

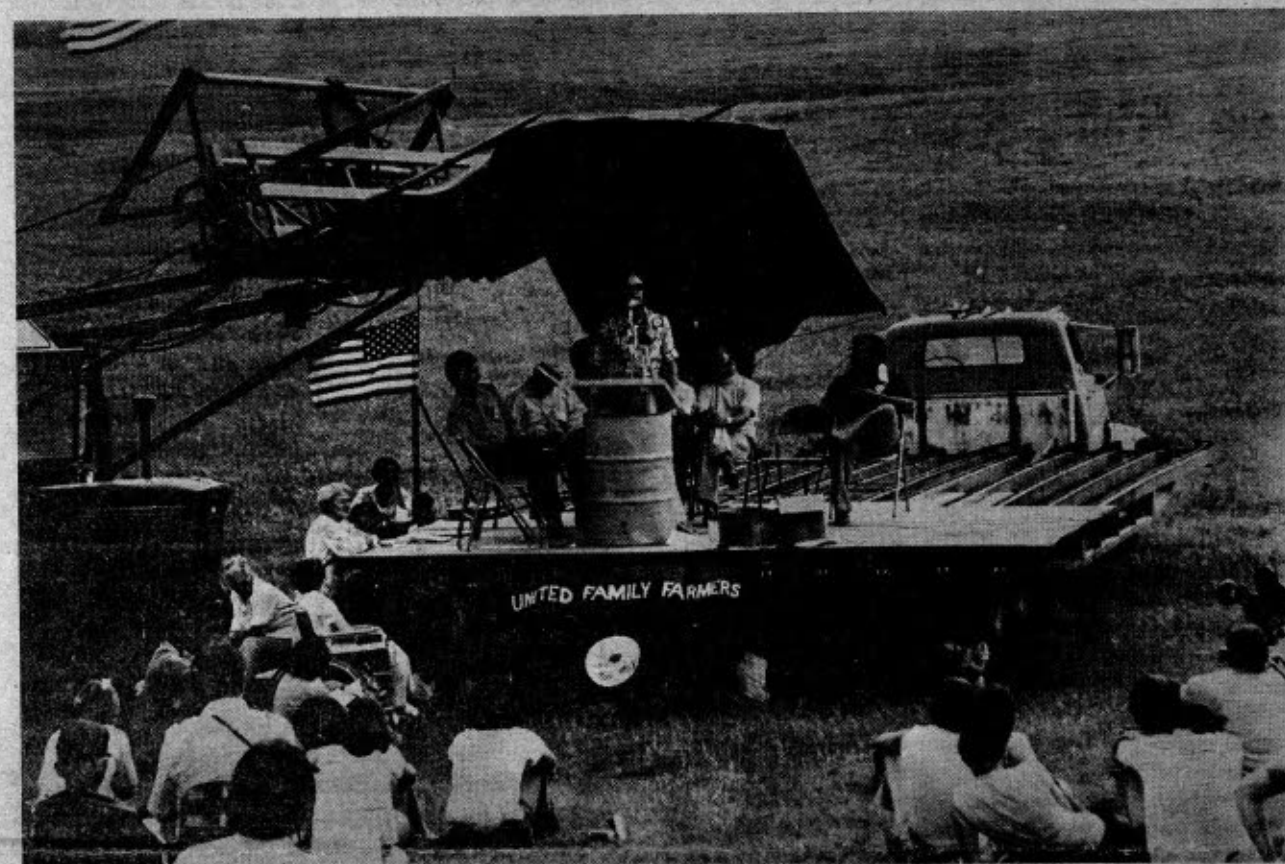
The Environmental Bi-Weekly

# High Country News

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Lander, Wyoming

Friday, October 10, 1975



Eight hundred people attended a "Stop the Oahe Canal" rally held this past June on the site of the proposed initial canal cut near Medicine Knoll, S.D. Kenneth Stofferahn, a state legislator from Humboldt, S.D., is addressing the gathering on the prairie.

Photo by Rebecca Rosenbaum

## Death knell for prairies? S.D. farmers fight Oahe Diversion

by Bruce Hamilton and Sharon Jones

The Oahe Diversion Project, ballyhooed for years as the savior of South Dakota's family farm agricultural economy, is now being bitterly opposed by many of its supposed beneficiaries. After nearly 30 years of planning, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation has begun construction of the massive irrigation project, but family farmers in the path of the bulldozers and draglines are raising a storm of protest and have dragged the Bureau into court.

Relying on the modest incomes derived from their family farms, the Oahe Project opponents have taken on the pet project of the Bureau and the state. The farmers charge that the project's costs exceed its benefits, and that loss of agricultural productivity, loss of waterfowl habitat, degradation of water quality, and gradual disappearance of family farming in the project area could result.

### PICK-SLOAN

The Oahe Diversion plan goes back to the Flood Control Act of 1944 — one of the most far-reaching public works plans ever conceived. In the act, vast developments for the nation's waterways were charted — among them, the Pick-Sloan projects was Oahe Dam and Reservoir in South Dakota on the Missouri.

Other Pick-Sloan Missouri River dams inundated 500,000 acres of land in South Dakota. While creating hydroelectric and open water recreation opportunities, the state lost valuable cropland. As part of the multi-purpose features of the Pick-Sloan dams, the Oahe Diversion was promoted to increase production in other parts of the state and prevent reoccurrence of the "dirty '30s" (dust bowl days) by stabilizing water availability.

The Oahe Diversion was originally designed to irrigate 495,000 acres in both the Missouri Slope and the Lake Plain regions of the state. In 1968, Congress authorized the initial stage of the project which encompassed part of the Lake Plain region. Initial construction began in the summer of 1974 on a pumping station, but canal construction has been held up by irate family farmers refusing to grant rights-of-way to the Bureau.

The area to be irrigated is already producing grain and meat. The Bureau says it will provide irrigation for 190,000 acres with the initial stage of the project, but to do so will involve taking 110,000 acres out of production for ditches, drains, reservoirs, and wildlife replacement areas associated with the project.

### IMPROVEMENT OR DESTRUCTION?

The Lake Plain region, a broad flat prairie stretching for 75 miles in north-central South Dakota, is the abandoned bed of what was Dakota Lake. Today, the serpentine James River winds through a woody floodplain of willow, cottonwood, elm, and ash — bisecting the lake plain throughout its length.

In this area, the descendants of the first white settlers, after three and four generations of experience, have tilled the hard-pan lake plain silts into South Dakota's leading hard red spring wheat area.

The region gets an average of 19 inches of rainfall per year — enough to get by on in most years, and all that the soil can accommodate, according to some area farmers. After a rainfall, drainage is poor and the water sits in pools on the surface. These farmers question what they would do with the 18 inches of additional water they

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## Approaching forests' limits

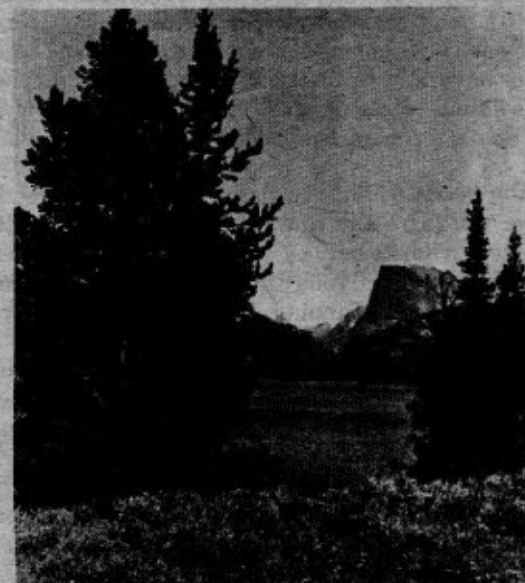
We are rapidly approaching the ecological limits of resources on our national forests, say two officials of the Wilderness Society. Wilderness, timber, big game, water, and range resources are being used up about as fast or faster than they can repair themselves, the officials, Bart Koehler and Dr. Roger Scholl say.

Scholl is wilderness coordinator for the society's western regional office in Denver. Koehler is a northern regional representative working out of Jackson, Wyo.

"Our use of wilderness is close to the limit of all that we have, the use of timber is at or beyond the limits, the use of big game is severely rationed with demand way beyond supply, the use of water is approximately at the limits, and grazing is close to the limits of range production," said Scholl at September U.S. Forest Service hearings in Denver. He based the assessment on data in the Forest Service's recently published "Program for the Nation's Renewable Resources." Hearings on the draft document, which outlines alternatives for the next 45 years for the Forest Service, have been held around the country and written comments from the public will be accepted until Oct. 15.

In his testimony, Scholl also pointed out that it takes some resources which the USFS report called "renewable" much longer to come back than others.

"For example, air is renewable on the order of hours, the solar energy in daily and seasonal cycles, water quantity in days or seasons, and water quality in perhaps longer time spans," he said. "Some vegetation renews



Wilderness, timber, big game, water, and range resources are being used up as fast as they can repair themselves.

itself on a yearly cycle and some in the order of centuries. A mix like wilderness takes centuries or longer."

Scholl concluded "resources at the slow end of the scale, such as wilderness, are essentially non-renewable resources."

Bart Koehler, who also spoke for the Wilderness Society at the hearings in Denver, said he could not endorse

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# HIGH COUNTRY

By Tom Bell

A recent editorial in *The Sunday Oregonian* (Sept. 14, 1975) caught my eye. The headline simply read "Manure Victory." Such a headline is bound to catch the attention of anyone out on the land, whether it be small homesteaders such as we now are or the large farmer-rancher.

The editorial was right to the point. It began, "Organic farming, long ignored by agriculture colleges and dismissed as non-productive by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has scored a major scientific victory: It has held its own in a National Science Foundation-funded study that found organic farmers produce nearly as much per acre, earn as good an income, while using a third less energy, than do those who rely on chemical fertilizers and pesticides."

The study referred to was done in the 1974 crop year by the Center for the Biology of Natural System at Washington University in St. Louis. It was headed by Dr. Barry Commoner, author of the popular environmental book, *The Closing Circle*. He is directing a larger study of ways American agriculture can adjust to recent energy-related problems.

A comparison was made between 16 organic farms in Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Minnesota, and Nebraska. Each was matched against a similar-sized farm with conventional crop-production practices. The main farm crops were corn, soybeans, wheat, oats, and hay. Each also raised cattle or hogs, or had a dairy herd. The farms averaged 476 acres, ranging in size from 175 to 785 acres. They were selected over a wide area to get a variety of soil types and terrain in the sample.

The study found that operating costs averaged only 19% of the total value of production on the organic farms. It was 27% on the conventional farms. Energy units used per unit value of production were about three times more for the conventional farms — 18,400 Btu (British thermal units) per dollar — than for the organic. The latter produced a dollar's worth of produce for only 6,800 Btu used.

Those facts have considerable implications for the future. As the study points out, organic farms may be much less vulnerable to disruptive effects of growing energy shortages and price increases.

The *Oregonian* editorial makes a telling point that, "Many farmers are interested in organic methods, but they find little technical help from the USDA or their state-supported colleges and universities. Too long, these institutions have been prisoners of the giant chemical companies that pass out research grants. . . . The Washington University study is a milestone because it offers the first serious scientific evidence that organic farming can be economical and productive. Many organic farmers have known this for a long time, but they were only isolated voices, ignored by their government and even their neighbors, both addicts of the quick chemical fix."

To the list of villains in this scenario could be added most of the farm and ranch magazines. Each must be supported in large part by advertising by the chemical companies. And each rails editorially and in long-winded articles against the banning of environmentally destructive or hazardous chemical pesticides.

The contradictions which exist in the farm media must be apparent to everyone but the editors. The latest issue of *Farm Journal* (October, 1975) carries one article on the banning of chlordane and heptachlor (with appropriate remarks against the Environmental Protection Agency and EPA Administrator Russell Train) and another on "Rootworm Damage . . . worst since the '60s."

The rootworm damage referred to is that affecting the corn crop across the Midwest. But the heart of the article is in these telling words, "The big question now is whether the huge beetle populations will set the stage for even heavier infestations in 1976. And back of this situation loom worse threats — the possibility that rootworms are developing tolerance or resistance to some of our present leading soil insecticides and the fact that they attacked first year corn in a number of localities."

The subject of organic farming is much too big to be covered here in one issue. Next column I will elaborate more on the ramifications of a growing movement to return to organic methods.



HCN

Letters

## WHERE ARE THE BEARS?

Dear Editors,

I am writing this letter to you to see if you have any ideas on the subject of the disappearing Yellowstone bears. This year very few have been seen there. Last year also. I realize some people have been injured recently by bears even though only about half a dozen have been seen. People do stupid things causing their own injuries most of the time, as you surely must know. I spend a lot of time at Cooke City, Mont., every summer and the bears are so scarce as to cause worry even there, where they have been pests for years. They were always a part of life at Cooke and you expected your garbage to be strewn about, your children loved them and learned how to live safely with them. Now each year they are more and more rare. So where have they gone?

The Park Service tells us they have moved the bears to the back country of Yellowstone where they are living in comfort and freedom. Anyone who knows anything about bears know better than that! The bears know where people are is Food(!) and they are going to be there also. We fear the complete destruction of the bears since they do not pay entrance fees to the park. Its supposed to be their home and thus make no money. The Craighead's are concerned too.

I am writing them, also all our Senators, the governor and two of Montana's. Won't some of your readers please do the same? Possibly we can compel a count of some sort by the Park Service as to the bears.

I trust you can read this. I am 66 years old and not too steady writing, but I love the bears and ask your help in any way you can.

Sincerely,  
Alice Menurey  
Powell, Wyo.

Editors' note: We asked Glen Cole, a Yellowstone National Park biologist working on bears, to tell us where the black bears are and if their numbers are decreasing. He sent HCN the following information:

"Yellowstone National Park is large, containing over 2.2 million acres or 3400 square miles. Roads, visitor and

administrative facilities take up one per cent of this area and the remaining 99% is wild land.

"All our information indicates that about as many black bears inhabit the park now as when the park was established, approximately 500. Because this amounts to an average density of one bear for each seven square miles and black bears generally stay within the denser forest areas, seeing the animals in the wild takes special effort, and often plain luck!

"Since 1970 intensive efforts have been made to make garbage, groceries, or handouts unavailable to park bears. This was done because records from previous years showed that feeding bears along park roads or allowing them to obtain groceries or garbage from campgrounds made the animals increasingly dangerous. Most bears fed along park roads eventually are hit by cars or must be killed because they become too dangerous to humans. The natural food of black bears are in abundant supply in summer.

"Park records on the numbers of human injuries caused by black bears and the number of bears destroyed from 1931-69 and since 1970 are as follows: 1931-69, 45 visitor injuries per year and 24 black bears killed per year; 1974, seven visitor injuries and three bears killed; 1975 (to date), one visitor injury and one bear killed (hit by car).

