsound.

In the public land agencies of this country we have many dedicated public servants who strongly object to pressures exerted by consumption-oriented interests. Yet their views all too often are ignored in the "professional" or "expert" decisions that are made.

An economic bias normally exists in decisions on privately-controlled forest lands. The results are plain. Even where the forest is being turned into plantations, in the long run the economics of man can't overcome the demands of ecology. Private ownership of lands cannot be an excuse for mismanagement which results in long-term destruction of resources. The public interest in ALL lands is too strong to continue on this course.

For the private rule of short-term and single-minded gain to be applied as public policy would be to chart a course of national resource disaster. Thus, on public lands, the issue is clearer still. There the PUBLIC INTEREST must be the scale. Here the example must be set. The public resource manager's job is not to maximize economic returns, necessarily, but to protect and manage the forest so as to maximize returns of all kinds in the public interest. This is a matter of explicit federal law. Thus, in some places, a prime stand of fine (Please turn to page 10)



Photos by Tom Bell

This photo of clear-cut timbering on the Teton National Forest of Wyoming illustrates several features which conservationists condemn. This area was once a choice summer range for elk herds. It has now been lost because of the roads which penetrate into almost every segment of once near-wilderness country. Population counts and harvest figures show a 50 per cent reduction in numbers of elk from the 1969-1970 time period to the 1970-1971 period. Numbers dropped from approximately 2,000 elk to about 1,000. The main road which cuts through the center of the forested mountainside (mid-photo) could have been located on the bare

ridge instead. Had it been, there would have been far less impact on game habitat.

Not shown in this photo but occurring in the area are cuts which extend to steep slopes above the stream beds. This area is geologically unstable resulting in slides and accelerated erosion.

The area is high in elevation with the Continental Divide meandering along the bare ridge. In the background are the Absaroka Mountains and the Upper Wind River Valley. In the lower left corner is the South Fork of Fish Creek, a tributary to the Gros Ventre River and thence the Snake River in Jackson Hole.



Thoughts

from the

Distaff Corner

By Marge Higley



Commissioners Appointed

Governor Forrest H. Anderson of Montana has appointed two more Fish and Game Commissioners to replace the five who resigned earlier. A Billings man had already been appointed. The governor still has two vacancies to fill.

The entire Montana Fish and Game Commission resigned in protest over what the members called a lack of control over the department. Their protest was mainly aimed at Director Frank Dunkle.

Beach Use Challenged

Oregon's law which reserves dry sandy beaches for public use has come under challenge. A suit challenging the law has been filed by a motel owner who charges unconstitutional confiscation of private property. The suit has been taken under advisement by three federal judges in Portland.

Parks May Close

Idaho may be forced to close all 20 of its state parks due to lack of funds. State Parks Director Wilhelm Beckert said a mixup in funding will result in an appropriation too low to pay salaries and other expenses.

Money was appropriated for state parks operation but budgeted in such a way that it cannot be used. Beckert said he was hopeful the special session of the legislature or the governor could help resolve the problem.

Congressmen Censured

The Idaho Environmental Council has censured Idaho Congressmen James McClure and Orval Hansen for their yes vote on the SST.

Gerald A. Jayne of Idaho Falls, president of the Council, said the two House members should have followed the lead of Senators Frank Church and Len Jordan, who opposed the SST.

Jayne said he supported the contention of the two senators that the SST was a "misplaced priority and an unnecessary extravagance."

Horse Hearing Scheduled

Senator Frank Church of Idaho has announced that his Public Land Subcommittee will hold hearings April 20 on legislation to protect wild horses and burros. The Senate bill was introduced by Sen. Henry M. Jackson of Washington.

Jackson said wild horses and burros have been reduced from an estimated population of two million a century ago to 17,000 now. The remaining herds are scattered through the 11 western states.

Jackson's bill would establish 12 refuges or ranges. The refuges would be selected by a panel of qualified scientists.

Concern Expressed

The president of the Wyoming Outdoor Coordinating Council and Wyoming's representative to the National Wildlife Federation, John C. Borzea of Rock Springs, wrote Senator Gale McGee expressing deep concern over the vote on the SST. Borzea said he was shocked at news releases stating that "you now support this program."

Borzea's letter was sent before the final, and crucial vote. McGee voted for the SST.

Cossatot Sets Precedent

A court case on the Cossatot River in Arkansas may help decide the fate of many other free-flowing rivers.

A suit filed under the National Environmental Policy Act enjoined the Army Corps of Engineers from "developing" the Cossatot. The Environmental Defense Fund filed the suit and obtained an injunction.

The suit may have far-reaching implications for many rivers throughout the West which are under threat of development.

Billboard Law in Effect

Wyoming finally has a highway billboard law that is expected to be effective in reducing signs on interstate and primary highways. The law was passed by the 41st Legislature under threat of a ten per cent loss of federal highway funds.

An earlier law passed in 1967 was watered down and then completely subverted by the Wyoming Legislature. After the act was passed, the lawmakers then voted to make the entire state a commercial zone.

The new law will prohibit outdoor advertising visible from interstate or primary highways except directional or other official signs. There are other exceptions including those pertaining to scenic and historic attractions.

Prospectors May Be Restricted

Senators Mike Mansfield and Lee Metcalf of Montana, Frank Church and Len Jordan of Idaho and Frank Moss of Utah have introduced legislation which would regulate mechanized prospecting and mineral exploration on the public lands. The bill would not affect prospectors with pick and shovel. In areas where irreparable damage could be done to fragile soils, bulldozers could be prohibited. In other areas, prospectors could use bulldozers only after filing a declaration of intent as to how the prospecting was to be done and then posting a performance bond.

When is Spring?

I tore last month off the calendar today. I must have been in a rather petulant mood at the time, for I found myself suddenly resenting whoever had dreamed up the idea of a calendar in the first place. Oh sure, it was fine for him to rearrange all those days a couple of thousand years ago; but what right had he to sort out MY days and put each one in its own tidy little white square--named and numbered and placed just so, for evermore? Maybe I'd like, just once in awhile, to have a Friday come right after Sunday--or perhaps now and then have a Wednesday at the end of the week instead of always in the middle! But no-- you could turn the pages for hundreds of years and you would still find seven neat rows--Saturdays marching down the left side, and Sundays down the right, with all the other days in their proper and irrevocable places in between!

In less whimsical (and more sensible!) frame of mind, I readily admit that we do need an orderly way of denoting the passage of time--past, present, and future. No one has come up with a better one since the Gregorian calendar was devised in 1582, so I suppose that Wednesdays will duly follow Tuesdays for centuries to come. It seems to be a pretty good arrangement, so I'm not really complaining.

HOWEVER--there is just one small change that I wish the calendar people would make! I'm sure it wouldn't cause nearly as much confusion as when FDR decided to move Thanksgiving Day ahead one week. That uproar subsided when people discovered that if they were going to be thankful one day of the year, it really didn't matter which week, so long as it still happened on a Thursday! More recently, a few other days, like George Washington's birthday, have been shifted around, and no one seemed to care very much. (Were George alive today, it's just possible that there might have been at least one voice raised in protest!)

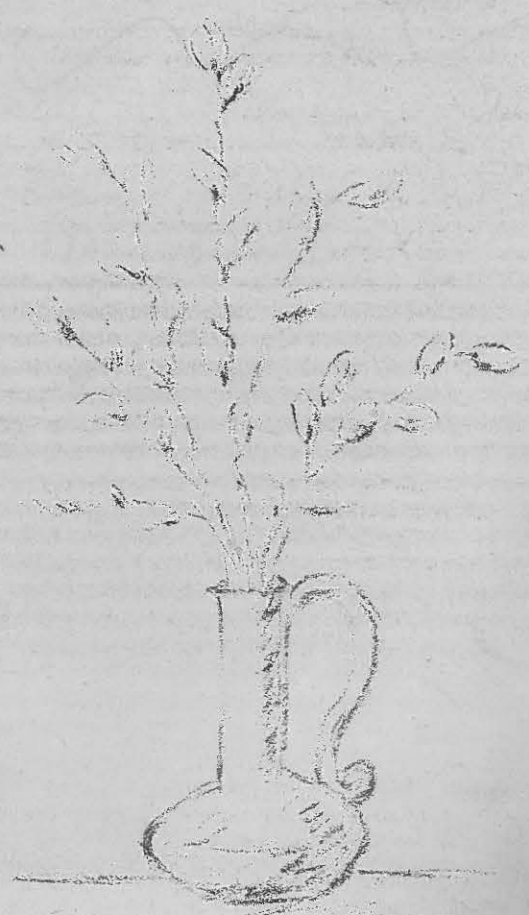
My suggestion for a change is quite simple. The date would remain the same--March 21. But underneath the number, couldn't they please just print "Equinox," instead of "First Day of Spring?"

For me, Spring doesn't begin with a day. It's more apt to come with a fleeting moment, which might be gone as unexpectedly as it arrived. Nor does it have to occur in March. The smell of warm, damp earth on a sunny February day can bring that sudden awareness that winter is nearly over. In the high mountains, I have felt that first stirring of spring as late as May or June, at the sight of dozens of dog-tooth violets, looking like tiny green and yellow court jesters, cavorting at the edge of a snowdrift.

Spring can come with the colorful flash of a bluebird's wing, as she hovers near the fence hunting straws to build her nest. Or the lilting song of the meadowlark, high in the morning sky.

A few days ago I got that "Spring is here!" feeling as I placed three twigs of soft, grey pussy-willows in the blue vase on the kitchen windowsill. By a strange coincidence, the date did happen to be March 21--but I had to put on my boots and wade through a snowbank to get them!

As far as I'm concerned, the "Beginning of Spring" will never be confined to one small white square on a page of the calendar!



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Predator Control In Wyoming

by Verne Huser

Predator control has become a national issue since this series began just a month ago as major articles on the subject have appeared in SPORTS ILLUSTRATED and in NATIONAL PARKS and CONSERVATION MAGAZINE (the NEW YORKER carried a similar article nearly a year ago, but apparently the time was not yet ripe for predator control and its accompanying poisoning programs to achieve national concern). An educational TV station in Denver is currently working on a feature dealing with predator control, and two major national conservation organizations have just filed suit against the Federal predator control agency to put an end to the abuse of the environment inherent in its far-reaching programs.

Defenders of Wildlife has for years tried to reveal to the public the practices of the Division of Wildlife Services (what a name for the agency that has as its primary goal the destruction of wildlife that serves as the natural control mechanism in an ecosystem!). Now the Sierra Club has joined DOW in a suit against the Secretary of the Interior, Acting Director Spencer Smith, and DWS chief Jack Berryman in an attempt to stop the predator control program on the grounds that it has not complied with the National Environmental Policy Act, which requires that any Federal

project conduct an environmental impact study before any of its programs begin.

In formational hearings on land management practices on public lands will be held early next week in Washington, D.C., by Senator Frank Church's Public Lands Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, and predator control on public lands will surely come up for serious consideration. Perhaps it would be fitting then to consider just what monsters fall into the predator category and just what other methods (besides poisoning) are used to control these monsters on public lands (one definition of the word MONSTER is "a threatening force," and certainly predators are monsters to those powers that litter our landscape with potent predator poisons).

In Wyoming the list of predatory animals includes the "bobcat, lynx, wolf, lion, coyote, skunk, badger, civet-cat, weasel, porcupine, jackrabbit, racoon, red fox and stray cat." (In Utah a predatory animal is any carnivorous animal not classified as a game animal.) Predacious birds in Wyoming include "English sparrow, magpie, sharp-shinned hawk, cooper hawk, gos-hawk, duck hawk, golden eagle, brown eagle, kingfisher, blue heron, great horned owl and crow." A reclassification bill introduced into the Wyoming State Legislature during the

1971 session would have given protection to all hawks, owls, eagles, the blue heron and the kingfisher as well as the mountain lion, but while it passed the House, it was held up in Senator Don Jewett's committee so long that the Senate never got around to voting on it.

The duck hawk (peregrine falcon) is one of the endangered species as far as Federal designation is concerned, but endangered species status does not necessarily provide protection. Thus in Wyoming an endangered specie is still persecuted (as is the golden eagle and whatever a brown eagle might be—immature bald eagle?). Another endangered specie, the rare black-footed ferret, has no legal protection in Wyoming, and while it is not persecuted as a predator, it is indirectly persecuted whenever prairie dogs are persecuted as pest rodents, for the black-footed ferret feeds almost exclusively upon prairie dogs. Wipe out the prairie dog, and you almost automatically wipe out the ferret, too.

Let's take a look at these monsters, the predators. Are they really as harmful as the predator controllers would have us believe? The mountain lion, rare in Wyoming (Fred Christenson has estimated a state-wide population of between 50 and 75) after decades of persecution, is still on the predator list despite the fact that several sister states in the Rocky Mountain West

have given this great cat protection of sorts by classifying it a game species and in some cases, closing the season as Wyoming did temporarily on the grizzly bear a few years ago. The mountain lion is not even listed on the Wyoming Cooperative Crop and Livestock Report among the top half-dozen predators causing cattle and sheep losses. But he is none-the-less persecuted. (By contrast, more livestock is lost to domestic dogs, but they cannot be killed by Game and Fish personnel to protect wildlife or livestock.)

The Canadian lynx is so rare in most of Wyoming as to be considered endangered as far as the state is concerned (if the state were concerned about endangered species). And certainly it can in no way be considered a major predator on livestock or on game.

An outdoorsman may consider himself fortunate to see one. The bobcat, however, is often considered a serious predator on sheep and lambs as well as on several small game species, both bird and animal. But the fact remains that bobcats are scarce in areas where coyotes dominate. How serious is bobcat predation? According to the Crop and Livestock Report mentioned above, 3.2% of Wyoming's sheep and lamb losses in 1969 were attributed to bobcats, an estimated value of \$122,000. (This estimate, however, is based upon the same faulty statistical method suggested in my last article.)

Campbell County Wool Growers' Association reports in a brochure entitled "Wyoming Ranchers: Custodians of Wyoming Wildlife," that "Coyotes and bobcats have no respect for deer and antelope any more than they have for sheep and calves when hungry or because of their desire to kill for the sake of killing." Such nonsense simply denies all ecological evidence, belies every major study of predator food habits, and brings to mind the fact that no predator but man has ever caused the extinction of a species. This fact suggests that man has no respect for certain species of wildlife but that predators other than man take what is easiest to get and consequently help maintain the balance of nature. Can the bobcat seriously be considered a major predator on domestic livestock when weighed against his predation upon rabbits and rodents? Many experts consider the bobcat at least partially beneficial to agricultural interests, especially in a state like Wyoming.

The inclusion of the stray cat on the Wyoming predator list puzzles me most of all. This is not because I don't consider such feral animals dangerous to wildlife (hardly to domestic livestock), but rather because stray dogs are, by the sheep ranchers' own statistics, the second leading killers of sheep and lambs. If the stray cat is on the predator list, why isn't the

stray dog? The Wyoming Game and Fish Commission has had major problems in some areas with game-killing dogs that often run in large packs, yet the wardens are powerless to control them. Certainly, domestic dogs running wild cause much more havoc among both domestic livestock and wildlife than all the stray cats in the state. The cats are no doubt bad on birds, and probably they should be on the predator list as introduced species, but so should stray dogs. Is it man's sentimental attachment to dogs that keeps "man's best friend" off the predator list? Sentiment and prejudice should not dictate our game laws; they should be based on sound scientific evidence and ecological principles.

Cats, especially the bigger ones, seem to be less susceptible to 1080 poisoning than the canines because most of them prefer to feed upon their own kills. But hunger may drive them to 1080 stations during the winter months. Members of the weasel clan, however, are particularly endangered by 1080 poisoning, and by a curious paradox of Wyoming Game and Fish laws, an equal number of weasels are listed as predators and as fur bearers, four.

Protected fur bearers can be—and often are—killed by poison baits as readily as are the target predators. The skunk, badger, weasel (both long-tailed and short-tailed) and the civet cat (if that is the spotted skunk) are all recognized as predators under Wyoming law. The marten, the mink, the fisher, and the otter are all classified as fur bearers and as such are at least partially protected. The wolverine, another weasel (as is the black-footed ferret) remains unclassified but may not be taken by trap—but what happens if a wolverine blunders into a trap set for something else?

The otter cannot legally be trapped either, and if one dies in a trap, the animal is supposed to be turned over to the Game and Fish wardens for disposal. Fishers are so rare in Wyoming that they are all but non-existent, yet they can be trapped during the fur season. The fisher's main food source, the porcupine, is so abundant in Wyoming that he too is on the predator list because of the damage he does to conifers, and land owners frequently poison the porcupine. Were the fisher protected and encouraged to propagate, perhaps he might control the porcupine naturally. Mink and marten are relatively plentiful in areas where illegal 1080 stations have not wiped out whole populations of carnivorous animals—but that has happened on some national forest sheep allotments in Wyoming.

Skunks may carry rabies, and rabies seems to be spreading in Wyoming, a state where the dread disease has not been common in the past. Skunks may eat bird eggs. They also eat rodents and reptiles and insects. Where do (Please turn to page 7)



Photo by Verne Huser

Owls depend almost entirely upon small mammals for their food supply. They are one of man's most efficient benefactors in that they prey upon rodents. The State of New Mexico has just taken a forward step in protecting owls, hawks and vultures.

we draw the line between harmful and beneficial attributes? Is the skunk persecuted because of his affinity for rabies? or because of his odor and nuisance quality? or because he really is doing serious harm to man's wildlife and domestic poultry? These questions need to be answered by field research. Will the skunk get a fair deal in a state so devoted to game species?

The badger is almost totally beneficial to man. Perhaps he too eats bird eggs, but when you consider all the bird and bird-egg-eating rodents the badger kills, on which side of the ledger does he belong? The weasels? Why are they on the predator list? Bird eggs again? Or domestic poultry? In Wyoming there are hardly enough chickens and turkeys, except in a few localized areas, to matter in the whole scheme of things, and again, the rodent-killing capacity of the weasels makes them more helpful than harmful. In some states they are protected as fur bearers, a strange protection to be sure, but better than persecution as predators.

The jackrabbit is a predator in Wyoming, presumably because he eats too much forage that rightfully belongs to the cattle and sheep. Doesn't anyone recognize the fact that rabbits overpopulate when coyotes and bobcats and eagles are reduced? Does no one see the relationship between the fisher and the porcupine? Protect a predator and you may reap unexpected results. The racoon is a predator in Wyoming: why? I once had a pet 'coon that ate almost everything he could get his hands on (and racoons do have hands) including eggs, but he loved frogs and crayfish best of all. He could catch and kill small fish, and he was fond of insects. Is he so dangerous to Wyoming wildlife that he too must be controlled? I wonder how all the wild creatures got along before man came along to control the predators.

Have you ever examined the casts of hawks, owls and eagles? The raptors regurgitate the indigestible parts of the prey they eat—bone and feather and fur—and you can tell positively what a bird of prey has fed upon. Great horned owls eat skunks and stray cats and rabbits and rodents; they even occasionally eat porcupines. Why persecute a bird that feeds so heavily upon what man considers pests? Wyoming Game and Fish laws relating to predators and predacious birds seem out of touch with ecological evidence. But this fault lies with the Legislature more than with the Commission, it seems to me. Many of the faults would have been corrected by the reclassification bill (HR253) that Jewett sat on too long to enable the Senate to take action. Wyoming's attitude toward the controls of nature must be changed. Predators are important to the balance of nature, and man's use of natural range for livestock is subject to natural controls. Overgrazing destroys the range, but predators protect the range by killing rabbits and rodents and larger

ungulates (even domestic livestock) when they overpopulate. The presence of predators should be a gauge to our understanding of the balance of nature and our wise use of the natural range, whether it be private land or public.

These then are the predators in Wyoming, the creatures that are poisoned and shot and trapped in the name of predator control, which often leads to further control as the balance is upset: kill coyotes, and rabbits increase; kill rabbits and eagles turn to lambs. I've discussed poisoning programs to some extent in an earlier article in this series, but three other methods of predator control continue to decimate predator numbers: denning, shooting and trapping.

Denning, the practice of finding predator dens and destroying the young of the species by gassing or by shooting or by spading (hitting them over the head with the shovel used to dig them out of their den), is one of the basic control methods used by the DWS. It may be a bit more selective than most methods employed, but it is a brutal method by most standards. (As is the common Idaho practice of rounding up great masses of rabbits and clubbing them to death on rabbit drives, barbaric family picnics sponsored by church groups and Boy Scouts and civic organizations.) Any predatory species that falls under the eye or the spade of the denner dies, even such useful species as badgers and skunks, which are generally considered more beneficial to farmers and ranchers than they are harmful. (Badgers seem to be listed as predators more for the fact that they dig huge holes in the ground than they are for destroying useful or game species.)

Shooting, another basic method of predator control practiced by the Division of Wildlife Services, includes the practice of calling predators with the sound of a dying rabbit and shooting the unsuspecting carnivore from a blind or hide-away, a highly sporting activity practiced by many "sportsmen" in the state. It is perhaps more sporting than shooting coyotes from a snowmobile in mid-winter snows: the animals, run for miles in the fresh powder, drop from exhaustion only to be run over and clubbed and shot by the



daring young man on his snow machine. Most hunters in Wyoming will aid DWS agents by shooting predators on sight, but perhaps the most effective method of shooting is from the air. This practice was used effectively against eagles until it was outlawed—and it continues to be used by lawless predator controllers, though it no longer enjoys official sanction.

The DWS does use airplanes and helicopters to control coyotes and bobcats

and almost anything that will run from the noise of a plane. One Rock Springs rancher is reported to have hired a helicopter for three hours and killed 40 coyotes. At least one flying gunner in Wyoming has made a practice of killing game animals from a plane, then landing and poisoning the carcasses with 1080 to kill predators in out-of-the-way areas. Recently, Utah's Senator Frank Moss and Wyoming Senator Cliff Hansen amended an anti-aerial-shooting law to allow ranchers to kill predators from the air on their own land, but since most ranchers consider as their own land those Federal lands on which they graze their livestock, chances are extremely high that we will have a new rash of aerial killing of predators, even on public lands.

Trapping is perhaps the most indiscriminate method used by the DWS though it is difficult to see how anything could be less discriminating than 1080. Christensen himself admits that this is the least selective control method used, but it is also the most widespread. Trapping by Federal agents is used extensively throughout the state, even in areas adjacent to national parks. Only the #3 Victor Special trap with offset jaws is used officially. Many fur trappers use the conibear trap, which kills instantly, but trapping—even for fur bearers—is so indiscriminate that frequently other species are taken including the partially-protected wolverine and the fully-protected otter. At least three bear cubs were trapped and left to rot in the traps on sheep range in the southern portion of Teton National Forest a few years ago, and a standard practice on Wyoming game bird farms until recently—when a Wyoming Legislator questioned the practice and a member of the Game and Fish Commission put an end to it—was pole-trapping birds of prey and leaving them to rot in the trap.