"Numbers of injuries to humans and numbers of black bears destroyed have both decreased since 1970. Prompt transplants of bears that beg for food along park roads, together with a reduction in the amount of bear feeding by park visitors, have accomplished this. The end result is that you may see fewer bears, but those bears you do see will be truly wild black bears, living as black bears have for centuries in the natural area that is Yellowstone National Park."

## CHRISTIAN FIGHT

To: High Country News & long may she wave!

So Tom Bell professes religion. Shucks, I think he had it all the time, working hard to enjoin us to be good stewards of the good earth God gave us.

Mr. Bell expressed some question about God's purpose for him in life. Seems to me that Mr. Bell has been fulfilling that purpose for some time, in his selfless efforts — his Christian fight to protect the public health and safety by preventing deadly pollution of both the "conventional" and unseen nuclear varieties.

He has done also the almost impossible by establishing with the *High Country News*, a newspaper essentially free from the commercial pressures of advertising — the dream of all pure journalists. . . . That in itself is an outstanding accomplishment.

Sincerely, J. C. Briggs  
Raton, N.M.



MERAMEC ENTHUSIASTS

Dear HCN:

The Meramec Valley of Missouri is threatened by a dam proposed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. If the project is not stopped, we'll lose wildlife, some fantastic caves, good canoeing territory, great smallmouth bass fishing, and another free-flowing river. I know that Missouri's Meramec Valley is out of your territory, but the cause is conservation and some of your readers may be Meramec enthusiasts. The Meramec Valley Conservation Task Force, Box 3711, St. Louis, MO 63122 will welcome help and ideas in attempts to avert the destruction of another of America's rivers.

Sincerely,  
Jean O. Youngsteadt  
Charleston, Ill.

AD INFINITUM, WE HOPE

Dear High Country News,

We feel that we are very fortunate to have a friend who gives this paper to us as a gift each year, and we not only devour it ourselves, but then pass them all on to others, who do the same, ad infinitum (we hope).

Very truly yours,  
Mrs. Raymond D. Parker  
Harrison, N.Y.

**HCN** Editorial

Not sabotage, but justice

This past month, everyone's favorite Wyoming scapegoat — the Sierra Club — was under attack again.

The club was accused of closing down Shell Oil Company's Young's Creek Mine in Montana, halting development of Carter Mining Company's Rawhide strip mine near Gillette, Wyo., and stopping development of the Laramie River Station coal-fired power plant near Wheatland, Wyo.

How did the club do it? Did it stage a sit-in in the dragline buckets? Did it sabotage the coal trucks? How could such a small band of conservationists pack such a punch?

The answer is simple — the club didn't do it. Because Sierrans don't have an army of saboteurs or the bankroll to see that they get their way, they must rely on cures within the system. In this case, the club appealed to the court system for judicial relief.

What's involved is not a suit against industry or against strip mining, but rather a request by the Sierrans that the federal government comply with its own laws before proceeding with coal development in the Northern Great Plains.

Congress passed a law called the National Environmental Policy Act. The law requires the government to analyze the impacts of its actions on the environment before it proceeds with any major federal action. By undertaking such an analysis, the government is forced to look at how it is approaching a development, and how adverse impacts might be best reduced.

In the case, the Sierra Club asked the court to determine if coal development in the Northern Great Plains was a major federal action requiring the preparation of an environmental impact statement. The club was joined by the Northern Plains Resource Council, the National Wildlife Federation, the Montana and South Dakota League of Women Voters, the Montana Wilderness Association, and the Montana League of Conservation Voters.

The court's final decision is still not clear. A U.S. District Court ruled in February, 1974, that a regional impact statement was not necessary. In June, 1975, a U.S. District Court of Appeals sent the case back to the lower court for further study. It is this judicial delay, among other things, that is holding up development now.

As Wyoming State Senator Malcolm Wallop put it, any citizen has a right to question laws. "If the courts had found no argument, they would have told them (the Sierra Club) to buzz off."

Laney Hicks, Northern Plains regional representative for the Sierra Club, says her group "while asking for orderly and careful development, becomes the scapegoat." She feels the club is being blamed because industry would like to see it silenced.

All this hassle over the preparation of an impact statement. It would have been less costly and less time consuming for the federal government to prepare the statement than to stubbornly battle the issue out in the courts.

The government should have already done most of the work for the study anyway, when it participated in the



state-federal Northern Great Plains Resource Program.

If the government has done proper planning, and it says it has, then the statement would be nothing more than a routine task — just a compilation and disclosure of that planning process. However, if the government's planning process is incomplete and secretive, as the Sierra Club suspects it is, then the government has a sizeable chore ahead to complete an impact statement. And that planning chore should be insisted upon by conservationists and industry alike.

Ironically, industry may be wishing today that they'd supported Sierra Club efforts of a few years ago. If industry had rallied to the Sierra Club's call for a regional impact statement, we'd be further along on the road to orderly development. —BH

Conservationist Dobos dies

Casper attorney John E. Dobos, a long-time defender of Wyoming's environment, died Oct. 6, 1975, in an auto accident on the edge of Casper Mountain.

Dobos, 48, was instrumental in setting up and running several of Wyoming's conservation organizations. He was respected in the environmental community for his thoughtful, compassionate approach to environmental and human issues. He was loved for his wit and generosity.

Dobos served as president of the Murie Audubon Society and was a director of that organization at the time of his death. He helped uncover the illegal eagle killings in Jackson's Canyon near Casper in 1971.

Dobos also helped organize the Wyoming Environmental Institute — an organization devoted to research on behalf of the state's environment. Dobos was chairman of the WEI board.

Arrangements are being made for family and friends to donate to a Dobos Life Science Fund. The fund will be a memorial to his work in preserving Wyoming's quality environment.



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Wilson's phalarope in Little Glen Canyon, Dolores River, Colo.

Photo by David Sumner

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## Oahe fight. . .

(Continued from page 1)

Bureau wants to supply, and what would happen to their land in the process.

The Bureau proposes 1,000 miles of open canals and three holding reservoirs in the initial stage of the project. To improve the drainage, the Bureau recommends nearly 3,000 miles of underground drain pipes and 935 miles of open ditch drains to funnel the return flows into the James River.

To handle the return flows, the Bureau proposes channelizing the James River — reducing 120 miles of natural meandering stream to a 54-mile ditch.

### GRASSROOTS OPPOSITION

Spearheading the opposition to the project is the United Family Farmers, organized during the winter of 1973. George Piper, president and founder of UFF, lives with

was not irrigable and they needn't worry about irrigation projects.

"Many innocent people took the government's word. Why worry, we thought, surely the government would do no harm," recalls Piper.

But the farmers' own experiences on the land suggested to them that defects of the project were not being given serious consideration, and it was necessary to seriously question the project. "We knew that if the Oahe question was to be raised, we would have to do it ourselves. We could not rely on anyone else to do the job," says Piper.

UFF asked consultants in the field of soil science, drainage engineering, groundwater hydrology, reclamation economics, water-resources economics, law, wildlife management, zoology, and botany to consider the Bureau's proposal.

"No opinion of any member of this consulting staff has yet been directly contradicted, although many staff members from the Bureau and from South Dakota State University have provided assurances that UFF is wrong.

root zone, where it will limit or completely destroy plant growth.

Whether the salts travel away from the root zones depends on soil texture, soil structure, soil chemistry, and the like, he said.

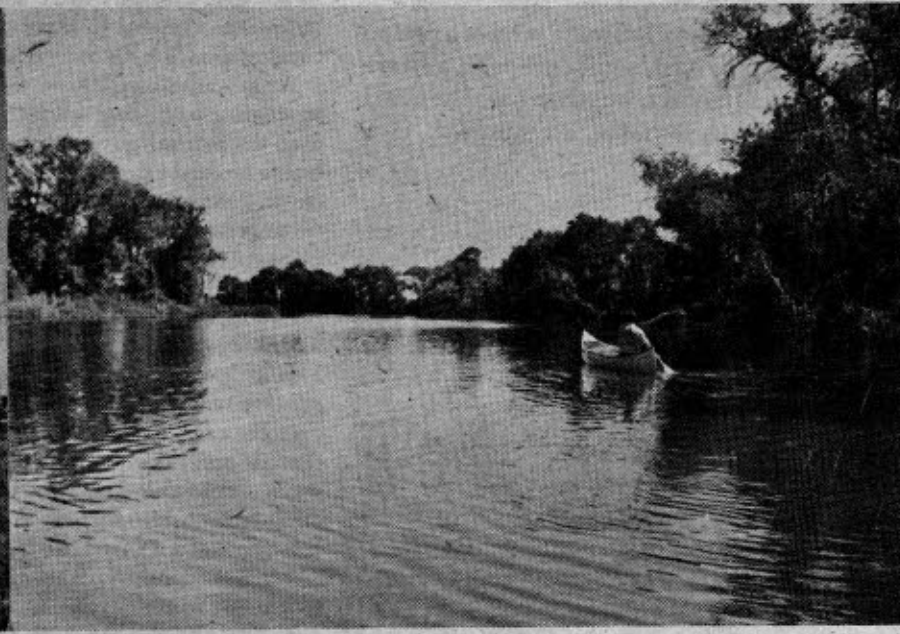
The soils in the Oahe irrigation area are not the type of soils that will allow a steady flow of water to readily drain away. The soils are heavy and tight. Because of these characteristics, the land in this area cannot carry off the irrigation water. If no artificial drains were built to carry off the water, the irrigations lands would become a salt lake, he said.

The Bureau has proposed an elaborate, costly, sewage system to attempt to solve the drainage problem. But here the Bureau is caught between the farmers, who would need an expensive system, and Congressional budget tighteners. The Bureau's solution has been to offer assurances to both sides by shuffling figures and contradicting itself, according to UFF.

Drainage experts told the Bureau that its pipes would have to be at the most 225 to 330 feet apart to solve the



Sign erected by farmers in the Lake Byron, S.D. area. Lake Byron, a natural prairie lake in northeastern Beadle County and popular recreation site of the Huron area, is to be enlarged through the construction of a dam to be utilized as an irrigation holding reservoir for the Oahe Diversion. Development of the reservoir will inundate nearly 150 cottages and summer homes along the shores of the lake, and destroy public fishing and recreation areas in the vicinity. The pool of Byron Reservoir will be drawn down



approximately 20 feet during the irrigation season exposing 2,000 acres of mud flats.

Canoeing on the James River. The Bureau of Reclamation plans to channelize the river and use it as a conduit to carry off irrigation return flows. Polluted return flows may make the river unusable for drinking and irrigation purposes. Channelization would ruin valuable wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities.

Photo by John McDermott

his parents and brother on the Piper homestead settled by Piper's grandfather seven years before South Dakota obtained statehood. The homestead is to be wiped out by the project.

The Pipers, like the majority of area farmers, were told for many years that irrigation was coming, but that it was several years away. They were assured that if they had any interest in the project, they would be told well in advance what the Bureau's intentions might be.

"Had we not informed ourselves, we would still know nothing about the project today. I have learned that it is not the intention of the Bureau of Reclamation to inform the people of the facts," says Piper.

Since its organization, UFF has grown to over 800 members. UFF is working for a moratorium on project construction and a referendum among the people in the project area. UFF has been joined in its opposition by other state groups, including the S.D. Wildlife Federation, S.D. Farm Bureau Federation, League of Women Voters of S.D., and many environmental organizations.

After attending a hearing on the draft environmental statement in the fall of 1972, Piper and his neighbors began meeting in the abandoned one-room country school house across the road from the Piper farm. Following weeks of research, UFF began taking their questions to government experts. "We were given assurances, but no answers," Piper says.

The Oahe Diversion was presented by the Bureau as a multi-purpose project. Farmers were promised water to increase their production; conservationists and recreationists were promised waterfowl enhancement areas, and recreational use at the reservoirs; municipalities were promised an abundant supply of high quality water; and the farmers plagued with flooding problems on the James River were promised flood control. Those in the pathway of the canals and reservoirs were promised nothing and told nothing, only that their land

The distinction between an assurance and an answer is critical," says Piper.

### FAMILY FARM FUTURE

The Bureau says one benefit of the Oahe Diversion will be the creation of an additional 500 family farms, but UFF consultant Dr. Paul S. Taylor disagrees. Taylor, Professor Emeritus of Economics at the University of California in Berkeley, has made a life-long study of the social and economic effects of reclamation developments. Taylor says that where reclamation projects are built, they almost universally tend to cause centralization of land ownership in the hands of the very few, reduce the number of landowners, increase the percentage of indigent persons in surrounding communities, and cause the dissolution of social systems.

The Reclamation Law forbids irrigation water from being delivered to persons holding more than 160 acres of land, and requires that the excess lands must be sold at pre-project prices. While this law is supposed to protect and promote the family farm, in fact it has not been enforced by the Bureau and there is no reason to believe that the Bureau intends to enforce the law in the case of Oahe, reported Taylor.

### DRAINAGE AND SOILS

Soil drainage can determine the success or failure of an irrigation project. To review the soils situation, UFF secured the expert advice of Robert Eikleberry, past-president of the Soil Conservation Society of America.

Eikleberry told the farmers that in their soil layers below the root zone there is commonly a concentration of sodium and other salts. When fresh water from irrigation soaks into and percolates through a soil, it dissolves some of the salts and carries them in solution. This solution either seeps into streams and rivers, percolates downward into the groundwater, or percolates upward to the

problem. Subsequently, the Bureau told area farmers the pipes would be spaced at 330 feet.

However, in its feasibility report to Congress, dated 1965, the Bureau kept costs below benefits by computing pipe spacing at 790 feet. In the environmental impact statement economic analysis, the Bureau used a spacing of 620 feet to compute costs.

"In many other projects the Bureau has underestimated the drainage requirements and has relied on a tolerant Congress for additional appropriations for additional drainage facilities after soils have become waterlogged and ruined by salt. Knowing that Congress would not approve a project which did not show an economically feasible benefit-cost ratio, there is little reason to doubt that the Bureau has cheated in estimating costs for Oahe," says Piper.

### DEATH KNELL

Irrigation wastes in the return flows will add a heavy burden of salts leached from the salty soils into the James River. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said in a recent letter to U.S. Rep. Larry Pressler: "The salt leachate entering the river could foreclose present uses of the river for a drinking water supply and even for downstream irrigation."

"The James River problem is presenting the Bureau a colossal headache," says Piper. "Failure of the project drainage system could convert areas of the lake plain to a salty marsh. A completely successful project drain could toll the death knell of the James River."