Trapping seems to be too indiscriminate a tool for effective use in controlling predators. Too often predator control programs are aimed at a whole specie instead of individual animals or birds that may be guilty of predation, and too often the method used is so shotgun in character as to be ineffective against the target species (though it may do a great deal of damage to non-target species). Little proof of real predation is necessary for the DWS or a local predator control agency to initiate a major campaign. In fact, predator control campaigns seem to be automatic whether there is any real problem or not. Consequently, numerous species of Wyoming wildlife are persecuted without just cause, and the ecological patterns have been altered in many parts of the state, often to the detriment of the overall wildlife picture and even to the disadvantage of the livestock.

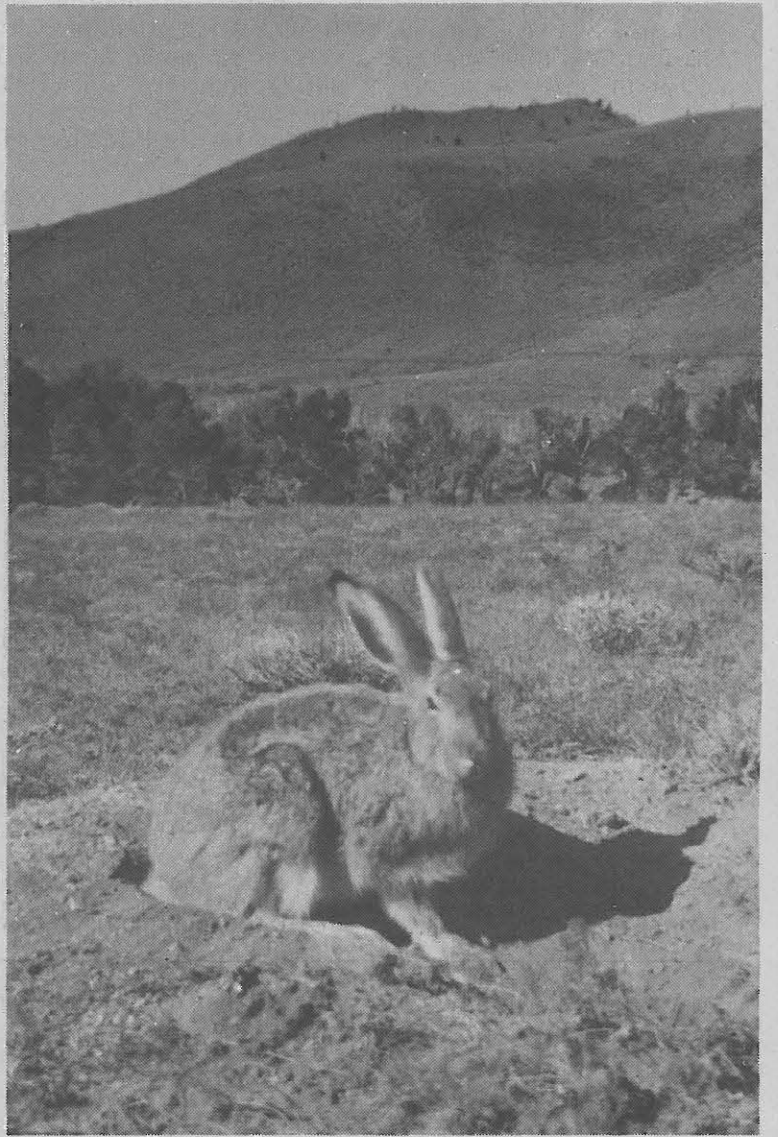
When rodent-eating birds and animals are reduced by predator-control programs, the range suffers, and a new poison campaign is initiated. All the wild creatures have their place in the total pic-

ture. Remove any one, and you have an unnatural situation that man may not have learned to control. Man can learn from nature if he will, and man cannot afford to destroy anything.

The English sparrow, a predacious bird in Wyoming, is unaffected by bacterial infections. Why? We don't know, but we'd like to destroy this pesky critter before we find out. Buffalo are immune to malaria. Is there anything in that fact for man? Yet, we

almost wiped the whole specie off the face of the earth. There is much man knows, even about the natural world, but there is infinitely more that he does not know. Will man destroy his own chance for survival because he doesn't know enough about predators? It is possible.

Every specie has its worth—though man may not yet have discovered it—and to allow any specie to disappear forever is an ecological crime that man cannot afford.



Wyoming's antiquated predator law classifies the jackrabbit as a predator.

Appointee Is Opposed

A Montana rancher appointed to the State Fish and Game Commission has raised another storm of controversy. This time conservationists applaud the appointment and fellow ranchers are in bitter opposition.

Arnold Rieder, the rancher in question, was endorsed by the Montana Wildlife Federation and his name suggested to Governor Forrest Anderson. He is a former state representative and state senator.

Rieder parted company with his fellow ranchers by supporting higher grazing fees on state lands while serving in the legislature during the early 1960's. He also supported a graduated land tax based on the productivity of land, and was instrumental in organizing the Montana Cattlemen's Association, a more liberal version of the staidly conservative Montana Stockgrowers' Association.

He is an outspoken opponent of predator control as practiced by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in behalf of the sheep industry. He is especially critical of the use of 1080 to poison coyotes and other predators.

Rieder's appointment has been opposed by both the Montana Woolgrowers' and

Montana Stockgrowers' Associations. However, it was conceded his confirmation would be difficult to deny because of many personal friends in the legislature.

Biologist Appointed

The Wyoming Game & Fish Commission has named Dr. James E. Guest as state habitat biologist. He joined the staff of the Department March 15.

Guest will be in charge of range surveys on all big game winter ranges throughout the state. His determinations on 19 different ranges will provide the Department with information on the best management policies for all wildlife.

Guest is a Wyoming native having graduated from Jackson-Wilson High School in 1960. He has masters and doctoral degrees in range management from the University of Wyoming.

His masters work was done on natural salt licks in the Jackson Hole area and his doctoral dissertation was on "Carrying Capacity on the Elk Summer Range" on the Teton National Forest.



"Him and His Shadow" took first place honors in the Sports Category. This typically Wyoming photo also named Sweep-

stakes Winner as the "Best of Show" of all daily newspaper photographs in the competition.



"Sunset on the Prairie" took first place in the Feature Category. The picture shows two children on their ranch home near Cheyenne.

A Wyoming photographer's love of doors helped him walk off with the awards in the Wyoming Press 1970 competition for daily newspaper

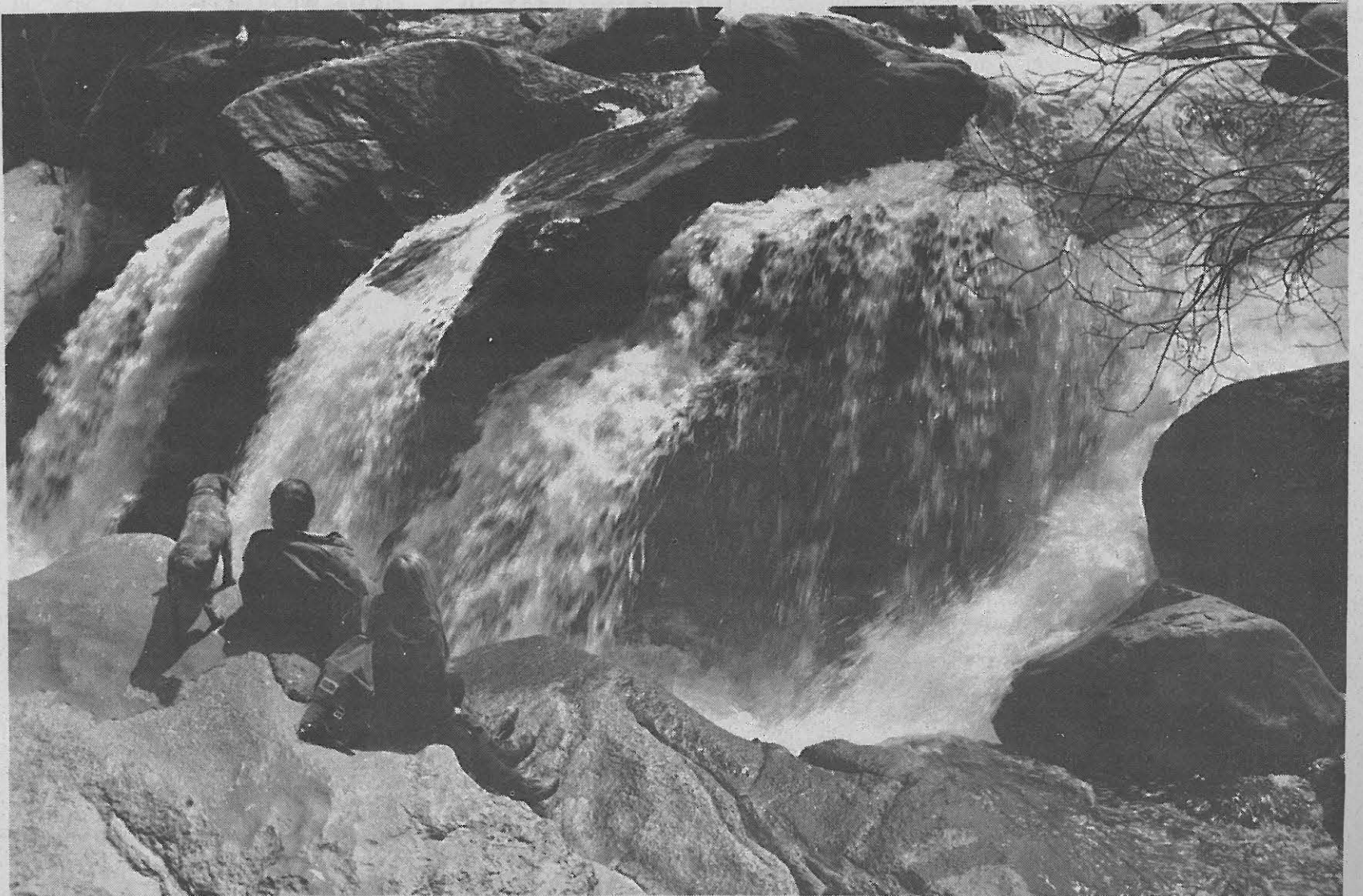
Pat Hall, former editor of *Country Weekly* (predecessor of *High Country News*) who now works for the *Sunday Tribune* in Cheyenne, won four first place awards and second place in the five categories he could enter. Hall was also awarded honorable mentions.

Scoring high with the judges were his door photographs, picturing the beginning of a new day. Some of his prize-winners are

PRIZEWINNERS



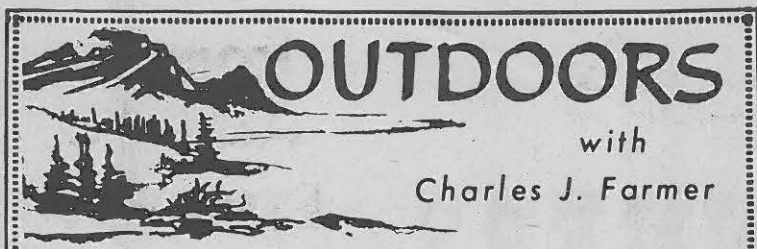
"Summer Solitude" was shot in a dandelion-sprinkled park in the Snowy Range area of Wyoming just west of Laramie. It took first place honors in the Personalities Category.