Compounding the Bureau's dilemma is the return flow problem of the Oahe's sister diversion in North Dakota — the Garrison. To avoid bad foreign relations, the Bureau has suggested that return flows from the Garrison, which were originally planned to be diverted to Canadian-bound rivers, may now be diverted to the James River. This



would compound the pollution problem downstream on the James River in the Oahe Unit.

**WILDLIFE: GAIN OR LOSS?**

The Friends of Oahe, a project booster organization, boasts 12,000 acres of water and marsh habitat and 28,000 acres of upland habitat will be provided by the diversion. The group admits that 14,000 of those acres will merely replace habitat altered by the project.

The claim of creating upland habitat seems to be another shell game with figures to try to make it seem like the project will be good for wildlife. Dry land is not in short supply in South Dakota, but wetlands are. In its impact statement, the Bureau concedes a net loss of 9,420 acres of wetlands, and a gross loss of 16,090 acres. Dr. Keith Harmon, field representative for the Wildlife Management Institute, projects a significant reduction in the waterfowl flocks because of the diversion.

The prospect of replacement habitat is also only an assurance, not a certainty. South Dakota sportsmen and conservationists have already had one bitter disappointment with federal water development projects.

The four dams built on the Missouri River by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers wiped out thousands of acres of valuable habitat. The Corps promised replacement habitat, but after 10 years of foot dragging, it abandoned the mitigation project without providing a single acre of replacement lands.

One Fish and Wildlife Service employe summarized the frustrating experience in a letter to the S.D. Department of Game Fish & Parks: "As usual we got a lot of lip service during planning and construction stages, but nothing actually accomplished on the ground. When we push for assurances that mitigation will actually be accomplished, they always tell us that mitigation is part of the authorization and not to worry. We spend years negotiating 'multi-purpose' projects with the Corps and Reclamation only to have the environmental and wildlife parts of the projects dropped like a hot potato."

**FAULTY ECONOMICS**

By law, the Bureau isn't allowed to build a project where the costs exceed the benefits of its work. This requirement has forced the Bureau to overestimate benefits and underestimate costs in the case of the Oahe Diversion, according to researchers at Johns Hopkins University under the direction of resource economist Dr. Robert K. Davis.

The researchers found that Bureau economists were underestimating the cost of loans to the farmers, using unrealistically low discount rates, and overestimating the useful life of the project, among other economic shenanigans.

When the researchers corrected this faulty economic analysis, they found that the project was not economically justifiable.

**FLOOD HAZARD**

Farmers along the James River doubt that the project will bring any flood relief after the river is burdened with large quantities of return flow water. The Bureau admits that they have no answer to the return flow problem, explaining that "a final decision on the most advantageous method of handling return flows is not needed for about five years." This is very close to the approximate time that water is to arrive in the James Valley. The James River Flood Control Association, river valley farmers who were promised that the project would bring flood control, now opposes the project.

**GERRYMANDERING**

In the beginning, the farmers were unorganized and poorly informed. Opposition to Oahe was eliminated by

forming gerrymandered irrigation districts, claims UFF.

Landowners were encouraged to take their land out of the district if they did not want irrigation and were assured that they would be rid of the project. Over 500 landowners within the originally proposed irrigation area withdrew their land. These people were not allowed to vote in any elections on the project, but now find themselves faced with canals, seepage, drainage, and flooding along the James River. Also, there is the possibility their land will ultimately be drawn into the project through expansion of the facilities and-or land reclassification.

Lately, UFF has moved into the political arena to undo the political stranglehold Oahe boosters have had on the decision making process. "I once told a group of farmers that either we would have to change the minds of our public elected leaders or replace them," Piper says. Oahe opponents have set out to do just that.

UFF members won three of the four contested seats during the 1974 election of directors to the Oahe Conservancy Sub-District. The same year, Rep. Larry Pressler, who campaigned in support of a moratorium on Oahe, defeated his incumbent challenger.

Oahe opponents, led by former Lt. Gov. Bill Dougherty, launched an intensive lobbying effort at the 1975 session of the South Dakota Legislature for a resolution demanding a Congressional moratorium on the project. After the measure narrowly lost by four votes in the State House of Representatives, a compromise resolution asking that pumping plant construction and land acquisition proceed,

but that canal construction be delayed, passed the House by a wide majority.

Except for Pressler, the remaining members of South Dakota's Congressional delegation and Gov. Richard Kneip strongly advocate continuation of the project. Sen. George McGovern has disappointed both farmers and environmentalists opposing the project. During his 1974 campaign for re-election to the U.S. Senate, McGovern said he would look upon the results of the election for directors to the Oahe Conservancy Sub-District as a referendum as to how the people in the area felt about the project. Although Oahe opponents won those elections, Sen. McGovern has recently called for accelerated construction financing.

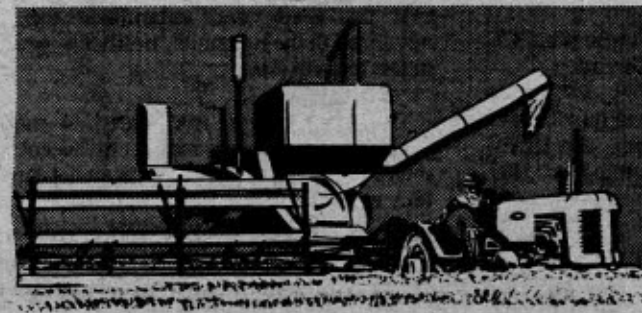
**LEGAL ACTION**

A lawsuit was filed by UFF against the Department of the Interior in federal district court in April, 1974, to delay construction of the Oahe Diversion. A UFF motion for a temporary injunction and a temporary restraining order was denied by the judge. But also denied was the government's motion to dismiss the case.

The suit, challenging the economic analysis and the adequacy of the environmental impact statement, is now awaiting further court action. The case is based on the Reclamation Act of 1902 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

UFF has agreed to settle the dispute out of court if the Bureau will agree to six basic conditions. UFF's primary request is for a regional vote in the five affected counties on whether the residents want the diversion. Opponents and proponents would abide by the referendum results, under the UFF plan.

"The issue is not whether irrigation is a good or bad thing, but rather whether a costly, burdensome development will be placed on the state's family farmers without their approval," says Piper.



**Piper leads fellow farmers**



Photo by John McDermott

"United Family Farmers was my fault I guess," admits softspoken George Piper. Piper, 35, is the founder and president of UFF, a group of landowners opposing the Oahe Diversion in South Dakota.

Piper lives with his parents and brother on a family farm near Lake Byron. If the Oahe Diversion is built, the Bureau of Reclamation will flood Lake Byron to form a reservoir which will inundate his family's land.

"Except for times when I have been in attendance at various schools and colleges, I have lived on the land and always have had a keen interest in the welfare and preservation of the natural resources of this area and of the family farm as a social and economic unit and a way of life," says Piper.

However, since returning to South Dakota to his family farm he has found little time for working the soil. He now works almost full time fighting the Oahe Diversion.

Piper earned his Bachelor of Science degree from South Dakota State University, Brookings, in Agricultural Science. He went on to the University of Missouri, Columbia,

where he earned a Master of Arts and a Ph.D. in zoology. After his university training, he conducted research in Missouri and taught in a college in Chicago for a year.

"My appreciation for the family farm as a good way of life has substantially increased since I have had an opportunity to live in metropolitan areas and compare the benefits of city life with rural life," he says.

In 1972 Piper returned home to South Dakota where he learned about the Oahe Diversion. Since then, fighting Oahe has been his life.

"I've spent two years researching Oahe. I have stacks of documents up to here," says Piper raising his hand above his head.

"At first the Bureau couldn't understand why some farmers don't want more water. The Bureau doesn't seem to realize we have a strong viable farming community right now."

"There is no need for reclamation in the James River Valley," says Piper. The Bureau was set up to make the desert bloom, but this isn't a desert.

Piper says the most difficult problem UFF faces is getting public information on Oahe printed in the local press. "All the major dailies in the project area are big proponents. They're defending a dream that's been around for 20 years."

For Piper and the UFF that dream has gone sour. Now they must fight an uphill battle against well-funded businessmen and politicians.

Piper feels that if the public knew the true costs of Oahe, they would turn down the project. He's so sure that his neighboring farmers will agree with him, that he's challenged the Bureau to a referendum vote.

Piper and the UFF will need all the help they can get to put their side of the story before the people. If you want to help, contact George Piper, United Family Farmers, Box 39A, Carpenter, S.D. 57322.

Pictured above is Dr. George Piper in front of an abandoned school house that UFF uses for an office.

6-High Country News — Oct. 10, 1975

# BLM study on grazing scrutinized

While the Bureau of Land Management hustles to meet a deadline for completion of a draft impact statement on grazing near Challis, Idaho, the agency is being scrutinized by livestock and environmental groups. The deadline is November 1, 1975.

The BLM is being closely watched because this is the first of 212 court-ordered grazing impact statements and it could set the tone for future statements. The statements were ordered as the result of a Natural Resources Defense Council suit. NRDC alleged that the BLM needed to prepare specific impact statements on specific grazing units under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. The BLM maintained that a programmatic impact statement on BLM grazing management nationwide was sufficient, but the court ruled otherwise.

Livestock operators in the Challis area believe that the BLM may be planning a 50% reduction in domestic livestock grazing in some parts of the Challis unit as a result of the impact study. To prove that the cut would be unwarranted, the Idaho Cattlemen's Association and the Idaho

Public Lands Committee are undertaking an impact study of their own.

Conducting the ranchers' study are three former BLM employes with range management backgrounds. "We feel that if the BLM comes out with a biased report, then we will have our own information and data to back us up," one rancher told *The Idaho Statesman*.

"The BLM is not considering economics, and we intend to make an economic study of the area," he said.

Sensing the ranchers' pressure on the BLM, the Natural Resources Defense Council is continuing to play an active role in development of the grazing plans. An NRDC range specialist and an NRDC attorney have already visited the Challis area, and other representatives are expected to visit the area this fall.

"We have commented on the agency's (BLM's) outline of the statement's contents and have submitted detailed suggestions concerning the issues we feel it ought to address," says NRDC.

NRDC is encouraging other environmental groups and

government agencies to participate in the impact statement preparation.

Copies of the BLM's draft impact statement will be available from: Harry Finlayson, District Manager, Salmon District Office, Bureau of Land Management, P.O. Box 430, Salmon, Idaho 83467.

## Studies show bottle bill would add jobs

Two new studies show that banning throwaway cans and bottles would create jobs, increase personal income, and conserve energy, according to a story by Ann McFeatters appearing in the *Rocky Mountain News*.

The Maryland Governor's Council of Economic Advisors' study shows that a statewide ban on throwaways would create 1,500 jobs in distribution and retailing and increase personal income by \$18.5 million. State and local government coffers would swell from added taxes to the tune of \$1.5 million and about \$7 million would be saved in reduced litter pickups.

A presidential advisory committee has released a report recommending passage of a federal ban on non-returnables. They say the ban would save \$1.6 billion nationally. The energy savings from the change-over would be equivalent to 1.8 billion gallons of gasoline a year, reports the committee. In addition, 8.7 million tons of solid waste a year would be eliminated.

McFeatters reports that Sen. Mark Hatfield (D-Ore.) has reintroduced his bill modeled after the Oregon bottle law into the Senate. Also six bills are pending in the House banning throwaways.

The bills are expected to receive strong opposition from the container and bottling industry and organized labor. The United Steelworkers of America say a federal ban would cost between 45,000 to 58,000 jobs in the basic metals and can manufacturing industries.

## Idaho citizens back stream preservation

Idaho citizens want their water resources protected, according to two surveys done for the Idaho Water Resources Board.

In response to a question regarding support for minimum stream flow legislation which could limit agricultural development, 69% supported legislation for "most major streams and rivers," 17% would support minimum stream flow for "highest quality fishing streams and rivers," and only 6% felt legislation was unnecessary.

Eighty-nine per cent favored strong protection of certain high quality rivers and lakes even though some form of economic development would be prohibited.

Forty-six per cent favored state scenic river designation for certain rivers; 32% favored national wild and scenic river designation, and 5% favored expanding existing governmental management. The total was a solid 83% for more protection.

Survey results were taken from a questionnaire circulated in all Idaho newspapers by the Water Resources Board and a public opinion statewide survey conducted for the board by an independent polling group, Opinion Research West.



## Forests' limits. . .

(Continued from page 1)

any of the eight program alternatives offered by the Forest Service, because they would not result in a sustained yield of natural resources. The society recommends using national forests primarily for wilderness, primitive recreation, maintenance of wildlife habitat, and watershed protection. Koehler says the society also advocates "intensive production of commodities primarily from the more productive, and thus more efficient, private lands."

### TIMBER OVERCUT

Forest Service data indicate that public timber has been sold and cut at a faster rate than it can grow back, Scholl says. "The report points out that in the West saw-timber net growth was 46% less than removals. . . and notes that a significant rise in prices will be needed to balance supply and demand in future decades."

Koehler says the society could not endorse any of the four timber goals outlined by the Forest Service, because they are based on a policy of "liquidating most of the virgin old growth." The society urges instead that timbering be concentrated on the best timber-growing lands in the Southeast and at low elevations in the Northwest and that most of the remaining virgin old-growth forest be preserved.

### JUST ENOUGH WATER

As for the water resource on forest lands, "it is apparent that our demand is at the limits of supply," Scholl says. "Our daily withdrawal of 327 billion gallons per day is 30% of the total runoff."

"Much greater emphasis should be placed on simply protecting fragile watersheds and recognizing that many forests are best considered as protective cover rather than as marginal sources of wood," he says.

### WILDLIFE RATIONED

"It is apparent that demand has far outstripped supply for at least the big game species," Scholl says. "It is frightening that in the contiguous United States there are only approximately five million individual animals of all the big game species, while there are some 214 million people. Seven and eight-tenths million people are big game hunters, and they harvest approximately two million big game animals each year. The use of this resource is severely rationed by limits and seasons, and the total demand is not met."

### RANGE FULL

About 10% or 86 million acres of grazing lands under Forest Service management are being "exploitatively grazed," says Scholl. He suggests "a massive effort to rehabilitate the presently degraded areas and a shift in grazing to the most productive ecosystems to provide present levels of forage."

### WILDERNESS DIMINISHING

Scholl said that while the Forest Service talks about expanding the wilderness resource, in reality that resource will diminish in size. Wilderness which is not protected exists outside the formal Wilderness Preservation System. As long as some wild lands remain unprotected,

we will be losing wilderness little by little, Scholl believes.

"Goal-C, in which the Forest Service would recommend permanently protecting 41 million acres of wilderness, actually amounts to the loss of up to 32 million acres of presently existing wilderness, and Goal-A amounts to a loss of up to 55.7 million acres," Scholl told the Forest Service.

Nevertheless, the Wilderness Society endorses Goal-C as a minimum effort toward wilderness protection.

### RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES LEFT

An abundant supply of recreation opportunities still lies untapped in our national forests, Scholl claims. He advocates the adoption of the Forest Service's Goal-C for recreation, which emphasizes dispersed activities.

"Emphasis should be on primitive recreation and small, simple, developed facilities along the existing 200,000-mile road network in the National Forest System," he says.

### JOB FOR PEOPLE, NOT MACHINES

Koehler advocates an increase in programs like the Youth Conservation Corps and the Job Corps in national forests to do reforestation, sanitation, and trail maintenance work.

"With unemployment so high these days, we should have more people — and fewer machines — working on the forest lands," he says.

## Forest planners needed

The story above presents the Wilderness Society's views on a subject we have all been invited to debate, the management of national forest lands.

We encourage other readers to participate in this unusual attempt at government long-range planning. If you act quickly, you can send comments directly to the Forest Service (deadline Oct. 15) — or you can contact Congressmen before hearings are held this winter.

The topic of debate, the draft "Forest Service Program for the Nation's Renewable Resources," was mandated by Congress last year. The Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 directs the Forest Service to prepare an assessment of the nation's renewable forest and range resources by Dec. 31, 1975, and every 10 years thereafter; and a long-range program by Dec. 31, 1975, and every five years thereafter. The draft statement recently published contains both the required assessment and several program alternatives.

After public comments from across the country have been received, the Secretary of Agriculture will choose a program and submit it to the President for transmittal to Congress. If approved by Congress, the plan will be the basis for long-range planning and funding for Forest Service activities.

Copies of the draft statement or a summary may be obtained from: Chief, U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250, or most local Forest Service offices.

# Big dollars destined to leave mark on Alaska

by Marjane Ambler

Boom towns. The lower 48 have their share. They're a part of our history and destined to rule some of our futures. But Alaska's black gold rush and the boom towns that it's building seem different — bigger. Everything about this rush is bigger: The distances traveled from home. The degree of isolation from family, friends, — and usually from women — for eight or nine week shifts. The physical discomforts in 50 degree below zero work camps. Thus the appetites must be bigger and the drive stronger for the thousands who do make the choice to go to work on the pipeline.

The dollars are definitely bigger. You feel their pressure from the moment you cross the state line. We hitched a ride with a surveyor on the pipeline crew who tells us he goes home with \$800 in his pocket every week. A laborer new on the job says \$500, after taxes.

Immediately you, too, get involved in the money rap. "I tried to buy a tomato today, and that one tomato costs \$1.20!" In mid-August in Fairbanks, bananas were selling for 69 cents a pound, milk for \$1.39 per half gallon, a draw of beer (without music) for \$1.50, laundromats for 75 cents per wash.

Prices have always been high in Alaska because of transportation costs. But pipeline dollars keep pushing them higher. The biggest impact is on real estate. Garages rent as homes for \$300 or \$400 with no running water. In Fairbanks, campers and tents crowd the Chena River banks, and the authorities say nothing. On one side of the river, winos, apparently homeless, lounge on the grass with their bottles and their money rap behind the Chamber of Commerce office. A friend tells us of an enterprising man who bought a large house and rents out floor space for \$10 per night. One night he made \$450.

Even those who have \$50 to pay for a motel room can't count on reservations to hold the room for them. A visiting consultant to the city of Fairbanks says he ended up sleeping in the game room of the motel when he arrived after 6 p.m.

Most pipeliners can get by. Jack, a young man from California, has come up to work a year or two to get enough money to buy some land and build a cabin back home. He declares as many dependents as he can, stays as long as he can stand it in camps on The Slope (the north slope of the Brooks Range) where he can't spend anything, and sends most of his money home.

## OPEN ARMED ALASKANS NOW RESENTFUL

It's these kids as much as the cowboy-booted oil men from Texas (they call them pointy toes) whom the local people resent. Maynard, who grew up in Anchorage, explains that he and other Alaskans still welcome tourists and people who have chosen to make Alaska their home. Alaska has always been an open armed place. But before, the winter was a limiting factor — anyone who remained past his first winter was okay. Now the dollars are big enough to offset the winters.

"They just sign their checks and send them home," he says bitterly. He says it's a common practice for pipeliners to declare "99 dependents," as many as they can get away with. The practice is illegal and heavily fined when caught. But many get out before the state tax people can catch up with them, and the state coffers suffer.

The long-time residents have been forced into the money rap, too, since they still must buy food, use the laundromat, and pay rent. A man who came to Alaska in the '50s, and has worked at an Air Force base as a civilian ever since, talks to us about going north if he loses his present job. He's hesitant. "It's alright for a single man, I guess, but eight weeks is a long time to be away from your family..."

But the lure of the dollars is strong and gets stronger as the bills rise. In a conversation overheard in a bar, a young woman was incredulous that her companion for the evening was satisfied with his present job even though he could make twice as much on the pipeline. Others are less resolute. Residents of Fairbanks say the job turnover is so high that when they go to the bank or the travel agent or the grocery store, there's a good chance that the person who waits on them will be new and faltering.

As in all boom towns, the established businesses must compete with the new wage scale. In Alaska, they also have to compete with the pipeline for construction materials. The small businessman whose wrecker breaks down must stand in line for repairs behind Alyeska, the consortium of oil companies building the pipeline.

In their day-to-day lives, residents must deal with tele-



Fairbanks and its big dollar doldrums are miles and miles away from the Toklat River valley in Mt. McKinley National Park. The park, too, will likely feel the impact of the increasing population.

phones that don't begin to keep up with the sudden increases in demand, and schools where their children go double session with 45 students in a class. They listen to the radio tell them that the crime rate has risen 45% in the last six months. And when they go to the airport, they see the prostitutes lined up with their Winnebago campers, waiting for the pipeliners to arrive from The Slope.

## BOOSTERS AROUND

Also like other boom towns, there are many boosters. Their bumperstickers say, "Alaska Pipeline — America's Lifeline." Others, more bitter about conservationists' opposition to their pipeline, carry the now famous slogan, "Let the Bastards Freeze in the Dark."

Fairbanks, unlike the other boom towns, has money. The pipeline boom actually started about six years ago when many businesses prematurely started expanding. Those that didn't go broke while they waited are now feeding into the sales taxes of the city. With the property values shooting skyward, the city's tax base is high. The city, however, is not interested in stimulating the housing industry, apparently since they figure that the construction workers will be there for only a few years more, and they don't think they can count on the gas pipeline yet.

Talking to Jack, the young man with the California cabin dream, he says he doesn't think Alaska will change much. Basically a sensitive, well-intentioned fellow, he has to be pushed to talk about what effect he and the

others might have on the North. He'd rather not think about it.

Among the others who are coming with the pipeline, there is a new breed of wolves, who, in their own way, are perhaps as predatory as the native wolves that still stalk the strand lines. Lamar, a pipeline employe, is attracted by the smell of money — however he can get it. Sometimes it might mean destroying a culture. Riding in his truck down the highway, we notice that his dashboard is crowded with books on Eskimos and Indians. His motivation becomes clear when he pulls into a roadside cafe to talk to the old trapper that he has heard runs the place. Soon he has talked the trapper into bringing out some beaded moccasins, a pair of tanned moose mittens, and a fur cap, all made by friends of his in a nearby Indian village.

"Where do you think I can buy these?" "How much could I get them for?" "How many can I get?" Lamar asks. The trapper explains that it is a dying native art; only one or two of the old people in the tribes across the North are interested in making them anymore. "I know," Lamar says insistently. "That's why I want them. Now." He asks, several times, to be taken to the village, but the trapper refuses, knowing Lamar and others of his kind will find the village soon enough.

By himself, Lamar's impact on the Indian and Eskimo cultures would be negligible. There have been trappers and traders trying to make a fortune off the natives for years. But the big pipeline money makes it easier for Lamar and the others to rent bush planes and swarm into the villages which may have so far escaped.

Money is making its mark on Alaska, a mark as indelible as the road stretching beside the pipeline, slicing the North Country in two. Money's mark is more insidious, and perhaps unnecessary — at least to the degree now being suffered. This fact is obvious to most residents of Alaska but is rarely discussed in media coverage of the pipeline.

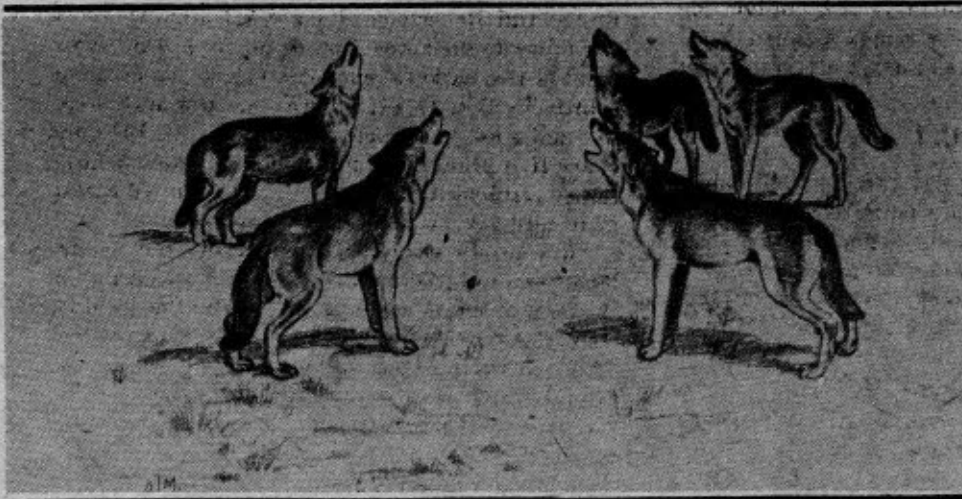
The reason: cost-plus contracts. Alyeska is paying the contractors their costs plus a certain percentage. This means the contractors are free to spend as much as they want. The result, predictably, is that little concern is shown for thrift.

Every worker we talked to mentioned that one of the biggest job frustrations is that there is not enough work. Jack says that for every 70 hour week that he clocked, he actually worked only three or four hours per day. There was nothing to do. Maynard says he quit because he couldn't stand doing nothing while having to look busy for the benefit of any Alyeska inspector who might come by. Both men agreed that every job they'd worked on had twice as many employes as were needed.

The high cost of the pipeline is crucial to the state. Alaska is getting paid royalties from the lease of Prudhoe Bay of roughly 12% of the wellhead price of oil once the fields are producing. The wellhead price is the market price minus the oil delivery price, which includes the pipeline cost. So every unnecessary dollar spent on the pipeline cuts into the state's royalties. The state does not have a regulatory agency to oversee the cost of construction of the pipeline to insure there is no waste.

Double employment means double the money, double the inflation, double the boom. And double the sacrifices of Alaska and its people.

Money is making its mark on Alaska, a mark as indelible as the road stretching beside the pipeline, slicing the North Country in two.



"All Together." Drawing by Olaus J. Murie from THE WOLVES OF MOUNT MCKINLEY.



There is intense competition for females during the rutting season.

## Elk, the Autumn Buglers

by Sarah Doll

When European settlers first came to North America, they found a large part of the continent inhabited by a large deer. Impressed by the animal's size, they called it elk, the European name for their moose. This name is still popularly accepted, although there is some movement back to the Indian name, wapiti.

There are three species of elk presently found in the United States. The Roosevelt elk is the largest, and lives in the rain forests of the northwest coast. The California, or tule, elk is the smallest and least numerous. The most important as a game animal is the Rocky Mountain elk, which has the largest population and range.

At least one variety of elk became extinct after North America was colonized. Hunting pressure by both Indians and white settlers was severe. For the most part, the meat and skin were fully utilized, but in the late 1800s traffic in the canine teeth of elk flourished. The elk were killed for

these teeth alone, which were sold to members of the Elk's Lodge, until that organization took action to stop the practice.

In the deer family, the elk is second only to the moose in size. A Rocky Mountain elk may measure 50-60 inches high at the shoulder, and weigh up to 1100 pounds. Coloration is a grayish tan, with dark brown head, neck, and throat, and a light rump patch. The antlers on a mature bull are usually at least four feet long, and spread three feet across.

Elk are quite adaptable in diet, as evidenced by their former range, which included the Great Plains and the eastern forests, as well as the West. Grass is the main food when available, usually mixed with a wide variety of sedges and herbs. Aspen trees, both leaves and bark, are used extensively, and during the winter pine needles become important.

Calving occurs in late May or early June. The calf is vulnerable to attack by coyotes, bears, and mountain lions, although the cow can usually defend it from coyotes.

It is usually independent by December or January. Growth of a male's first antlers starts the following May.

The antlers of mature males grow from March through July. Much time is spent in August rubbing off the velvet, and by September the horns are polished and ready for the mating season. A bull will service as many females as he can gather in his harem, and his bugling to all challengers is heard throughout the range. Usually posturing and threatening are enough to settle mating disputes, but occasionally real battle does occur, and both front hooves and antlers are brought into play.

After the mating season, males are exhausted and in poor shape to face the winter. The females must carry their young through the winter. A severe season, with heavy snow cover over the grass, can be disastrous for the herd. There are so few remaining natural predators, and so little natural habitat left, that elk populations tend to grow larger than their range can support, making food shortages in the winter more severe.

The large die-offs caused by severe winters have touched off one of several controversies regarding elk management. Should elk be artificially fed through the winter months, as they have been traditionally at the National Elk Refuge at Jackson, Wyoming? Or should the die-offs be allowed as a natural check against overpopulation? Winter feeding in Yellowstone National Park was discontinued some years ago, and this year an exceptionally long winter killed hundreds of elk. The tourist season opened with many carcasses lining the road, and public outcry was great. Glen Cole, research biologist at Yellowstone National Park, feels that since a national park is supposed to preserve the natural ecosystem, artificial feeding should not be undertaken. The winter deaths are part of natural selection. However, University of Montana wildlife biologist Les Pengelly charges that human intervention in the park, encroachment on winter range outside the park, and loss of predators have already spoiled the ecosystem. He doesn't advocate feeding, but removing the excess animals to other areas.

A second point of contention centers around the hunting season. Hunting is accepted as a valid management tool for keeping populations down. A late season hunt has been held in some years north of Yellowstone to thin the population as it migrates to its winter feeding ground. However, the "firing line" of hunters standing outside the park's boundaries tends to keep the herd from migrating, and they'll stay in their summer range until snow makes migration difficult.

Another controversial management issue involves logging. Foresters and some biologists have long maintained that clearcutting an area helps elk by allowing more

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Photo by Charles W. Smith

Victims of the winter are an important food source for the coyote.



Elk seem to prefer grassy clearings with areas of timber nearby.