"The Falls of the Popo Agie" depicts a cool, restful spot where the Popo Agie River drops down out of the Wind River

Mountains near Lander. The photo won first place in the Pictorial Category.

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Dirty Movies

The Alaskan bull moose stood like a statue as the mighty hunter pumped a fifth bullet through the barrel of his .375 magnum rifle. It was another bad shot. The bullet shattered the bull's hind leg and left it swinging like a rickety garden gate. By this time the moose had several pieces of lead in him, scattered all over his massive frame. None of the bullets, however, had been directed toward the vital points that would result in a fast, humane kill.

The middle-aged woman sitting in front of me in the local theatre gasped at what she saw. Her husband, who had probably talked her into going to the "hunting movie" sat expressionless alongside her. He too, was obviously sickened by the distasteful sequence of bad shooting.

In the past two years there have been a string of "hunting" movies that are usually advertised a couple of weeks before their local showing "As the greatest wildlife adventure ever filmed." This pre-advertising campaign, which seems to get the full cooperation from local television and radio stations, plus newspapers, has attracted long lines in front of the ticket office.

The enthusiasm for these "great hunting adventures" that "take years to film" is short lived. Persons expecting Disney type of color reproduction and camera work, are blasted from their seats with the efforts of a shaky photographer and his collection of home movies. It is easy to see that the film did take years to produce by the variation in color quality of segments shot months or years apart.

Aside from the amateur quality of the technical aspects of movie making, the director, producer and camera man (usually one and the same man) has little regard for the sport of hunting. Knowing full well that many non-hunters will be persuaded to view the film, killing sequences are often too bloody, too long, and too frequent. If these movies have turned off hunters, can you imagine the effect they have on non-hunters?

I am not going to mention specific names of the movies in question. Actually, it is hard for me to keep the titles straight. Little imagination goes into the naming of the movies and this lack of concern seems to hold true throughout the entire 120 minutes or so. I can remember such gems as "Trails to" or "Safari to" "Path to" . . . all beginning of unorganized, shoot-em-up trips that seem to wind up in Alaska.

I saw my first, poor attempt at what was called a hunting movie two years ago. Since then, I have attended just about all the catastrophes that followed. Deep inside, I hoped that the efforts of these amateur movie makers would improve. They did not. Long ago, my hunting friends gave up going to these movies. They told me that by not buying tickets the manager of the theatre might realize that blood and guts in the outdoors is not what today's hunters want to see.

Yes, I keep going to the "hunting" flicks. The lines are not as long anymore. But if I didn't experience the blunders of amateur movie makers trying to make a fast buck, then I would not feel qualified to write about the problem.

The popcorn is usually good and sometimes it makes me forget the repetitious, guitar background music, the jumpy camera, and the bleeding color.

At a time when the sport of hunting needs all the help it can muster from concerned outdoorsmen, the hunting movie merchant is like a burr under the saddle.



Animals Fare Badly

Black-tailed deer and Roosevelt elk herds in western Oregon experienced a hard winter even though the weather has not been overly severe. However, the winter has been long, cold, and overcast, and March, with its heavy rains and snow at higher elevations, has been especially trying on the animals.

This is the report from game biologists working the west slopes of the Cascades and Coast Range who advise that many deer and elk are in very poor condition and that losses could be severe unless the weather moderates quickly.

Normally at this time of year most slopes have experienced warming trends and sunny weather which encourages greenup and some shrub growth,

providing the animals relief from the weather as well as food supplies with increased nutritional value. In contrast, the long cold and overcast conditions this winter have retarded plant growth to the point that deer and elk are consuming food with little value.

In addition to lack of nutrition, biologists report that long periods of overcast and persistent nighttime freezing followed by daytime thawing set up a toxic condition in various plants, especially ground forage such as grasses, herbs, trailing blackberry, and others. Deer and elk consuming vegetation get what is called the "scours" and soon become weak and emaciated. Numerous animals die as a result.



Photo by Charles W. Smith

Winter visitors to Jackson Hole can view thousands of elk on the Jackson Hole National Elk Refuge. Before the advent of white settlements, the elk used to migrate out of Jackson Hole to the snow-free plains and prairies to the south and east. Now, they are prevented from migrating and so must be fed hay to keep them from starving.

About 8,500 elk are on the refuge waiting for the snows to melt and the hills to become green once more. Then they will travel as far north as Yellowstone Lake.

Ecological Studies Slated

Studies on the ecological impact of clear-cutting on the Medicine Bow National Forest in southeastern Wyoming have gotten the green light from the National Science Foundation. The research will be done by a team of eight University of Wyoming students. They will work under the direction of Dr. Dennis Knight, assistant professor of botany, and Dr. Robert N. Likes, physicist at the University.

The National Science

Foundation grant is for \$14,320 for a 10-week project this coming summer. The project was drafted by Linda Rundquist, botany senior from Casper and a sophomore zoology major from Laramie, Paul Lewis. It was submitted by the Environmental Action Organization on the University campus.

In announcing the project, Knight said the project is precedent setting because it was originated, described

and all plans made by the students themselves. Apparently, NSF authorities subscribed to their ideas."

The studies will be done in order to evaluate the influence of size clear-cut areas on tree regeneration, wildlife dynamics, and effects on soils. Preliminary plans were made in cooperation with the U. S. Forest Service.

Hearings . . .

commercial timber is retained as wilderness, for those values are essential in their own right and as guides to what man must observe.

Such judgments of public interest are not solely susceptible to "professional" or "expert" answers. To assure that the public interest is achieved, real and NATURAL public involvement in all aspects and states of decision-making and operations is essential. The central finding in the Bolle Report (Report on the Bitterroot National Forest) put it this way:

"The Forest Service as an effective and efficient bureaucracy needs to be reconstructed so that substantial, responsible, local public participation in the process of policy-formation and decision-making can NATURALLY take place."

And, as Dale Burke of THE MISSOULIAN concluded in his in-depth series on the Bitterroot experience:

"Whatever the ostensible causes of the problems in the Bitterroot and elsewhere, the basic reason can be traced directly back to a lack of public involvement at a time when it was needed. If we, the public, are to claim these forests as ours, which indeed they are, then we must accept our role as watchdogs of them and insist all the time -- and not just during controversies -- that they be managed for the benefit of the resource itself and not a special interest alone."

Director Is Appointed

Secretary of the Interior, Rogers C. B. Morton, today announced the appointment of Wilford O. (Bill) Nelson, Jr. as Director of the eight-state Southwest Region of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

Nelson has been acting in that post in the regional headquarters in Albuquerque since the retirement last May of William Krummes.

Nelson began his professional career with the Bureau in Wildlife Management in Salt Lake City in 1948. Positions of increasing responsibility took him to Phoenix in 1949 and Oklahoma City in 1952. From 1957 to 1962 he was Regional Supervisor in Minneapolis of what is now known as Wildlife Services.

Nelson was in Washington, D. C. from 1962 to 1967 as Assistant Chief, Division of Wildlife Services before transferring to Albuquerque as Deputy Regional Director.

The new Regional Director, one of five in the agency, received a BS degree in Wildlife Management from Utah State University in 1948 and took additional graduate studies at George Washington University in WASHINGTON, D.C.

He resides in Albuquerque with his wife, Jo Ellen. They have three daughters.

The region covers New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas.

Air-shooting Prohibited?

Congressmen John Saylor of Pennsylvania and David Obey of Wisconsin, along with 20 other bi-partisan sponsors, have introduced a bill to prohibit the hunting of wildlife from an airplane. Similar legislation was introduced in the last Congress where it passed the House unanimously but was killed in the Senate.

The bill would amend the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 by providing a criminal penalty for shooting at certain birds, fish, and other animals from an aircraft. The bill is H. R. 5060.

Mr. Saylor, in introducing the bill, said, "It is pathetic in this day and age to note that there are human beings so devoid of compassion, so unsportsmanlike, so eager for killing, that they must use a vehicle designed for transportation in order to prey on the Nation's wildlife. One is reminded of the 1800's when 'gentlemen sportsmen' slaughtered great herds of buffalo from train platforms."

Roncalio Asks For Exemption

Wyoming Congressman Teno Roncalio testified March 23, before a House Subcommittee considering a bill on the indiscriminate slaughter of wildlife from aircraft.

The bill, H. R. 5060, is before the Subcommittee on Fisheries and Wildlife of the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries.

Roncalio said he agreed in principle with H. R. 5060 that the wanton killing of game animals and birds from aircraft be ended. He did ask that livestock owners be permitted to use aircraft in predator control operations carried out by the owners or authorized personnel. Roncalio also asked that the section authorizing permits for use of aircraft in hunting be amended to exempt livestock owners.

Roncalio noted that during 1968, predators claimed 85,200 head of sheep and lambs in Wyoming, valued at \$1,326,400. The toll nearly doubled in 1969 when predators accounted for the loss of 140,100 sheep valued at \$2,454,900.

The Wyoming Congressman emphasized that he supported predator control programs when the object was the selective elimination of game at the scene or through other effective methods that did not result in indiscriminate destruction.

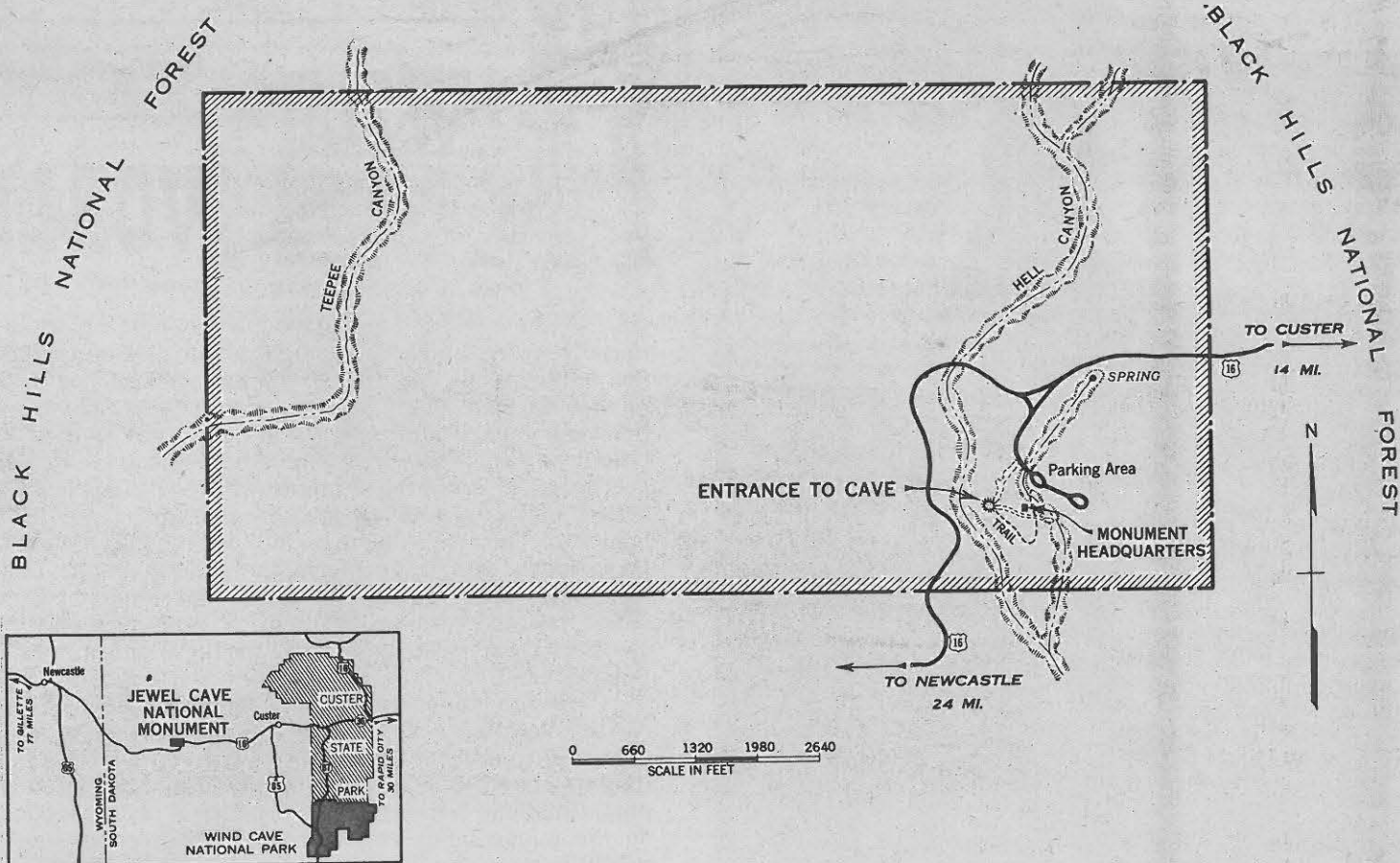
He met before the Subcommittee session with Robert P. Bledsoe, executive secretary of the Wyoming Wool Growers Association. Bledsoe, joined Edwin E. Marsh, executive secretary of the National Wool Growers, in a joint statement before the Subcommittee.