Photo by Dick Randall, Defenders of Wildlife



Oct. 10, 1975 — High Country News-9



Photo by Charles W. Smith

Antlers of a mature bull elk are often four feet long and span three feet.

grasses and low shrubs to grow. Several government agencies in Montana are launching an extensive study of this problem.

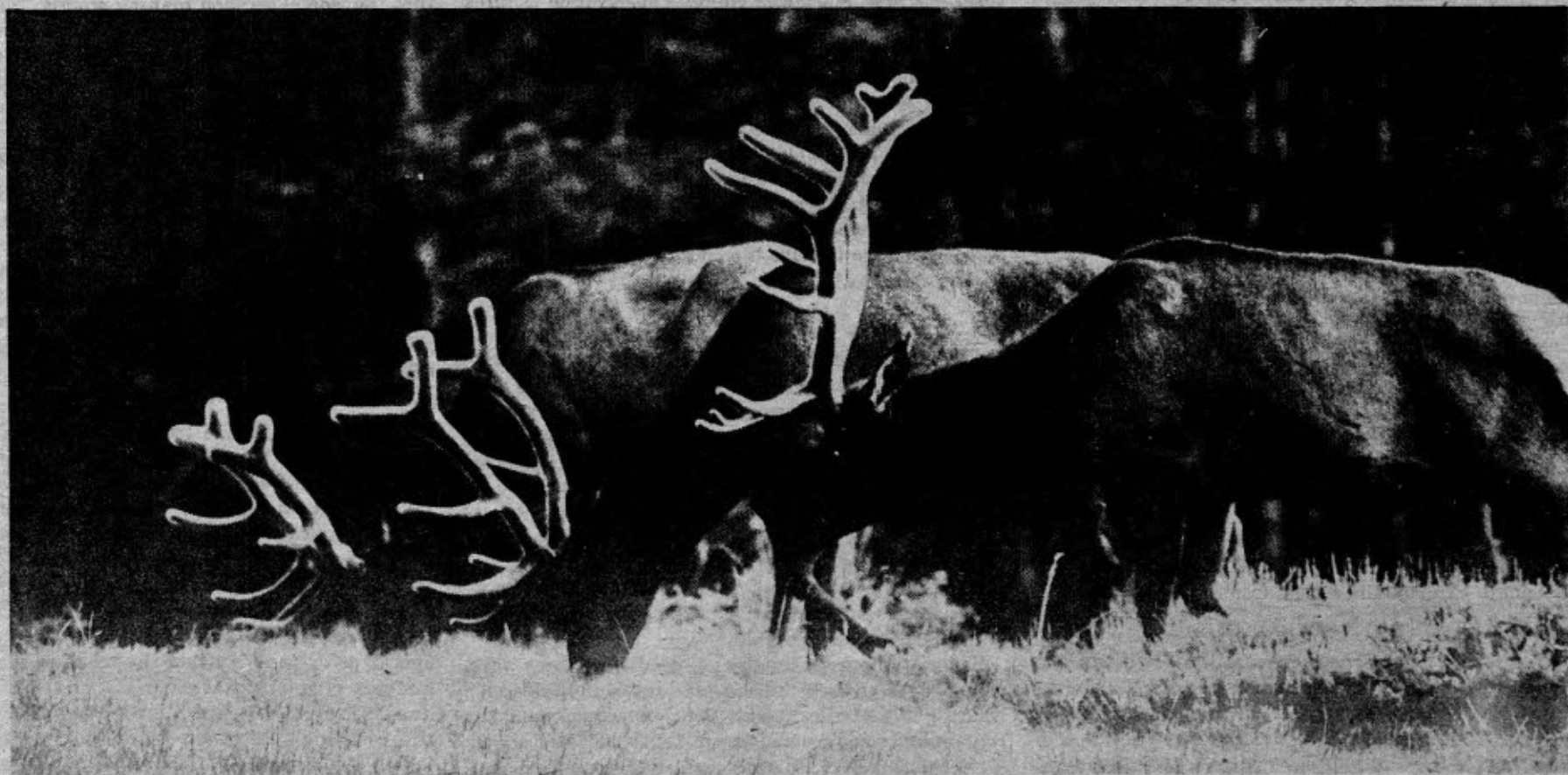
While elk are often observed grazing in clearcuts, it is dangerous to assume that all clearcuts are good for elk. Comparisons are difficult because wildlife is more visible in clearcuts than in forests. Large clearcuts can rob elk of needed cover. Roads associated with logging can have detrimental effects on elk populations, both by creating

barriers, if cutbanks are high and steep, and by bringing too many humans into an area. Roads also provide easy access for hunters which is needed in some areas and not in others.

Les Pengelly, while acknowledging that clearcutting of small areas may help elk in some places, makes this point: "If foresters take credit for helping wildlife by removing trees, burning slash, and providing access roads, why are they in such a hurry to replant the area? Why doze the site

to reduce competition? Why fence, spray, trap, fertilize and replant?" It is a problem much in need of study.

In his book, *The Elk of North America*, Olaus Murie writes, "Looking to the future, in view of the needs of elk and the exacting requirements of recreation based on multiple use, the safest course is to model elk management along natural lines, not only to preserve the elk as a living animal, but also, so far as is reasonably possible, to preserve its distinctive habits as well as its habitat."

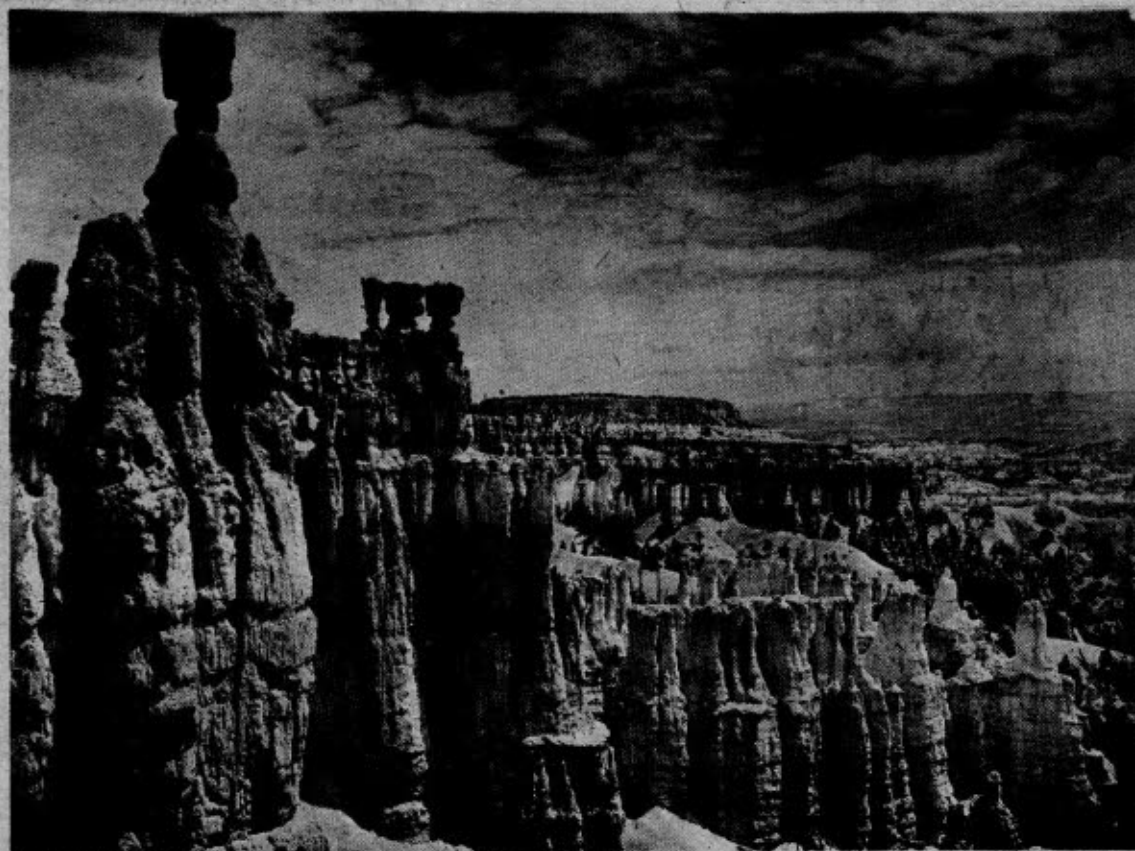


Elk are in velvet until late summer.

Photo by Dick Randall, Defenders of Wildlife

nearby..

10-High Country News — Oct. 10, 1975



#### CLEAN AIR ACT COULD STOP KAIPAROWITS

A Clean Air Act amendment to protect national parks, wildernesses, refuges, monuments, and reserves could stop the proposed Kaiparowits power plant in southeastern Utah, if the amendment becomes law. Speaking in Utah, Assistant Secretary of Interior Jack W. Carlson said a Congressional subcommittee has approved an amendment which would classify land to prevent significant deterioration of air quality in selected areas such as those named above. Carlson said buffer zones of 50 miles around these areas have been suggested, which would remove the Kaiparowits Plateau from consideration for the coal-fired power plant. The Kaiparowits site is within 100 miles of four national parks, including Bryce Canyon National Park, pictured above. Meanwhile, the Kaiparowits Advisory Council has selected the East Clark Bench site for the townsite for Kaiparowits workers. Utah Gov. Calvin Rampton had opposed that site since he was afraid the workers would live across the stateline in Arizona if the East Clark site were chosen. The period for comment on the environmental impact statement for the entire project has been extended to Nov. 14, 1975.

Photo courtesy of Utah Travel Commission.

## Government seeks insulation

(Third of a series  
on home insulation)

On June 4, 1971, then-President Richard M. Nixon directed the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to issue revised standards for insulation applied to federally-insured homes. Today, the Federal Housing Administration's updated insulation standards stemming from that directive serve as a model minimum building code for home owners and builders across the country.

The President estimated that requiring sufficient insulation would reduce FHA's maximum permissible heat loss by about one-third for a typical 1,200 square foot home — and even more for larger homes.

"It is estimated that the fuel savings which will result each year from the application of these new standards will, in an average climate, equal the cost of the additional insulation required," Nixon said.

The FHA set standards for various federally-financed buildings around the country. The standards vary according to climate and type of construction. In the Rockies and Northern Great Plains, the minimum standard for a wood frame house was R-19 in the ceiling (about six inches of fiberglass or rock wool), R-11 in the walls (about four inches of fiber), and R-7 for the foundation (about two inches of fiber).

#### FEDERAL INCENTIVE

One feature of the proposed Energy Conservation and Conversion Act of 1975 (H.R. 6860) is a tax incentive for individuals insulating their homes. Under the bill, a homeowner could claim a credit equal to 30% of the new insulation costs incurred, up to \$500.

H.R. 6860 passed the House on June 19 and is now in the Senate Finance and Budget Committee.

#### STATE STANDARDS

As of Jan. 1, 1974, all new homes built in California had to be insulated according to state-set standards. This regulates new homes, but old substandard homes are not covered. Pacific Gas and Electric estimates that only about half of the existing homes in its service area have adequate insulation.

"If insulation in the recommended amounts is installed in only 10% of the homes without it, enough natural gas will be saved each year to serve 12,000 residences," says PG&E.

Most states have not set minimum insulation standards for private homes.

#### CITY POWER

In 1973, two Ohio cities, Wooster and Cuyahoga Falls, amended their building codes to require minimum thermal insulation. Most city building codes address structural features, but ignore energy conservation features such as insulation.

The Ohio cities' codes require insulation in amounts equal to, or greater than, those stipulated by the Federal Housing Administration. FHA regulations apply only to buildings financed with federal assistance, but the cities' codes are binding on all work.

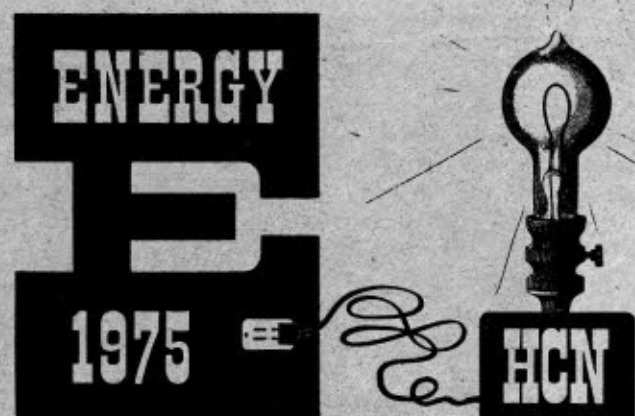
Tom Uhl, Wooster director of administration, told *Environment Action Bulletin*, "If more cities had insulation requirements in their building standards, we would do more to solve the energy crisis the nation is facing than any other single thing."

#### GRAND SCHEME

The American Institute of Architects has urged a high priority be given to make all the nation's buildings more energy efficient. In its report, *A Nation of Energy Efficient Buildings by 1990*, the AIA outlines a strategy for saving 30% in existing buildings and 60% in new ones for a total of 12.5 million barrels of oil a day by 1990.

The AIA estimates the total investment costs for its plan would be from \$729 billion to \$1,460 billion over 15 years. Providing 12.5 million barrels of oil a day would require an investment of \$415 billion over the same period, and would cost consumers between \$892 billion and \$1,449 billion to buy it.

Savings in energy costs would be divided three ways, suggests AIA. Home owners would receive 10%, utilities would get a fixed return on their investment, and the remainder would be used as capital to fund new energy savings "packages." The AIA says all this can be accomplished "with a minimum of economic dislocation."



energy news of the Rockies and Great Plains

**BIA NULLIFIES CONSOL LEASE.** The Bureau of Indian Affairs superintendent for the Fort Berthold reservation in North Dakota has nullified a prospecting permit and exclusive leasing options of the Consolidation Coal Co. The superintendent told Consol that the BIA "did not sufficiently comply with the code of federal regulations" in getting an environmental impact statement before issuing the permit. The Crow and the Northern Cheyenne tribes in Montana have also declared coal permits and leases void; however, their action was through the tribe, not through the BIA.

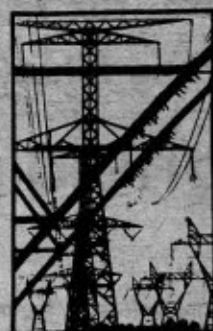
**FORD'S SHALE PLAN UNREALISTIC.** An official of a major oil shale company says that President Gerald R. Ford's plans for the oil shale industry may be unrealistic and "a little too ambitious," according to an Associated Press story. Ford said he wants one million barrels of oil daily extracted from oil shale by 1986. An official of TOSCO (The Oil Shale Corp.) said that scale of production would require "politically unacceptable" levels of federally guaranteed loans. He said he favors federal loan guarantees on a much smaller scale. Private institutions lack the money for heavy backing of the industry because they are already spending so much to finance development of other resources, such as the Alaska North Slope, he said. Federal oil shale leases are in Colorado and Utah.