New Mexico Passes Good Legislation

The New Mexico Legislature passed legislation putting all environmental controls under a new Environmental Improvement Agency. The new agency is expected to provide a broad foundation on which strong and far-reaching controls, regulations and legislation can be built.

Other important environmental legislation included bills to allow the State Public Service Commission to consider environmental factors in locating utility plants and transmission lines, to protect the cougars from indiscriminate shooting, to protect hawks, owls, and vultures, and to prevent destruction or defacement of natural features, trees, and rocks.

Defeated in the recent session were bills to control subdivisions and provide for better land use planning, to provide for a state wild and scenic rivers system, and to create a forestry commission and a commission to study population trends and controls.



Jewel Cave Small But Beautiful

Jewel cave is small but beautiful. The walls of many of its underground chambers are lined with a solid coating of dogtooth calcite crystals which sparkle like jewels in the light. Because of this unique, colorful formation, the cave and a protective surface area of 1,275 acres were set aside as a national monument by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1908.

Jewel Cave National Monument is located 14 miles west of Custer, South Dakota, and 24 miles east of Newcastle, Wyoming. The area was originally recorded as a mining claim, known as Jewel Lode, after its discovery by two prospectors, Albert and F. W. Michaud, on August 18, 1900.

While out prospecting, the Michaud brothers were attracted by the noise of wind coming from a small hole in the limestone cliffs on the east side of Hell Canyon. In the hope of discovering valuable minerals and locating the source of the wind, these men, in company with Charles Bush, enlarged the opening.

The Michaud brothers believed they had discovered a cave which would be of great interest to tourists in the Black Hills. They built a log house nearby for the accommodation of visitors. However, they were unable to attract enough people to make the venture a financial success.

The area is surrounded by the Black Hills National Forest of which it was once a part. It remained under the administration of the Forest Service until 1933 when it was transferred by Executive order to the National Park Service.

The national monument is located on a high, rolling plateau ranging from 5,200 to 5,800 feet above sea level. The plateau is broken by many gulches and ravines. The entrance to the cave is on the side of one of these ravines known as Hell Canyon.

The main passages of Jewel Cave are supplemented by side galleries and chambers of various sizes. The first chamber is of dense,

fine-grained limestone, and somewhat resembles the Gothic style of architecture. About 500 feet from the entrance the walls and roofs of a number of galleries are lined with a thick crystalline calcite. The rooms and chambers have different colors, ranging from a peculiar light-green tint to darker greens and bronze.

Boxlike cavities along the walls and ceiling of the cave are covered with minute crystals which stand in bold relief from the ground mass. These attractive crystals range in color from light brown to deep chocolate. Clumps of crystals of various sizes and shapes are found in the walls and passageways.

For the past 63 years Jewel Cave has experienced a gradual increase in annual visitation. During the 1970 summer season 33,111 visitors took the half-mile, hour-long traditional gasoline lantern tour of the area immediately inside the natural cave entrance.

Late last year ground was

broken on Jewel Cave's first visitor center. Corner Construction Company of Rapid City is now engaged in foundation work on the site. The building is due for completion by the end of this year and should be dedicated at the start of the 1972 summer season. 1972 will witness the centennial celebration of our National Parks and will usher in a new era in Jewel Cave's history. The modern visitor center will include elevator service to provide public access to a scenic and heretofore remote section of Jewel Cave. A half-mile tour route has been carefully laid out through one of the more interesting and colorful portions of the cave. A paved trail with aluminum stairs and handrails along with indirect lighting will insure the visitor a safe, comfortable, and pleasing cavern experience.

The traditional lantern tours which enter the cave through its natural opening in Hell Canyon will continue to be conducted by the National

Park Service. These ranger guided subterranean adventures will be run on a greatly reduced schedule after the opening of the new visitor center however. It is hoped that Jewel Cave will have "something for everyone" starting on the 100th anniversary of the National Park idea in 1972. The monument visitor will have a choice--the "red carpet" tour for those who seek beauty and inspiration, or the "primitive crawl" for spelunkers who want exercise and the physical feel of the cave. Of course the true troglodyte won't be satisfied until he's experienced both aspects of the cave!

Meanwhile, slowly, carefully, quietly Herb and Jan Conn continue their patient exploration of the vast subterranean network of passageways--36 miles surveyed and mapped with no end in sight. Who knows? Perhaps Jewel Cave is destined to become known as one of the major cavern systems of the world!

Land Use Planning A Must

Colorado's Lieutenant Governor, John D. Vanderhoof, at a recent meeting in Denver, said comprehensive land planning is a must. He said 'bitter experience' has shown growth in itself may not necessarily be good, and that modern man must learn how to channel it.

"We have had enough--from mercury poisoning of unknown origin to the endless search for the balance between the need for growth in some areas of our state, and the obvious dangers of further growth in others, to recognize the need for planning--immediate, comprehensive planning," he said.

Vanderhoof said Colorado's Land Use Commission is developing an Interim Land Use Plan. The plan is to be developed from four sources:

—A survey of interaction of nature with man-made

development.

—A survey documenting land policies and controls as they now exist.

—A system which documents how man-made changes can affect the world.

—Information which exists in files such as those of county

assessors to monitor changes in ownership and a possible consequent change in use.

Vanderhoof said, "We have come to realize that the hostility between man and his environment must end, or man, the victor, will be destroyed."

Sheep Wintered Well

Oregon's bighorn sheep pulled through the winter in fine shape as evidenced by the sighting of more than 60 of these great game animals on Hart Mountain and the Steens, the two main areas in which the sheep reside.

Biologists of the Hart Mountain Antelope Refuge on an aerial flight recently sighted 32 bighorns on Poker Jim Ridge to the north of the headquarters, one of the principal wintering areas. Of the sheep observed, 12 were mature rams, several in the

trophy class.

Ellis Mason, district biologist for the Game Commission at Burns, sighted 29 bighorns in the Steens Mountain area recently as he was making a routine flight to tally antelope on the Harney County ranges. Mason tallied 12 rams in the herd, several with full curls. All of the bighorns were observed on the east face, generally in the vicinity of Cottonwood and Big Alvord drainages.



Photo by Ted Carlson

Abuses of the public lands result in starving game, loss of habitat, and a general deterioration of man's environment. The abuses can come from overgrazing, too many roads with too many 4-wheel drive vehicles, and the ever-ready bulldozer.

The abuses are perpetuated by special interests and antiquated laws. Amongst the worst of the latter is the Mining Act of 1872. Below is shown an area in central Wyoming where the surface of the ground is deliberately laid open to the forces of erosion. The purpose is to expose chunks of jade which might not naturally weather out for 100 years or more.

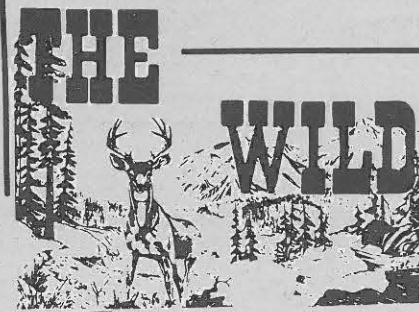


Areas of Action

Senator Frank Church, chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Public Lands will hold two days of hearings (April 5-6) on management practices on the public lands. These lands include about 187 million acres in the national forests, 23 million acres in the national parks, 27 million acres in national wildlife refuges, and 476 million acres administered by the Bureau of Land Management. The hearings are not being held on a specific piece of legislation. But statements and comments made for these hearings will have a bearing on many bills now pending. Management practices on the public lands cover many areas. These include: timbering practices, mining practices, grazing practices and fees, predator controls, wildlife administration and management (where these are under federal control), wild horse ranges, and many more. If you have concerns or strong feelings about any of these matters, please write Senator Church and request that your letter be included in the hearing record. Statements are especially needed from professional and scientific sources on specific matters.

* * *

Those interested in preserving a part of the Old West and protecting the few remaining wild horses and burros have an unprecedented opportunity. Nearly one hundred members of the House have co-sponsored H. R. 5375, and a number of senators have introduced legislation to provide protection, management and control of wild, free-roaming horses and burros on the public lands. You can write your congressman asking support for H. R. 5375 and write both of your senators requesting support for S. 1116, introduced by Senator Henry Jackson. Letters to Senator Jackson are especially needed in time for upcoming hearings (April 20) on his bill. At that time the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee will hold hearings on S. 1116.



by Verne Huser

WORLD

Are you a public land user? Do you hunt on BLM or Forest Service land? Do you snowmobile or camp, hike or fish on the public domain? If you use public lands in any form or fashion, there is a new organization for you: the National Council of Public Land Users (P. O. Box 811, Grand Junction, Colorado 81501). Membership is \$5 a year.

The objectives of the organization are 1) to preserve the access and use of the Federal and State Public Lands for the general public as they have an individual equity interest in these lands, and 2) to inform the general public of the conditions which prevail on these lands and to suggest action for preservation of their interests. Frankly, the organization seems to be gunning for the Western livestock range permittee.

A resume of the December, 1969, resolutions of the NCPLU may give the reader a better idea of what the organization is about: "WHEREAS it is reported that more than 90% of Colorado's water supply originates on federal public land and WHEREAS the practice of using herbicides on the public lands contaminates a high percentage of public waters used for human consumption, and WHEREAS the practice of using 1080 poison baits, and other poisons, to eliminate wildlife from the public lands leads to contamination of public waters which is used for human consumption, and WHEREAS these practices are primarily for the benefit of a few, special, privileged domestic livestock permittees and destructive in effect, BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED in the name of conservation of human resources, health and safety, the above practices be discontinued immediately."