**OLD TIRES VALUABLE.** A facility to recycle oil, carbon black, steel, and fiberglass from used tires will soon be built near Rocky Flats, Colo. The Oil Shale Co. (TOSCO) and Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. will build the \$2.2 million plant to test commercial feasibility. If the plant is a success, 15 larger ones could be built around the country, says a spokesman for TOSCO. The process is a variation of a method used for getting oil from shale. The firms are trying out the idea because tires are hard to get rid of and because "It's economical. You can make money," says Bernard L. Schulman, manager of research and engineering for TOSCO.

**CONSERVATION CORNERSTONE.** Ten western governors have agreed that energy conservation should be the "cornerstone" of any federal energy development policy and that states should have an "early entry point" into the federal decision making process. These policies were drafted at the Western Governors Regional Energy Policy Office meeting at the end of July in Santa Fe, N.M. The governors voted, 8-2, to ask the federal government to continue its present moratorium on coal leasing until comprehensive coal leasing policies and programs are developed. Utah and Arizona voted against the measure.

**GULF NOT PUSHING GEOTHERMAL.** Gulf Oil Co. has stopped work on a geothermal lease it holds in Idaho because it has "no money in the budget to continue test work . . . and no plan . . . to do any more drilling," according to an *Idaho Statesman* report. Gulf purchased the three year lease on 117,000 acres which raised hopes in the Camas Valley that royalties would soon flow into the local economy. While Gulf holds the three-year lease, no other company can develop it.

**RAILROAD LEASE PROPOSAL REJECTED.** The House Interior Committee has rejected a proposal that would have allowed railroad companies to obtain leases to federally-owned coal. (See "Reckoning," Sept. 26, 1975) Opponents said the proposal would have given railroads an unfair competitive advantage where federal coal is located in a checkerboard fashion with coal already owned by the rail companies. Meanwhile, a coal slurry line official is charging that railroads are using their special privileges to prevent the public from realizing the benefits of new technology. The president of Energy Transportation Systems, Inc. said the major obstacle to the company's slurry line is now railroad opposition which has blocked right-of-way at 49 points where the line would cross railroad tracks enroute to Arkansas.



## The HCN Hot Line

energy news from across the country

**PEABODY DIVESTITURE APPEAL.** Kennecott Copper Corp. says it plans to appeal the recent Federal Trade Commission ruling requiring its divestiture of Peabody Coal Company. Kennecott argues that since 1968 numerous companies have entered the coal business, thus nullifying the FTC's original concern over lack of competition in the coal fields.

**PRICE-ANDERSON UP AGAIN.** The Price-Anderson Nuclear Insurance Act, an act which limits the liability of nuclear reactor owners to only \$560 million, is up for renewal again. Ralph Nader, Friends of the Earth, and the Environmental Coalition on Nuclear Power testified before the Joint Atomic Energy Commission in late September favoring no limit to the liability of reactor owners. The groups say a nuclear accident could cost billions of dollars and the liability limit is a subsidy which leads to less vigilance by builders and operators and false economies for nuclear power.

**ALASKA GAS ROUTE.** Eight of the 11 western governors back the trans-Alaska route over the trans-Canada route for a natural gas pipeline from the North Slope to the lower 48 states. Govs. Dan Evans (R-Wash.) and Calvin Rampton (D-Utah) voted against the trans-Alaska resolution and Jerry Apodaca (D-Ariz.) abstained at a governors conference in Sun Valley, Idaho. At Alaska gas pipeline public hearings in Billings, Mont., few people testified. Most testimony favored a share of the gas going to Montana if the pipeline route crosses the state, according to the Associated Press. Randall Gloege, testifying for Friends of the Earth, favored a trans-Alaska route in the oil pipeline corridor to minimize impact. He said the trans-Canada route would cut through the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

**MINERAL LOCK-UP BLASTED.** "We've gone too far in preserving the federal lands from development," assistant Interior Secretary Jack W. Carlson told the American Mining Congress meeting in San Francisco in late September. He said we are "locking out our own ability to achieve independence in both energy and minerals. . . ." Carlson noted that 17% of the federal lands were withdrawn from multiple use by 1968 and that has now increased to 67%. The solution is to return to the "old time religion of multiple use," he said.

**COAL TRAIN COSTS SOAR.** Without careful planning, utilities will be at the mercy of railroads serving the coal fields, Dale Steffes told the Slurry Transport Association at a Houston meeting. Steffes, a consultant who has just completed a study of coal rail costs, said that in many cases, transportation costs will be twice the coal costs, according to Coal Week. Utilities looking at western coal "ought to buy the transportation first, then go out and buy the coal," he said.

**NEW ENGLAND SOLAR SYSTEMS.** Massachusetts Electric Company, Narragansett Electric Company in Rhode Island, and Granite State Electric Company in New Hampshire are inviting customers to experiment with solar water heating. Willing customers contribute \$200, and their utility pays the remaining \$800 to \$1,400 for the solar system. Eleven different models will be tested and results monitored.

**RADIOACTIVE RABBITS.** Jackrabbits have burrowed into a radioactive waste salt cake at a nuclear waste facility in Hanford, Wash., and scattered radioactive material over a five and one half square mile area. Studying the Energy Research and Development Administration's Hanford reservation, two scientists conclude: "Animals can pose problems in large waste management areas." The two, Thomas P. O'Farrell and Richard O. Gilbert, say they doubt the incident posed any threat to human health, according to the Los Angeles Times.

## TVA bill would expand board, regulate rates

A bill to amend the Tennessee Valley Act of 1933 is now being considered in both the House and the Senate Committees on Public Works. The bill was prompted by Senate oversight hearings where TVA was criticized by environmentalists, residents of the valley, and labor leaders. (See HCN, Sept. 26, 1975) Critics say the bill is a meager attempt to reform the agency.

Both bills would expand the TVA board from three members to five, in an attempt to increase board accountability by assuring regional representation on the Presidentially appointed board. The House bill (HR 9508) would also limit the board to raising rates every two years and only after public hearings. Previously, rate decisions had been made at closed board meetings. The House bill also includes a "sunshine" provision which would require the board to hold public meetings unless a quorum decided, by roll call vote, to close the meeting.

The House Public Works Committee's bias in favor of the agency was indicated when the committee recently voted to allow TVA to raise its debt ceiling from \$5 billion to \$15 billion. The committee lavishly praised the agency's low rates, according to the Mountain Eagle. TVA rates are still 40% lower than other utilities' rates, according to TVA figures, despite the fact that they were raised several times recently. Only two witnesses ob-

jected to the agency's request for the new debt ceiling so it can complete construction of eight nuclear plants by 1985 and increase its electrical output by 100%, according to a Mountain Eagle report.

TVA is now exploring for uranium in seven western states. The uranium will then be enriched by the federal government and used to fuel the TVA nuclear plants. One-fifth of the increased electrical demand that TVA anticipates will be from the federal enrichment plants.

## Report from Alaska

by Greg Capito



To the casual observer, Alaska's water resources appear to be unlimited. The state has thousands of lakes and rivers including the Yukon, which is the third largest river system in North America. In general, there is an abundance of water, but during certain seasons, it may not be available.

For example, in normally wet southeast Alaska, where stream flow is the primary source of supply, a drought of short duration may dry up waterways. In cold desert areas of the Arctic, shallow lakes and rivers freeze solid for eight months of the year. In some regions, ground water is of poor chemical quality, while in others, permafrost limits the development of good supplies.

Rapid growth and increasing energy development suggest that allocation of this valuable resource must be strictly regulated. As municipal and industrial users seek to increase their sources of supply, some streams will be completely dewatered. Maintaining minimum flows for the reservation of fish and wildlife is a serious concern of conservation-minded Alaskans.

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12-High Country News — Oct. 10, 1975

## Organic Act, clearcutting future uncertain

## Monongahela decision reveals need for review

by Mike Weber

A court case challenging the proposed clearcutting of 428 acres of the Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia has resulted in temporary victory for clearcutting opponents. In August, 1975, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit affirmed a lower court decision in *West Virginia Division of the Izaak Walton League, Inc. v. Butz*, 367 F. Supp. 422 (1973). The decisions effectively ended the use of clearcutting as a management tool in that forest.

The case turned upon the judicial interpretation of the Organic Act of 1897. The act is the original source of power for the Secretary of Agriculture to authorize timber sales from national forests. The Court of Appeals agreed with the lower court's findings that:

1.) Trees may be sold and cut only if they are "dead, matured, or large growth." In addition, the sale must "serve the purpose of preserving and promoting the younger growth of timber on the national forests."

2.) Before sale, the timber must be "marked and designated" for sale, a two-step process involving an initial designation of the general area of public land from which the timber will be cut, followed by a marking of each individual tree to be cut.

3.) Failure to remove timber which is cut constitutes a violation of the act.

4.) If the Forest Service intends to institute policies which are valid forest management practices, but in contradiction of the act, they must first obtain authorization from Congress.

The court order directed the Forest Service to revise its regulations accordingly.

The plaintiffs in the case described the Monongahela National Forest as one of the "finest mixed hardwood forests in the United States." Clearcutting became common practice on the forest only after 1964.

Clearcutting is a process in which the boundary of a cutting area (but not individual trees) is marked prior to the cutting of virtually all trees in the area, regardless of age or condition. This practice is inconsistent with the court-ordered individual marking of only dead, matured or large growth trees. This is the most significant aspect of the decision for the timber industry, which has found clearcutting to be the most economical method of harvesting timber in many areas.

Also of great significance is the direction by the court that, "Efforts toward regulatory blighting of Congressional controls by administrative seige cannot be permitted." This means the Forest Service must turn to Congress if it wants to continue to exercise the same freedom in forest management that it has in the past.

Thus, a Congressional review of the Organic Act is likely to come, especially if application of the court decision is extended to other national forests.

Speculation on what the long-term effects of the decision may be is widespread. An immediate consequence, according to the *New York Times*, has been the banning of further timber sales in four eastern states where decades of overcutting have left few concentrations of mature trees. Those states are the states within the jurisdiction of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Echoing the sentiments of the Forest Service, Dick Guth from the Northern Region Information Office in Missoula, Mont., said that extending the decision to his area, "would preclude application of a silviculturally (having to do with the management of trees) acceptable practice." He said the Forest Service is hopeful that Congress will take up legislation to address this subject. Vern Fidelity of the Intermountain Regional Office of the Forest Service in Ogden, Utah, agreed and stated that, "amendment of the Organic Act would allow us to use the full range of silvicultural practices."

In Denver, Pat Finney, Special Project Coordinator of the Rocky Mountain Region, predicted that application of the decision in the state of Wyoming would mean a reduction in next year's proposed timber sale from 107 million to 29 million board feet. He said this would be accompanied by a loss of 700 jobs and \$11.7 million in cash flow.

Citing the example of lodgepole pine, Finney pointed out that recent research in some universities indicates that younger trees must be harvested in order to maintain

a healthy, vigorous stand, but this could be in violation of the court decision.

Finney also said that the decision did not speak specifically to the practice of clearcutting. He said that a mature, even-aged stand of lodgepole pine could still be clearcut so long as each tree was individually marked. The decision would merely require more work to harvest the same stand, resulting in a higher cost per board foot, he said.

While the Forest Service was generally disappointed with the court decision, Wilderness Society vice-president Frank J. Berry said, "It is encouraging to find the integrity of the courts has again come to the rescue of the ideals of constitutional government." (*Wilderness Report*, September 1975)

United States Sen. Gale McGee (D-Wyo.) viewed the decision as, "a victory not only for sensible forestry in West Virginia but in Wyoming and for the nation as well."

At present no legislation has been proposed in response to the court opinion, nor has the Justice Department finally decided whether or not there will be a further appeal. While tentative victory and defeat is marked in

the ledgers of the respective parties to the case, future policies in our national forests remain undecided. Conservationists have charged the Forest Service with attempting to provoke Congress into overturning the decision by stopping further timber sales in the court's jurisdiction. The Forest Service in turn stresses that as professional managers, they will be able to perform in whatever manner is decided by the courts. The courts feel it is a matter better decided by Congress.

Whether provoked by further court cases relying on the Monongahela decision, the management of the Forest Service, or the pressures of the forestry industry as it contemplates its unpredictable future, it seems inevitable that Congress must respond. The courts can only interpret the law once Congress has declared it. Obviously, the declarations of Congress in 1897 could not anticipate the changes in forest harvesting techniques that would occur in the next 200 years.



A recent court decision may mean big changes for the Forest Service or for its guiding legislation — the Organic Act of 1897. The court ruled that the Organic Act says only mature, dead, or large trees may be cut and they must be individually marked for cutting on national forest lands. Above is a stand of lodgepole pine, a species that tends to grow in even-age stands. Clearcutting would not be ruled out in this type of stand, according to the court's decision, but it would be more difficult since each tree would have to be marked. Photo by Stan Rice



# Western Roundup

HCN

Oct. 10, 1975 — 13

## Illegal tax policy aids developers

A Colorado county's taxing policy is a bonanza for developers and speculators and a burden on homeowners, **The Denver Post** has revealed. The Jefferson County policy allows discounting all vacant land to one-third of its actual value before figuring its assessed valuation. That results in vacant land being assessed at 10% rather than the normal 30% of its actual value. El Paso, Douglas, and Adams counties reported similar practices. According to Colorado's property tax administrator, the policy is illegal.

## Snow-filled town fights cloud seeding

The publisher of the **Ouray County Plaindealer** is leading her community in a battle against the Bureau of Reclamation's cloudseeding program in southwestern Colorado. The Bureau recently issued a press statement saying that "grassroots opposition to a weather modification program . . . is in the most part turning into grassroots desire for a program" in the area. The statement came out during the same week that the publisher, Joyce Jorgensen, was testifying in Denver against the project, using statements from several elected officials and businesses in the super snowy town of Ouray who also oppose the project. A Bureau official testified at the same Denver meeting that "the pressure to undertake operations is made up of concerns from the energy crunch and for oil shale development." Both developments require large amounts of water.

## Two tribes sue for western water

More than 2,000 water users in Wyoming and Montana have been named as defendants in suits brought by the federal government for the Crow and the Northern Cheyenne Indian tribes. The Crow tribe claims all Pryor Creek water as well as water in the Big Horn, Little Big Horn, Sage Creek, Sarpy Creek, and Tullock Creek was reserved for them in treaties dating back to 1825. The Northern Cheyennes cite an 1884 executive order as authority for their claim on the Tongue River and Rosebud Creek. The case is not likely to be determined for several years, according to a story in the **Billings Gazette**. The U.S. Supreme Court must decide whether the issue should be determined by state or federal courts.