Two current developments in Federal government relate to the efforts of NCPLU: 1) on April 5 and 6 Senator Frank Church will hold public information hearings on management practices on the public lands (Church is chairman of the Subcommittee on Public Lands of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs); 2) the Division of Wildlife Services, the federal predator control agency that uses most of the 1080 in this country, is being sued by the Sierra Club and the Defenders of Wildlife.

Just a year ago Paul Maxwell, president of NCPLU and a former writer for the Defenders of Wildlife News, conducted a Sierra Club-sponsored tour of northwestern Colorado which I accompanied. We were looking for overgrazing and illegal fencing on BLM land (we found both), for evidence of antelope problems with BLM fencing (we found that, too), and for illegal (unmarked) 1080 stations and coyote getters (cyanide guns), which we did not find. Herb Snyder, who is secretary of the NCPLU, also made that trip.

Both Snyder and Maxwell are active conservationists devoted to ending the abuse of the land and of the wildlife that roams on the land, not as freely as before BLM fencing but in abundance in many areas nonetheless. Maxwell is a former government (DWS) trapper who left the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife position because he didn't care for the federal predator control practices. Maxwell has also raised coyotes--has them around the house as pets.

Another question raised recently by a closely-related organization--Canadian and American Wolf Defenders--is the matter of shooting predators from airplanes. Utah's Senator Frank Moss and Wyoming's Senator Clifford Hansen amended an anti-aerial shooting bill to allow ranchers to kill predators from the air on their own ranches. With their BLM grazing lands fenced from the public, the ranchers may feel justified in killing predators on their grazing allotments, and I say "What right have they to kill my coyotes on my land?"

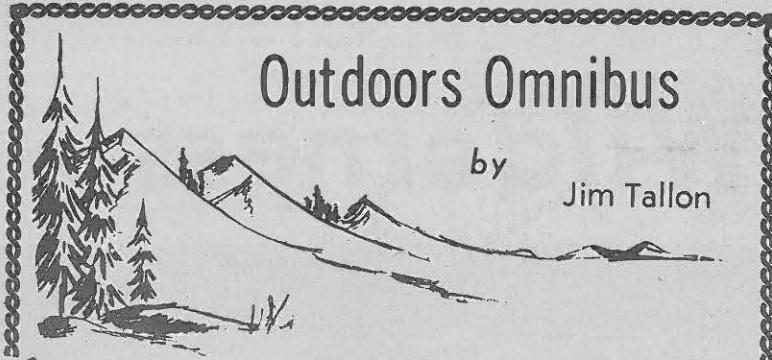
If you are interested in putting an end to hunting from aircraft, you might write your Senators (Hansen may be a lost cause on this one) and your Representative asking them to support Senate Bill 78 and House Bill 5060. These companion bills both prohibit shooting or attempting to shoot from an aircraft and bird, fish, or animal over U.S. owned public lands, but the Senate version still carries the Moss-Hansen Amendment (you might ask your Senators to reject the amendment if you have the same doubts that I have).

So more and more the public is calling into question the use and abuse of public lands. Why should my land be fenced for his use to the detriment of my antelope? Why should my forests be cut down for his profit to the detriment of my elk? Why should he poison my coyotes on my land and allow my rodents to overpopulate so he can poison again? Now is a good time to voice your opinion about your views on public land use. The record of Senator Church's hearing will remain open through the month of April. Why not write him?



Outdoors Omnibus

by
Jim Tallon



No Room for Reasoning On Rods

When I learned that Congressmen Pat Froun and Thomas Frawd had jetted into town, I called their hotel for an interview. Always anxious to meet the press, Froun and Frawd postponed a social visit with the governor and his aides. They welcomed me into their suite in unison which is easy for them to do. As most of you know, Congressmen Froun and Frawd are Siamese twins joined at the brain. In fact, they are the only Siamese twins in the world to have different fathers.

They are perhaps best noted for the introduction of their controversial bill H. R. 1993993-Z, Registration and Confiscation of Rods as Potentially Lethal Weapons. Froun and Frawd are strongly behind STUPID (Society Tending to Usurp Piscatorial Instruments Dramatically).

"Tell me, Congressmen," I said, aiming my portable tape recorder's mike at them.

"See-curity!" Froun and Frawd screamed, evidently believing the tapered mike to be some sort of lethal weapon.

In an instant, two burley plainclothesmen pinned me to the top of a cocktail table while they dismantled the mike. Of course they found nothing, and with apologies in order, the interview resumed.

"Gentlemen," I said, "exactly how do you feel about rods?"

"Acceptable, if they're holding up curtains," said Froun.

"Yes, curtains," said Frawd.

"I understand you were quoted by a Washington, D.C. newspaper as saying no American should be permitted to own a concealable rod."

"That's exactly right, especially those Abercrombie and Fitch shoulder-holster models," said Froun.

"Shoulder-holster?" I questioned. "You mean those little rods that break down into half-a-dozen sections and fit in a small pouch for carrying inside a coat pocket?"

"Pouch, shoulder-holster, one and the same," said Froun.

"Yes, one and the same," Frawd echoed.

"There can be no reason," Froun went on, "for American citizens owning rods under 19 inches. H.R. 1993993-Z will see to it that all such rods are confiscated, and anything longer, registered. Nearly every day senseless tragedy results directly from the use of rods."

"Could you cite an example?" I asked.

"I'll answer that one," Frawd injected. "One of your own local fishermen, Al Ellis, nearly met his demise while trying to match the distance of spin-tackle with casting-tackle while surf-fishing. Ellis suffered such a severe backlash that he was bound hand and foot with 12-pound test monofilament and might have drowned had not friends rescued him. As it was, all the fishermen in the group had to miss lunch while trying to unravel Ellis."

"Furthermore," Frawd added, "rods represent a serious threat as a potential for homicide, aggravated assault, robbery, rape and other crimes. In 1969 two felons held up a pony-keg station in Philadelphia with two seven and one-half-foot medium action spinrods. They backed the owner into a corner at rod-point. The owner, a past-president of the Philadelphia fly-fishing club, whipped his 9-foot flyrod from out of the corner and disarmed one of the felons with a roll-cast. Distracted by the move, the second felon was downed by a blow to the head from the butt of the rod which was loaded with a Pflueger Medalist single-action fly-reel, leaving Pflueger permanently tattooed in reverse across the felon's forehead."

"Congressman Frawd paused to take a deep breath before going on, "Young man, I'm telling you, the day of such dueling is over!"

"Congressman Froun picked up the ball, "Consider, if you will, that at the present time any American citizen can go into sporting goods stores and buy a rod. How do we know such purchases are made for legitimate recreation? How do we know such purchases aren't being made to commit diabolical crimes?"

"I understand that the basis of your authoring H.R. 1993993-Z was, in your own words, 'Over 18,000 Americans were whacked soundly with rods during 1970,'" I said.

"That's right," they said.

"Some think these figures were intended to lead the American public to believe that all 18,000 were 'criminally' whacked people. However, a more thorough investigation showed that less than 5,000 people were criminally whacked, the balance of rod incidents being made up of accidental, self-inflicted whacks, and rods being used across certain bottoms as educational devices."

"Whacks are whacks, as far as we're concerned," Froun said. "You forget to mention the suicide, where the owner of some 67 rods made the mistake of telling his wife he was going to buy another."

"I understand there are over 20,000 firearms regulations on the books to stop purveyors of such crimes you mentioned earlier," I said. "Do you think that H.R. 1993993-Z alone will put an end to such distasteful use of fishing rods?"

"Well, it's a start, and you've got to start someplace," Froun replied. "Once we get H.R. 1993993-Z enacted, we've

other things planned for the American public."

"You keep saying 'American public' and 'American citizens,'" I said. "How do you feel about Czechoslovakians. They're still permitted to own fishing rods, you know."

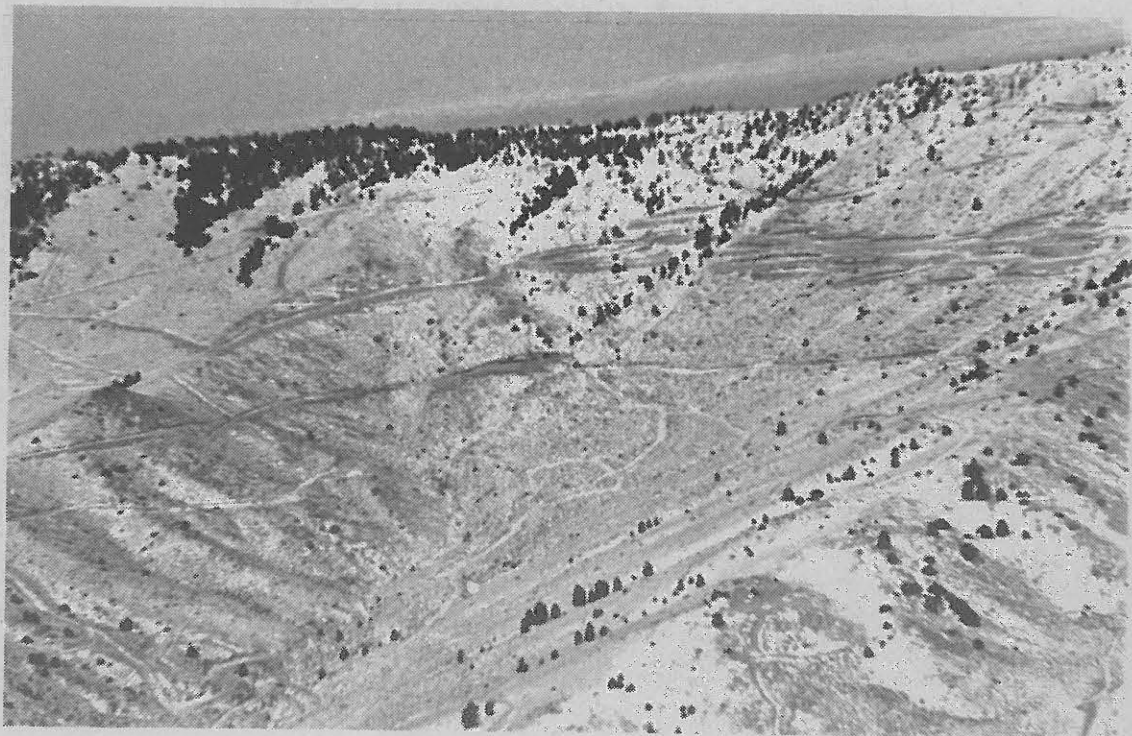
"We're only concerned with the safety and welfare of our own people," they said, again in unison.

With that the interview ended. As I departed I noticed that Frawd had picked up the telephone and was talking to Froun on an extension. It seems I heard... "lures... reels... next."



Photos by Bob Gorsuch

Mineral exploration and mining operations on the public lands of the West have desecrated thousands of acres. Existing laws and regulations cannot cope with demands upon the land. What is needed are restrictions on operations and meaningful reclamation of damaged lands. These two photos show the dozed roads along steep slopes where mineral exploration was conducted, and a steep-walled open pit, now mined out and left for the ages. These are in Wyoming but reasonable facsimiles can be found throughout the West. The public can contribute to a redress of these lands by writing to Senator Frank Church and expressing their concern. The address is Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. Send copies to your own senators.



Reprint of Rare Johnson County War Document

When the Northwestern Livestock Journal published the confession of Geo. Dunning on Oct. 14, 1892, it set Wyoming on her ear.

The cattlemen raided the newspaper office and destroyed 24,000 copies of that paper but one survived.

The Powder River Press has acquired that copy and has issued a limited edition of reprints in exact facimilie.

Johnson County war buffs will want to read the confession "Just as it appeared," and see the gaps in advertising space where the cattlemen had boycotted the paper.

If you are sympathetic with the rustlers "you can't afford to miss this important reprint." And if you are a catile baron and still feel that way about it, you'll probably want to buy a copy and burn it.

Send \$3.50 for each copy to—Powder River Press, P.O. Box 153, Dept. HCN, Cheyenne, Wyo. 82001.

The Gros Ventre Wilderness

Sunday morning we dismantled our camp on Jagg Creek and walked through sagebrush and lodgepole, dodging the thicker timber along the lake shores to establish our next base at the head of The Six Lakes. Here, we put our tents up in a picture setting, near a cascading waterfall which turbulently tossed its waters into the largest of the lakes. The roar of the plunging water provided a perfect tranquilizer for sleep the ensuing two nights.

Under the waterfalls, a pair of water ouzels skittered beneath the surface, often to emerge with a food morsel. Then they disappeared into the underside of their marvelously constructed and skillfully placed nest, to feed their young charges.

Exotic wildflowers such as Parry primrose, shooting star, silky phacelia, splitleafed painted cup and lupine bloomed in profusion all around our camp.

Some of the group pitched their tents on a spit of land which jutted into the lake, and swam in the clear water. Occasionally, we were told, the lake goes dry. Consequently, there were no fish in it because there is very little restocking in these remote areas. In the spring of 1970, it had filled up so rapidly, it had overflowed its banks. Grass and sedges which were still green could be seen twenty feet beneath the surface.

Others of our group climbed the escarpment which joins Crystal Peak to Black Peak for another view of the Six Lakes, Crystal Canyon,

hikers to the north. The ridge group also encountered considerable specimens of petrified wood which was of low quality due to its makeup of soft, limestone-like material. Pausing at a small secluded lake in the trees they watched wild ducks as they circled overhead, landing occasionally in the water. The ducks provided good entertainment as each hiker relaxed and ate his lunch.

The Ridge group of hikers now descended into the broad valley near where the Gros Ventre nearly doubles back upon itself as it loops around the easternmost extent of Sportsman Ridge. Here the river meanders through a broad U-shaped valley, as it makes its way from the headwaters near Corner Peak.

Fording the Gros Ventre we made our camp on the shores of a gem-like lake which reflected the image of Darwin's Peak to the south as if it were a mirror. As far as we knew this lake was unnamed, but what could be more appropriate than Darwin Lake?

We found excellent fishing for brook trout in two nearby, more shallow lakes. The fish were hard to catch in Darwin Lake. They had become skittish of fishermen who had been there before and wise about lures. In the smaller lakes, however, they quickly took to a meps spinner and we were in business. The fishermen in our group caught their limits and shared their string with the entire outfit the next morning, contributing the



Steamboat Peak near the southeast terminus of the Gros Ventre Range in the proposed Gros Ventre Wilderness Area in Wyoming.

left Darwin Peak stood its lonely sentinel. Each of these peaks present a much more rugged surface on the south and east than they do on the north and west, because the rains come into the Upper Gros Ventre Valley from the Green River Basin to the south. Consequently, the southern faces of the peaks are more heavily eroded.

One can only ponder what the effect of the proposed development of the Upper Green River Basin would have on the ecology of the Upper Gros Ventre Valley. It seems logical to assume that the evaporation of the proposed artificial lakes would predispose more rainfall to occur here since the prevailing weather is from that direction.

The entire Gros Ventre is unstable as is evidenced by the landslides and the drifting of rock as seen in many places. (More landslides are believed inevitable at many points along the Gros Ventre River.) The core of the Gros Ventre is the oldest of known rock but a large sedimentary layer of shale and limestone overlays much of the range. The texture of these rocks can be described as soft and dry. In many places sagebrush grows almost to timberline. Tundra has failed to develop on many of the alpine peaks. The entire area is in a delicate ecological balance.

Our camp at the head of the Gros Ventre was perched on a shelf of a hillside overlooking the valley below. Immediately across from us loomed the massive bulk of Black Peak. On the south end of Black Peak a huge monolith of limestone appeared, pearl-like in the crystal-clear mountain air, as it stood, a fortress-like bastion. Huge chunks of limestone, some the size of a small house, rested in the boulder field under this rampart of limestone.

The highest peaks of the Gros Ventre Range, Triangle, Hodges and Doubletop (11,715') were at our backs. Our picturesque camp was right on the edge of the alpine zone. Snow was only a few steps away, as there had been

a heavy fall in April which lingered far into the summer. Locales that would ordinarily be in their day season were now in full bloom. There were still deep banks of snow in the high peaks.

We viewed bighorn sheep through our outfitter's excellent telescope as they picked their way over the jagged cliffs on Black Peak. Some of our party hiked into the tundra, exploring the rocks and looking for unusual wildflowers such as mountain heath, marsh marigold, alpine forget-me-nots, sky pilot and moss campion. A few climbed the summits of the peaks and walked along the high ridges, enjoying the cool crisp air and the many vistas of distant peaks and valleys.

We saw our first coyote in two summers in Wyoming's wilderness areas beneath the cliffs of Black Peak. Looking at us as if to say, "this is man, I must fear him," he gracefully tucked his tail, and then his perfectly camouflaged image disappeared into the rocks as if he were a part of the country. Coyotes are still thought of as a bounty species in large areas of the Western United States. One wonders if man will exterminate them from most of their range as he has the grey wolf. It is a unique experience to see them in a wild setting such as the Gros

Ventre.

Sunday, July 25, our party took down their tents, packed their gear and made the steep climb to the pass between Corner Peak and the higher peaks to the east. We made our way across the



snowbanks to a forest service trail which descends 3500 feet along Swift Creek to Granite Creek near the vicinity of Hot Springs. Wind swept Idaho white pine, crownless and contorted, bravely challenged the elements and marked timberline as we entered the trees again. Douglas fir now shared the slopes with lodgepole pine.

The trail was very steep. Horses had recently used it, dislodging small rocks that would otherwise provide footholds. These rocks now flipped over with the touch of a human foot. This made our descent hazardous. The trail criss-crossed Swift Creek and (Please turn to page 15.)



Late afternoon shadows show to good advantage the scars of erosion on the southeastern flank of Black Peak in the proposed Gros Ventre Wilderness Area. An elevated terrace appears at the base of the limestone "dike"

and the surrounding mountains - the Wind Rivers, the Absarokas and the Tetons.

Tuesday morning, we split into two equal groups of 10 each and walked to the eastern side of Black Peak via different routes. One contingent took the longer but easier walk, to the north of Black Peak. The other skirted over the north ridge, viewing beautiful grotesque, wind-sculptured rock formations and strange crevices under the rocks, apparently the result of underground erosion through the ages. A large heard of elk was "spooked" accidentally by the ridge group, into the path of the

delicacy of fresh trout for breakfast.

We were now camped off a little to the east of the Gros Ventre River. A short distance away was Upper Falls and below this Ouzel Falls. On our lay-over day some visited the falls, others fished and some just relaxed in camp. By now, most of us were beginning to feel at home in the Gros Ventre.

We left our good fishing grounds Thursday, with our cameras, lunches and other paraphernalia and headed up the valley for our last camp at the head of the Gros Ventre River. To our right and ahead was Black Peak, and to our



The Wilderness Society party pauses at the summit of its journey near Corner Peak. A Forest Service trail marker appears in the center.

Hells Canyon...

only by historical accident that Hells Canyon does not already have a protective designation, as it was simply not well known until lately. Historical accident is no reason to give the ubiquitous dam builders any additional advantage; rather we should move to protect the area immediately. We lost Glen Canyon to a dam-hungry bureau which still uses tax dollars to propagandize on the virtues of the reservoir it created, because not enough people knew what was being lost to stop it. We do not intend to allow Hells Canyon to become the "Glen Canyon of the Northwest."

"Hells Canyon is not only the deepest gorge on Earth, but it contains one of the wildest rivers in America, one representing great prehistoric and historic value. Here are found unique combinations of plants and wildlife, in addition to the great variety of both, and most of the vegetative zones in North America are compressed into this small area between river and mountain top. Far more than a matter of recreation is involved, although that is important and is fantastically provided for in Hells Canyon; it is a matter of a land ethic. As Aldo Leopold put it, we must extend our ethic to include not only individuals, and society as a whole, but also to include the biotic community. If we do not soon show more respect for such incredible natural areas as Hells Canyon, as well as for the areas where we do extract our food, fiber, and minerals, I'd say the land ethic is down the road a ways, for we may not have another chance. It is highly probable that 500 years from now, if western civilization is still intact, the accomplishment for which we are best remembered will be, not our gadgets, our agriculture, nor our medicine, but the pieces of land we left alone. The destruction of each natural area reduces that much more the likelihood that man will survive with even the modest degree of sanity we now enjoy.

"2. Conservationists are frequently patted on the head and assured by Moratorium backers that 'Time is on your side'. This may or may not be true. If there is one

significant unknown in the Hells Canyon issue, I would say it is just that. However, true or not, the claim is quite irrelevant to the present need for protection.

"3. The preservation option is, for better or worse, the option, and the only one, which is reversible. If we preserve Hells Canyon, and some future generation decided, heaven forbid, that a dam were needed, the option would not be physically foreclosed. But for now at least, it makes no sense to claim we need more food produced from more

Park Roads Are Opened

Glacier National Park Superintendent William J. Briggie today announced that spring opening of park roads began on March 24 and is expected to be completed by June 10 with the opening of the Going-to-the-Sun Road over Logan Pass. Annual park road opening usually starts at this time with snow plowing of lower elevation roads in the vicinity of Lake McDonald, then operations extend throughout the park and up the Sun Road towards Logan Pass.

During the two month period usually required for opening the Going-to-the-Sun Road snow drifts of sixty feet or more in depth are frequently encountered for which large bulldozers are used to excavate to the road before rotary snow plows can be used in clearing the road surface.

The following road opening dates are approximate as snow conditions, along with weather can influence this schedule: Camas Creek and Fish Creek Road, April 9; Sun Road, McDonald Lodge to Avalanche Campground, April 24; Sun Road, Avalanche Campground to Loop, April 30; St. Mary - Jackson View Overlook, May 15; North Fork, May 22; Many Glacier, May 8; Two Medicine, May 30; Chief Mountain, May 15.

Briggie said that as a safety precaution, snowmobiles are prohibited on sections of roads on which snowplows are operating and that all plowed roads are closed to snowmobiling.

irrigated land in Southwest Idaho, even if it were economically feasible to pump water for it from Hells Canyon. At what point will we really TRY TO HALT the all-too-rapid conversion of the Earth into an anthill designed to support the maximum number of humans possible? We won't do it by growing more potatoes on more 'reclaimed' land in Southwest Idaho. Nor would we make any appreciable dent in world human hunger.

"4. The Moratorium would do nothing to protect the high country adjacent to the Middle Snake from imminent road-building and logging. The National River Bill would, but without it or some comparable legislation, we will lose another of our de facto wilderness areas. There isn't enough wilderness left in the United States now, and we can ill afford to lose any more of it.