## County to rule on Ski Yellowstone

The Ski Yellowstone resort development remains the subject of controversy in Gallatin County, Mont., where the county commissioners held a hearing on the proposal. (See HCN, May 23, 1975) The developers have asked the Bozeman, Mont., Chamber of Commerce to endorse the project. The Forest Service has not decided between two requests for special use permits, for the same Lake Hebgen area — one from Ski Yellowstone and one from the Montana Wilderness Association for a cross country ski area. An official of Ski Yellowstone told the **Missoulian** that the corporation will subdivide 960 acres of land below Hebgen Mountain whether or not they get the special use permit for the Forest Service land to build ski lifts on the mountain.

## Indians, environmentalists fight CAP

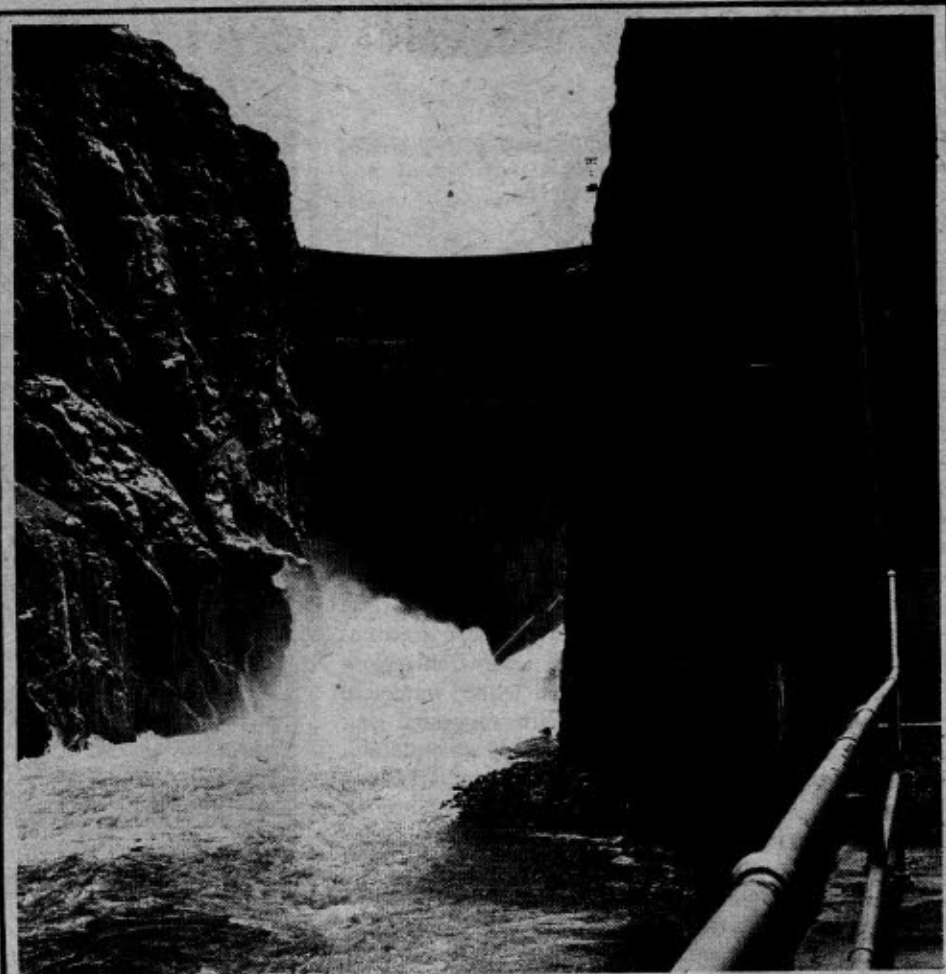
Congress will be considering appropriations in October for the Central Arizona Project, a multi-billion dollar project to divert water from the Colorado River 200 miles across the state to Tucson and Phoenix. Environmentalists have filed suit to stop one segment of the project until an environmental impact statement is complete. Plaintiffs include the Citizens Concerned about the Project, the Maricopa Audubon Society, and two persons interested in the Fort McDowell Indian reservation. Three fourths of the reservation would be inundated by the proposed Orme Reservoir, putting 345 residents out of their homes. If they don't give up their land by choice, it could be taken by eminent domain.

## Kennecott courts trouble in the air

Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico are all tangling with Kennecott Copper Corp. over air pollution regulations. Both New Mexico and Utah had granted variances, but Kennecott violated the variances, too. In New Mexico, the state filed suit because Kennecott wouldn't file a compliance schedule. Kennecott said it couldn't comply without building a new smelter. In Utah, the state has objected to Kennecott demolishing two of its five acid plants which remove sulfur dioxide from waste gases at the smelter. Kennecott hadn't been using the plants since February when it shut down a major portion of its operation, according to **Deseret News**. In Arizona, Kennecott and four other smelters may be forced to use air pollution control devices instead of the system they all now employ, called the closed loop system. A regional Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) official has recommended banning the closed loop, under which smelters monitor air quality and curtail operations to meet air standards.

## Radioactive tailings now being removed

Radioactive tailings are now being removed from under the floors of schools, homes, and businesses in Grand Junction, Colo., where they had been used as construction fill. The tailings were used extensively in the city during the post World War II building boom. Now more than \$6.6 million has been appropriated through a joint effort by the federal government and the Colorado Department of Health to start removing the tailings or to apply sealant in structures where they were used. The project was initiated when an increased incidence of birth defects was found in newborn children there.



Western governors objected strenuously when the chairman of the Western States Water Council told them he assumed priority for water would go to industry rather than agriculture. The chairman, Wesley Steiner, said his choice was based upon economic concerns as well as inevitability, according to a **DENVER POST** story. He said the disruption caused by the shift would not be significant because the agriculture economy's loss would be a gain for industry and would result in more jobs. Gov. Calvin Rampton (D-Utah) agreed that more efficient usage of water is desirable but said, "I'm not willing to let it (agriculture) die just to have more jobs." The confrontation took place at the Western Governors' Conference in Sun Valley, Idaho.

Photo of Buffalo Bill Dam near Cody, Wyo., by Lynne Bama

## No more snowmobiles in Glacier Park

Glacier National Park officials have decided not to allow snowmobiling in the park in the future, following a review of comments from the public on the subject. Snowmobile use had already dropped off because of avalanche danger and poor snow conditions, according to the Park Service. Ski touring and snowshoeing use has more than tripled since 1973 in the park.

## Rapid growth hurts Colo. residents

Rapid growth in Colorado didn't contribute to the prosperity of individuals in the state, according to a report by state Rep. Jack L. McCroskey. The report, entitled "Costs of Growth," points out that between 1960 and 1970 Colorado's population climbed about 25%, almost twice as fast as the population of the nation as a whole. "While Colorado as a whole moved merrily upward," McCroskey says, "the average person actually slipped a rung or two on the economic ladder." As evidence, McCroskey cited U.S. government statistics on the '60s: 1) Colorado's per capita income rose 9% less than per capita income in the U.S. as a whole — a 69% rise, rather than 78%. 2) Median family income in Colorado rose 65%, compared to a national gain of 70%. 3) The earnings of factory and construction workers in Colorado rose slightly less than the national average. People who have no monopoly power in the state gain little or nothing from abnormally rapid growth, McCroskey concludes. Among those who do gain are land developers, privately owned utility companies, and to a lesser extent, television stations, he said.

## Bulldozers in Glacier Park streams

Bulldozers, which were brought into Glacier National Park this summer to repair roads and bridges after severe flooding, are now "getting a little carried away," according to a park visitor. In June, 1975, the park was hit by flooding which caused \$1.7 million of damage. The bulldozers and other heavy equipment were needed to remove sediment from the roads, which sometimes included boulders up to a foot in diameter, and to clear debris from under bridges. However, in one case the bulldozers proceeded to channelize a stream a mile and a half past the bridge and in another, they went outside the park boundaries and onto the Blackfoot Indian reservation. The process of channelization is opposed by biologists across the country who are concerned about its destruction of aquatic habitat. Glacier Park Acting Superintendent Dick Monroe told HCN that it is "not park policy" to allow bulldozers into park streams. This, however, was an "emergency situation . . . it was the only way we could get the roads back in," he said. The flooding occurs about every 11 years, he said.

14-High Country News — Oct. 10, 1975

## Thoughts from the Distaff Corner

by Marge Higley



There's something to be said on behalf of whittling. I wouldn't guarantee that it induces philosophic thinking, but I strongly suspect that it does. During these beautiful crisp autumn days I have spent many pleasant hours sitting on the sunny bench back of the house — whittling. Perhaps it's really the quiet solitude, but I think it has something to do with the feel of the smooth, sweet-smelling wood in my hands — at any rate, I have come up with some conclusions about whittlers and environmentalists.

The problems they face are incredibly similar. For instance, before you start any positive action you have to have some fairly concrete idea of what you hope to accomplish. The other day I cleaned the bark away from a piece of aspen and studied it, wondering just what I wanted to do with it. Something about the grain suggested long ears. Now a rabbit has long ears — but so does a mule, and it's a cinch that before I touched a knife to it, I'd better make up my mind which one I wanted to try! Since my interest lies more with the woodland creatures, I decided on the rabbit. An environmentalist has to make his choice among the many fields of environmental endeavor before he can really get started.

Then there is the matter of progress. As an amateur whittler I have found that generally the results are better if I chip away steadily, a little at a time. By too hastily cleaning away the wood from the bunny's rump, I very nearly lost his tail! This may not always be true in environmental matters, but I suspect that there have been a few tails cut off because of too hasty action.

Criticism is another similarity. Why whittle? Wouldn't it be better to sit inside and knit for my grandchildren? Why try to stop strip mining? Wouldn't it be better to let them dig up the coal, and then we wouldn't have to import so much oil?

Environmentalists and whittlers both use tools, too. To rough off the big chunks of wood, I use a chisel, and for the very fine parts, an X-acto knife, but mostly I use the same old sturdy pocketknife that I use to clean fish or peel potatoes. The environmentalist uses big guns when necessary, and specialists when necessary, but for the most part his work consists of plain old hard leg work and diligent study.

Speaking of tools and criticism, there's another similarity. "Aren't you afraid of using such a sharp knife? Don't you ever cut yourself?" Well, I must admit that I do nick a knuckle once in a while, but I'd never get the rabbit done at all if I used a dull kitchen paring knife. Many an environmentalist has had to stick his neck out in order to get his point across, but he's willing to take that chance.

There are disappointments, too. Just where the rabbit's nose should have been there was a knot-hole filled with rotten, crumbling wood. In frustration, I tried to remedy it, but finally tossed that piece back into the wood basket and started all over again, this time with a more solid piece. How many times have environmentalists had to give up and start over again from the beginning?

To offset the disappointments, there is the joy of praise for a finished job. "Gee, it really does look like a rabbit! For awhile there I thought it was going to turn out to be a dog!" Environmentalists, too, get a few left-handed compliments.

I don't know whether or not environmentalists get philosophical, but this morning, as I polished off the last humps and bumps with fine sand paper, I came up with the most profound thought of all these many thoughts.

When an environmentalist finishes a job he started out to do, he may have saved a beautiful free-flowing river from damnation; or a forest may stand that might have been cut down; or there may be a strip mining law that will preserve the land.

All I have is a little wooden rabbit!



Zabriskie Point, the site of proposed strip mining in Death Valley National Monument. "We'll be able to stand right here and watch trucks haul away part of the view," says monument superintendent James Thompson. National Park Service Photo

## Monument to our generation? Strip miners invade Death Valley

Strip miners are taking over Death Valley National Monument, according to a *Los Angeles Times* report.

"The natural features, for which the monument was established to protect, are being totally and irreparably altered at a rate of nearly 200 acres per year," states a National Park Service report. "Exploration, work on mine roads, and minimum work done to hold mining claims is marring the natural features on an additional

1,000 acres per year."

The Tenneco Corporation has already opened two strip mines in the monument removing 13,000 tons of borax a year. Tenneco plans a third strip mine in full view of the scenic overlook at Zabriskie Point. In addition, the U.S. Borax and Chemical Corporation is searching for new deposits in the area.

The miners are primarily after borax and talc. The Park Service says 1,827 mining claims have been filed inside the monument, covering more than 36,000 acres. The total is increasing by nearly 200 claims per year, according to the *L. A. Times*.

The mining cannot be stopped by the Park Service, according to a recent ruling by the attorney for the Department of the Interior. Death Valley was withdrawn from mining when it was declared a monument in 1933, but miners and then-Secretary of Interior Harold L. Ickes persuaded Congress to reverse the ban a few months later, according to the *Times*.

"In addition to Death Valley, four other units of the National Park System currently are open to mining," says the *Times*. "They are Glacier Bay National Monument and Mt. McKinley National Park in Alaska, and Organ Pipe and Coronado National Monuments, both in Arizona."

To undo Congress' past act, Rep. John Seiberling (D-Ohio) has submitted a bill (H.R. 9540) to withdraw all National Park System lands from mining with the proviso that existing claims be allowed to continue. Sens. Lee Metcalf (D-Mont.), Henry Jackson (D-Wash.), J. B. Johnston Jr. (D-La.), Mark Hatfield (R-Ore.), Alan Cranston (D-Calif.), and John Tunney (D-Calif.) have introduced a bill which not only closes all national park units to further mineral entry, but also prohibits surface mining for three years on private existing claims. Rep. Morris Udall (D-Ariz.) says he will introduce a bill to close all park units to mining permanently. Public hearings in the House and Senate Interior Committees are scheduled on the issue for early this month.

According to the Interior Department, eliminating mining in Death Valley would reduce annual production by \$15 million and increase U.S. reliance on imported Turkish borate. Borate mines in Death Valley account for 80% of domestic production. Colemanite, a borate mineral, is used in the manufacture of fiberglass.

### Kleppe makes some promises

Senate Interior Committee hearings on the nomination of Thomas S. Kleppe to be Secretary of the Interior concluded on September 25. At this time, there is no likely opposition to Kleppe on the committee, according to *Conservation Report*. A vote on confirmation is expected October 10, with Senate action following soon after.

Kleppe, the head of the Small Business Administration, was mostly criticized for his record in SBA. On environmental issues his record has been sketchy and most observers don't know how he will act as chief administrator of the nation's natural resources.

In the hearings, Kleppe said he did not favor strip mining for phosphates in the Osceola National Forest of Florida.

When asked his opinion of the vetoed strip mine control law, Kleppe refused to make any specific comments. Kleppe said he would agree to continue the federal coal leasing moratorium if Congress acted this session on a leasing bill.

Brent Blackwelder of the Environmental Policy Center testified that Kleppe supports the Garrison Diversion — an irrigation development in North Dakota opposed by many landowners in the area, the Canadian government, and most major conservation organizations. Blackwelder asked Kleppe to end "secrecy and coverups" in the Interior Department's Bureau of Reclamation.