"Please give further consideration to co-sponsoring the Hells Canyon-Snake National River Bill. Idaho needs strong conservationist leadership for many reasons; one of the most important of these is Hells Canyon."

In future issues, HIGH COUNTRY NEWS will give more insight into the controversy and the issues surrounding Hells Canyon, use the words of conservationists in their plea for protection, and explain the proposal for a Hells Canyon-Snake National River.

Gros Ventre

it's estuaries. This was a very steep and precipitous walk but we could be thankful that we were descending.

Shortly after noon the entire party had reached the buses at Granite Creek which were waiting to return us to the lodge. Some of us plunged our feet into the icy waters of the creek and heaved a welcome sigh of relief for hot, sore and tired muscles. We boarded the buses and traveled downstream along Granite Creek to it's intersection with the Hoback River. Here, we turned right, or west, along the Hoback, leaving it's banks in a few miles to pass through Jackson and Jackson Hole; under the towering Tetons and then on to the lodge, arriving in the late summer afternoon. Our trip was now the subject of reflection and memory.

A bill has recently been introduced into the United States Senate by Wyoming's Senator Cliff Hansen to set aside 145,550 acres of the Gros Ventre for inclusion in the National Wilderness System. This area is a "natural" for a perpetual wilderness. The unusual environment here affords a valuable opportunity for observation and study of a range which abounds in game in spite of it's fragile ecological balances. Left as it is, it can be an instrument through which man can better understand himself and the earth of which he is a part. Placing it under the protection of the Wilderness Act will assure present and future generations the opportunity for a unique wilderness experience.

Environmental Eavesdropper

LOONEY LIMERICKS

by Zane E. Cology

When the dam's water churned and roiled,
The fish's blood bubbled and boiled.
Too much nitrogen
Got in it -- and then,
The fish's whole life was spoiled!

The Sierra Club and the Defenders of Wildlife have filed an injunction against the Interior Department for using poison to control animals. The two national conservation groups charge that predator control programs have resulted in the loss of many harmless animals and birds some of which are on the endangered list.

The Environmental Protection Agency has ruled that use of DDT and 2, 4, 5-T can continue until a ruling is made "within a year." The two pesticides, along with aldrin, dieldrin and Mirex, the termite and fire ant control, will be reviewed for environmental hazards.

The Conference Board, a non-profit business research organization, said new autos go onto the nation's highways at the rate of 6,000 a day. Half of the growth is accounted for by families which already own two or more cars.

The Environmental Defense Fund has been awarded a \$285,000 grant by the Ford Foundation. EDF enlists lawyers to defend the public interest in environmental issues.

The Commission of Population Growth and the American Future has recommended an explicit population control policy. The Commission said, "Despite the pervasive impact of population growth on every facet of American life, the United States has never developed a deliberate policy on the subject." Specific recommendations will be made in a final report.

A British Columbia research scientist, fired two weeks ago for outspoken criticism, says a \$7 million sport fishery on Kootenay Lake is seriously threatened by a dam. E. H. Acara says poor-quality water spilled from Dancan Dam into the lake may wipe out a population of the world's largest rainbow trout.

The Montana Chamber of Commerce was severely criticized by the 11-member legislative delegation from Missoula County. The bi-partisan group said the state chamber was not only jeopardizing "their image throughout the state but damaging rapport with the legislature." The legislators said, "The Montana Chamber categorically opposed almost every proposal related to pollution control... They made no effort toward discussion or compromise. 'Industry' was the key concept. Anything that vaguely threatened its omnipotence was to be stamped out."



To keep informed on environmental matters in the Rocky Mountain area

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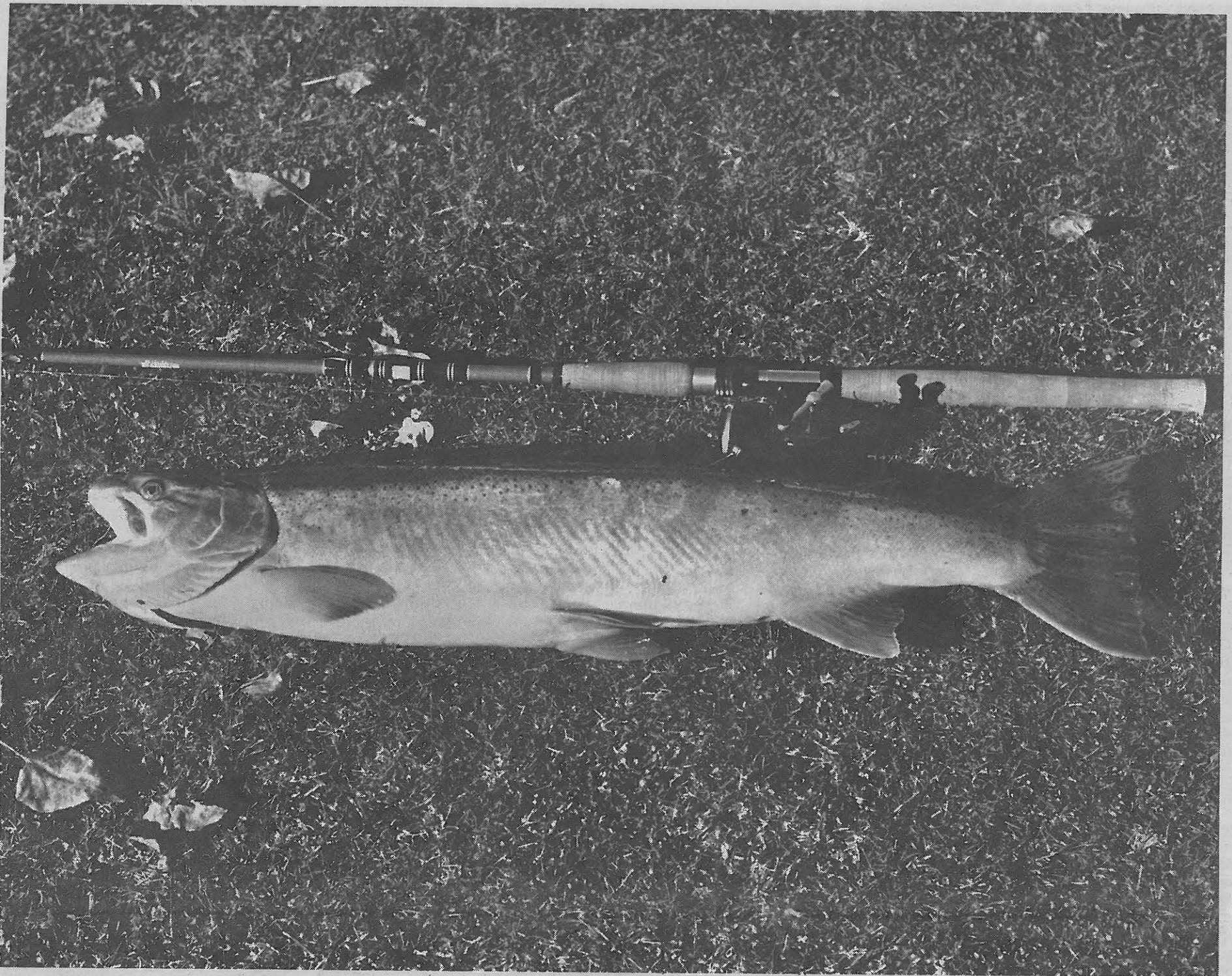
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DO YOU CARE?

Johnny Horizon says:

**This land is YOUR LAND
KEEP IT CLEAN!**



Sport fishing in the Snake and Columbia Rivers of the Northwest is threatened by loss of fish. Excess nitrogen in the water may doom the sea-run steelhead such as this 16-1/2 pound beauty from the Middle Fork of the Salmon River in Idaho. The water picks up

the nitrogen as it spills over the many man-made dams in the Columbia River system. The nitrogen causes bubbles in the bloodstream of the fish and results in a disease similar to the "bends" in man.

Bubble Disease Threatens Fisheries

Governor Cecil Andrus of Idaho said two more years of nitrogen poisoning of steelhead and salmon in the Snake River and "we are out of business." Losses of the game and sport fish from oversaturation of nitrogen are now estimated to be as high as 70 per cent in the Snake and Columbia Rivers.

Andrus spoke at a meeting in Portland also attended by Governor Tom McCall of Oregon. Governor Dan Evans of Washington could not attend but he was represented by Thor Tollefson, Washington State fisheries supervisor.

The governors met to discuss the serious problem of fish losses caused by excess nitrogen in the water. They requested Congress to appropriate \$8.1 million for slotted bulkheads and turbine installations in the Columbia River dams which would alleviate the nitrogen problem.

In a resolution to Congress, they demanded protection for the salmon and steelhead runs. They pointed out that the anadromous fish of the Columbia River System contribute millions of fish to sport and commercial fisheries each year. The fish

are of considerable economic value to all three states.

Scientists who spoke at the public meeting said the high losses of fish were caused by excessive nitrogen concentrations in the water. The nitrogen causes "bubble disease" which is similar to the condition in human divers known as "the bends."

The high nitrogen content is a result of water pouring over dam spillways into deep pools. The condition can be

partially corrected by modifying the dams to allow the water to escape more smoothly.

Salmon and steelhead spawn in the fresh water streams at the head of the great rivers. The adults are caught in the nitrogen problem as they run from the oceans back to the streams to spawn. The young fish are caught as they run downstream. In both cases, the fish are hit at the worst possible

time. During the spring and summer when the fish are passing both up and down river, power demands are low and the water is allowed to spill.

There are seven major dams along the Columbia and Snake which contribute to the problem. The Army Corps of Engineers is modifying its water management plans to provide some relief at the critical times.

The nitrogen problem has

been known only since 1968 when the series of dams went into full operation. Governor McCall said if the problem could have been anticipated, "the savings to taxpayers could have been astronomical."

The government has spent \$250 million on Columbia River hatcheries which cost about \$6 million to operate. These hatcheries were built to help reduce losses of fish blocked by the dams.

Sandhill Cranes Congregate

LINCOLN, Nebr. -- One of Nebraska's biggest natural spectacles is beginning to gather momentum, as thousands of Sandhill cranes continue to congregate in the Platte Valley from Grand Island to Lewellen.

The first of the cranes made their appearances in February, but the buildup should peak within the next week to 10 days at an estimated 150,000 birds. The Platte Valley is a centuries-old staging area for the cranes on the spring migration.

Each year, the cranes cover unplowed fields and

pastures while feeding during the day, then retreat to Platte River sandbars to spend the night. Largest gatherings of the cranes are found along the Platte from Grand Island to Lexington, although some 15,000 generally mass near Hershey, and a few hundred to several thousand appear near Lewellen.

The stilt-legged birds stand 3-1/2 feet tall and boast wingspreads of 6 to 7 feet. They are impressive both in the air and on the ground. One of the most breathtaking sights nature offers is the takeoff of thousands of cranes, as they rise in unison

and spiral skyward before leveling off in straightaway flight.

Observers will also be treated to performances of the cranes' ballet-like courtship rituals, which consist of sparring, hopping, and flapping of wings. Serious watchers should use binoculars or observe from well-concealed blinds, since the migrants are suspicious of humans.

A car makes a good vantage point for casual observation and county roads in the area permit reasonably close access to feeding and loafing grounds. Camera

buffs will find telephoto lenses necessary for detailed pictures.

The cranes generally stay on the Nebraska scene until late March or early April, when they continue their journey toward nesting grounds in northern Canada.