Kleppe also said he would request a delay in federal government leasing off the Southern California coast pending a personal review of the controversial issue.

Kleppe is the former mayor of Bismarck, N.D., and a two-term Congressman from the state. If confirmed, he would succeed Interior Sec. Stanley K. Hathaway who resigned earlier this summer for health reasons.

## BULLETIN BOARD

### OIL SHALE HEARINGS

Rep. Tim Wirth (D-Colo.) will be holding hearings on oil shale in Colorado later this month for the House Science and Technology Committee. Wirth would like to hear testimony on any facet of oil shale development and its environmental impacts. Hearings will be held on Oct. 25 at the Rifle City Hall, Rifle; on Oct. 27 at the National Center for Atmospheric Research Building, Boulder; and on Oct. 28 in the Post Office Building at 18th and Stout, Denver. All start at 9 a.m. Those wishing to testify should contact Tom Tackaberry, House Science and Technology Committee, House Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20515. Telephone 202-225-9117.

### N.M. LAND USE

A land use symposium sponsored by New Mexico State University will be held in Albuquerque Oct. 15-16. The theme is "Privately Owned Rural Lands and Land Use Planning." Registration fee is \$6.50. For more information write Keith Austin, Box 3AE, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, N.M. 88003.

### MINERAL OWNERSHIP MAPS

The Wyoming office of the Bureau of Land Management has prepared a series of surface and mineral ownership maps that for the first time offer a full and accurate description of surface and mineral ownership in many areas of the state. The maps show lands where the federal government still retains mineral rights even through the surface lands have passed to state or private ownership. They also show other public lands. There is a charge of \$1.50 for each quad sheet showing land ownership status, and a charge of \$2.00 for each quad map showing mineral ownership status. Write BLM, Box 1828, Cheyenne, Wyo. 82001.

### NATIONAL PARKS HEARING

The Senate Interior Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation will hold two days of oversight hearings in Wyoming in mid-October on National Park management problems, according to Sen. Cliff Hansen (R-Wyo.). The hearings will be held on Tuesday, October 14, at the Ramada Snow King Inn in Jackson, and Thursday, October 16, at the Convention Center in Cody. Both hearings will open at 9:00 a.m. Hansen, who is the ranking Republican member of the subcommittee, will chair the hearings on issues which impact generally on the management of the National Park System and specifically on Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks. Persons wishing to testify should write to James P. Beirne, Counsel to the Subcommittee, Room 3106 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510.

### ENERGY FINANCE MEETING

A conference on financing energy resources in the western states will be Oct. 29-31 in Albuquerque, N.M. The conference is jointly sponsored by 10 governors who recently founded the Western Governors' Regional Energy Policy Office. Participating states are Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming.

### JENNY LAKE PLAN

The National Park Service is studying possible changes in the management of the popular Jenny Lake area in Grand Teton National Park in northwest Wyoming. Alternatives include banning overnight camping and phasing out Jenny Lake Lodge. Comments are being received until October 24, 1975. Copies of the proposals are available from the National Park Service, Grand Teton National Park, Moose, Wyo. 83012.

## Eavesdropper

environmental news from around the world

### LOONEY LIMERICKS

by Zane E. Cology

South Dakota is in for a flood.  
The James will be a sea of mud.  
Don't build an Ark,  
And prepare to embark.  
It's only Oahe — a plan that's a dud.

**NEW LOBBYING REGS OPPOSED.** Conservation groups are objecting to new lobbying regulations proposed by Common Cause. Common Cause, a public interest organization, wants to expand disclosure of lobbying activities. "Environmental lobbyists argue that increased administrative costs imposed by more stringent disclosure requirements would put most environmental lobbyists out of business," writes *Land Use Planning Reports*.

**AUTOS PAY FOR BUSES.** An \$83 million bus system for the California side of Lake Tahoe would be financed by a "user" fee on drivers who insist on using their own automobiles, according to the *Los Angeles Times*. The California Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, which came up with the plan to deemphasize auto use in the scenic area, must now take its plan to the legislature for approval.

**LID ON SULFATES.** The Environmental Protection Agency plans to limit further increases of airborne sulfates. EPA says sulfates may already be endangering human health throughout the entire Northeast and in many urban areas nationwide, according to the Associated Press. Sulfates are chemicals which develop in the atmosphere from sulfur oxides emitted primarily by facilities burning high sulfur coal or oil fuels. Sulfates have not been regulated by EPA in the past.

**REFUGES IN TROUBLE.** The National Wildlife Refuge System "in a few short years will cease to play a viable role in this nation's conservation program," Forrest A. Carpenter, president of the National Wildlife Refuge Association, told a Senate subcommittee studying the system. The subcommittee was told by other conservation organizations that the refuges were being ignored and mismanaged by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service because of budget cuts. Subcommittee chairman Sen. Frank E. Moss (D-Utah) said some will find the conservationists' views alarmist, but "most will agree the refuges are definitely in trouble," according to the Associated Press.

**CLEAN UP STILL POPULAR.** "Even during a time of recession, high unemployment, and rising fuel costs, the public does not voice a readiness to cut back on environmental control programs to solve economic and energy problems," says Opinion Research Corporation in an August 1975 report. ORC found that six out of ten Americans feel it is important to pay the price necessary to clean up the environment. "Business seems to have little recourse but to learn to cope with and even capitalize on . . . the transformation of environmental protection into a popular, institutionalized movement. . .," says ORC.

**WASTE NOT AND SAVE.** The Environmental Protection Agency has proposed for all federal facilities waste-paper recovery guidelines that are projected to save the government more than \$10 million a year. Under the proposal, high-grade office paper, corrugated containers, and newspapers would be separated and sold for recycling.

**SMALL CITIES SAVE.** "Smaller cities are the most economical with taxpayers' funds," says Bob Brown, executive director of the Tax Foundation. Cities under 50,000 population spent an average of \$158.32 a year per person for municipal services in 1973. Cities between 300,000-500,000 population spent \$327.84 while cities over one million population spent \$681.14. "It appears there is no such thing as the 'large economy size' city," Brown says.

### CONSERVATIONIST SOUGHT

The Wyoming Outdoor Council is seeking an executive director. Should be dedicated conservationist willing to run an office in Cheyenne, write a monthly newsletter, attend state meetings. Subsistence wages. For more information contact John Enger, president, Wyoming Outdoor Council, Route 2, 944 Shoshone, Powell, Wyo. 82435 or telephone (307) 754-4576.



### NOTICE OF REVOCATION CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY

The Insurance Commissioner of the State of Wyoming has on this date, October 2, 1975, revoked the Certificate of Authority of Seaboard Life Insurance Company of America, a Florida corporation. This revocation is made as a result of the company being placed in rehabilitation by the Circuit Court of the Second Judicial Circuit, in and for Leon County, Florida. All policies issued by the company now in force may remain or be terminated at the discretion of the policyholder.

Dated this 2nd day of October, 1975.

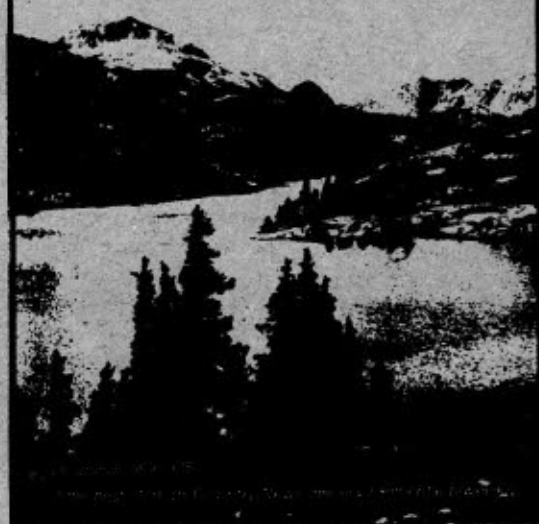
s. John T. Langdon  
Insurance Commissioner

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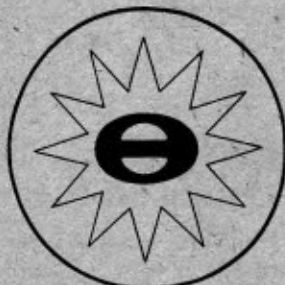
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16-High Country News — Oct. 10, 1975



# THE MONKEY WRENCH GANG

by Edward Abbey, J.B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia and New York, 1975. \$8.95, hard cover, 352 pages.

Review by Peter Wild

The labyrinths and pinon-topped mountains of the Colorado Plateau are the backdrop for this picaresque novel of continuous thrills. The characters complement the real but improbable geography of southern Utah and northern Arizona. Fate brings together Seldom Seen Smith, a jack Mormon with three wives, and George W. Hayduke, a manic-depressive demolitions expert of the Green Berets, recently returned from Vietnam. They are joined on a trip down the Colorado River by A. K. Sarvis, M.D., a plump and balding physician and small-time eco-raider, given to quoting Aristotle, and Ms. Bonnie Abzug (no relation to the Congressperson), his secretary and frustrated mistress. One boozy night around a campfire in the bowels of the Grand Canyon, the three men discover a common bond. Sealing their oaths with whiskey and blood, they vow enmity to the road builders and dam builders destroying the surrounding wilderness, while Bonnie looks on, stoned and aloof.

Assured access to the doctor's checkbook, they spend a few days caching sleeping bags and emergency supplies of peanut butter in various nooks of the Canyon Country. Their careers as outlaws begin with a guerrilla raid on Caterpillar D-9A's and Hyster C-450's, the bulldozers and crawler-tractors gouging a highway through their desert. An evening spent fouling engines with sand convinces them that crime not only is easy but fun. Buoyed by the success, thousands of dollars of earthmoving behemoths rendered useless, they lust for bigger game. The reader is off with them, holding to the seat of his pants through a series of adventures punctuated by exploding bridges, high-speed chases in jeeps, Bonnie's pyrotechnic lovemaking beneath the stars, and miraculous escapes through hails of bullets. Occasionally, a shadowy one-eyed masked man on horseback helps them through the

It might be well to push our chairs back from the feast that Abbey has served us and consider what we have eaten.

rougher spots. Panting after them during all this is the Bishop of Blanding, Utah, who leads a pack of Blazers of the local Search and Rescue on a personal vendetta to bring the four to justice and to God.

Abbey delights in pointing to the general madness on both sides. As Hayduke observes, the advocates of plastics, pesticides, and pavement are transferring the wasteland they created in Vietnam to their own once pristine country. For their part, the members of the destructive quartet, driven by vermicular tangles of motivations, are in sore need of a Freudian analyst's couch. Presidents of monster Exxon and ITT need not tremble that *The Monkey Wrench Gang* will inspire a general assault upon

their domains. Sophocles' play, *Oedipus*, did not result in a rising rate of incest among the Greeks; neither did it move men to gouge their eyes out. Instead, weary environmentalists will find *The Monkey Wrench Gang* a delightful purgative, a lyrical and humorous transport.

So far, so good. At a cost per hour far less than that charged by the neighborhood movie house and at a level of originality that can compete with the best of "Mary Tyler Moore," we've been entertained for a few evenings by a bizarre rendition of environmental affairs, not usually known for their fun. Self-delusion can be grand. However, it might be well to push our chairs back from the feast that Abbey has served us and consider what we have eaten. Our jaws drop: we have just stuffed ourselves with several thousand empty calories of Yellow Zonkers.

In one significant respect the commercial publishing houses are little different than supermarket chains or automobile dealerships. They stay afloat financially only as long as their products sell. At present the publishing merchandise that turns the quickest profits are easy-to-read books laced with porno-violence. As almost any writer will be happy to testify, the writing game is a tough one; the novelist, as talented and as serious as he may be about his art, can't be blamed for slanting his work toward current fads. The best of authors have turned out commercial books now and then in order to keep their editors happy and groceries on the table. That in itself takes a decent amount of talent — the kind of talent that an ad writer needs to sell boxes of Tide or Chevrolets. It usually produces, however, books that, like so many other commodities in our culture, entertain briefly, only to be tossed aside. People may find delight in racing through *The Monkey Wrench Gang* once; few, if any, will bother to read it twice.

Edward Abbey is a talented writer, one with several fine books still in him. Occasionally in *The Monkey*



Author Edward Abbey Photo by Douglas Peacock

*Wrench Gang* he forgets that he is writing slick commercial stuff of the pop-zap, electric Kool-Aid variety. When this happens, he breaks through the slapstick and kitsch to give us, almost by mistake, his unique and perceptive gifts concerning the landscape and man's relationship to it. As to his future books, one can only hope that Abbey is aware of the distinction, that while he's been trying to fool us he also hasn't been fooling himself.

## Dear Friends,

Fancy graphics are a luxury we can't afford, has always been our motto. But just recently a young man came along and knocked the visual complacency out of us.

Like many people who help out the paper, he has not asked for a cent of pay. And yet he's a fully accredited professional, in love with both words and pictures. He is Jeffrey D. Clack, whom long-time



Jeff Clack, designer and benefactor. Photo by Peter Houlihan

readers will remember as a co-founder of the forerunner to *High Country News*, *Camping News Weekly*. Clack, 30, grew up on a ranch near Wheatland, Wyo., and entered the field of "visual communications" at age 15 when he founded a railroad hobby publication called *Voice of the Rails*.

At various times, Clack has been founder, editor, publisher, production manager, circulation manager, photographer, and columnist for countless publications. He has worked as a graphics artist for eight newspapers and two magazines — and, in his spare time, he has written three novels and 20 short stories.

For some reason, improving the looks of HCN has become Clack's latest project-obsession. Somehow, he has fit over 100 hours of work for us between his shifts at the *Town Crier* in McAllen, Tex. His letters, which come about once a week, give us a correspondence course in the graphic arts.

Why does he want to help us, when there's no hope of pay in sight? Well, for one thing, he says he believes in Teddy Roosevelt's dictum: "Every man owes some of his time to the upbringing of the profession to which he belongs." And for another, his step sister, Sue Schrader, a devoted HCN reader in Riverton, Wyo., asked him to help us.

So, with Clack's help, we've begun housecleaning. We think the effort will help us reach more people. It will certainly make us more enjoyable for those who are already faithful readers. We have a new flag (that large type on the front page that declares us HCN), some new column heads, and many new ideas. Why shouldn't a paper devoted to the natural assets of the Rocky Mountain region look good?

Clack is looking for a full time job somewhere in the Rockies. He has no complaints about his current position, "but the challenge is gone." For now, his challenges come at night and in the wee hours of the morning when he's figuring out ways to make us what he is sure will be "the snappiest publication in the West."

We wish him luck. And we hope you enjoy the improvements.

—the editors

## In The News

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