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The Environmental Bi-Weekly



# High Country News



Vol. 9 No. 12

Friday, June 17, 1977

Lander, Wyoming

Is it 'outstandingly remarkable'?

## Officials measure charms of Sweetwater Canyon

by Justas Bavarskis

To become a part of the National Wild and Scenic River System, a river, or stretch of it, must be judged "outstandingly remarkable." Nobody involved in the judging process can define what "outstandingly remarkable" means. But everyone insists that that's what the river must be.

When it passed the Wild and Scenic River Act of 1968, Congress declared, "(It is) the policy of the United States that certain selected rivers of the Nation which, with their immediate environments, possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values, shall be preserved in free-flowing condition, and that they and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations."

But it left future litigants to founder for themselves in the "outstandingly remarkable" swamp on a case-by-case basis.

### A LOOK AT THE RIVER

Led by staff members from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 12 of us set off

one day this spring to determine whether a 9.5 mile stretch of the Sweetwater River that flows through Sweetwater Canyon in southwest Wyoming was outstandingly remarkable enough to be included in the National river system.

The Sweetwater rises at the southern end of the Wind River Mountains, tumbles down the eastern slope, flows along the northwestern boundary of the Red Desert, roars (in spring) down Sweetwater Canyon, then meanders through the valley it has cut past Split Rock, through Devil's Gate, by Independence Rock, and into the North Platte — a total distance of 122 miles. Eventually, its water ends up in the Atlantic.

It was this route that the fur traders, explorers, and pioneers followed in their search for the wealth of the West. On Oct. 12, 1812, looking for a route that would let him ship furs from the mouth of the Columbia back to the East, Robert Stuart of the Pacific Fur Co. and his party stumbled across the Sweetwater below the canyon, and spent the winter there. Probably they were the first white men to see the Sweetwater. In finding it, they also laid down essentially what became the Over-



**REMARKABLE?** Many small, inconspicuous rivers are — in their quiet, clear, tumbling ways — "outstandingly remarkable" and worthy of protection.

See below for a discussion of the criteria being used for selecting rivers for the National Wild and Scenic River System.

(continued on page 4)

### BOR makes crucial count

## How many rivers deserve Congress's protection?



**THE GREEN RIVER** in Utah is one of the rivers recommended by President Jimmy Carter for study as a wild and scenic river. See details of Carter's environmental message on page 7. Photo of the Green River by Verne Huser.

The Mid-Continent Region of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR) will commence a major inventory of rivers that might be suitable candidates for the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System beginning in 1978. This is likely to be the first and last such comprehensive survey of this region's free-flowing rivers; it is expected to have far-reaching effects on the future of river protection in the Rockies.

For some time the staff in BOR's national office in Washington, D.C., has been concerned about the unsystematic growth of the river system. They observe, perhaps correctly, that rivers have been selected for study primarily on a political basis — a fact that is leading to a very uneven, imbalanced mix of protected rivers. That Colorado has 12 rivers under study or proposed for the system (the most of any State except Alaska) is due not to any orderly approach, but rather that former U.S. Sen. Peter

Dominick (R-Colo.) wanted to curry environmentalists' favor prior to his unsuccessful 1974 re-election bid.

During the latter part of the Ford Administration, BOR was also under heat from the President's Office of Management and Budget to justify the national system. Protection under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act can be expensive, especially where private lands are involved and scenic easements must be purchased to hold down development in river corridors and protect natural values.

In the West, where much public land is

involved, these costs are modest — on the 105 miles of the Dolores River that President Jimmy Carter recently proposed for inclusion in the National System, the tab for easements was only \$220,000.

But in the East, the bill has been higher — \$7.1 million on the Gasconade and Big Piney Rivers in Missouri, and \$5.23 million on Little Beaver Creek in eastern Ohio. In addition, costs of development and management along a Wild and Scenic River can also be high — for example, \$453,000 on

(continued on page 5)

**Up until now, rivers have been selected primarily on a political basis. Colorado has 12, partly because former Sen. Peter Dominick wanted to curry environmentalists' favor one election year.**



# HCN Letters

## HCN BETTER THAN BEANS

Dear HCN,

My soul is in greater need of nourishment than my body — hence, enclosed please find my personal check for a year's renewal. The hens are laying and the salad greens are up — so go ahead and take my beans & tortilla dollars!

Susie Henderson  
Cerrillos, N.M.

## SEABROOK STATEMENT

To the Editor,

I will be going to court tomorrow for my part in the Seabrook nuclear plant occupation and will be serving my sentence when people read this. Since I don't feel that the court will hear my statement when I plead guilty, I am making it to all of you now.

I knowingly broke the law when I went on to the proposed site, and since I want to take full responsibility for my action, I am pleading guilty. My intent and purpose was to stop the plant and not to break the law. For this reason I don't feel in my heart that I have done anything wrong, but rather that what I did was right.

When the public is sufficiently and honestly educated about nuclear power, the majority will realize that they do not want it. Perhaps my action will motivate a few more people to realize the seriousness of this matter and to educate themselves.

I would like to thank the many people who support me in what I am doing, and say that I feel very fortunate to be able to take an action which many would like to do but circumstances prevent them from doing.

David Hill  
Emery Farm, Rt. 4  
Durham, N.H. 03824

## AGAINST THE WALL

Dear HCN,

In late May, the U.S. Senate approved an amendment to the federal strip mine bill which calls for condemnation of landowners who resist strip mining of federal coal lying under their private surface. We feel the Senate's vote was a tragic mistake, and we hope and pray that the joint conference committee will strike the amendment out

of the bill. The Senate could not have understood the consequences of condemnation.

One consequence will be to get people backed against the wall. A coyote will do just about anything before he'll fight, but even a coyote will fight if you get him cornered. We love our land. We have worked for seven long years to try and get recognition of what we feel is our right to say no to having our land destroyed by strip mining. And despite pretty propaganda pictures of heavily fertilized spoils vegetation, strip mining does destroy the land's health and ability to sustain itself. We do not intend to ever stand quietly by and watch our home and land be destroyed.

It is argued that condemnation is only supposed to be used as an emergency measure. But the companies know why



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they want it. The companies will use the threat of condemnation to bully and intimidate people into selling out on the companies' terms — whether the country needs the coal or not. We have had bitter experience with this in Montana. Until 1973, condemnation for strip mining was allowed in our state, and many people were harassed into selling out.

A typical case is an old rancher in the Sarpy Creek area. Coal company representatives had been at him for weeks. One day when we went to see him, we passed a company car hurrying away. We found him sitting at his kitchen table crying. We asked him what was wrong, and he said he'd had to sell; if he didn't sell, they'd take it. We hardly think the U.S. Senate should be the one to make more of this sort of ugly coercion possible.

The third consequence of condemnation will be that big corporations will gain even more power in America. The energy companies will be able to gain control over much of the West's agricultural land and water and minerals. This is not an idle fear, for the amount of land they have acquired already is alarming.

The final consequence of condemnation will be the ruin of much of the West. If you drive people off the land that care for the land, there's no one left to protect it. Condemnation is at the root of what happened to Appalachia. We know this from our own

experience. We are members of the Northern Plains Resource Council — a group primarily made up of ranchers and farmers concerned about Western coal development. It is only because of NPRC that our state reclamation law and pollution laws have been enforced in the coal fields. Ask any state official involved if he agrees with that claim, and we think he would have to say yes. Other environmentalists have certainly helped out, but we landowners have been the heart of the effort. If we are driven out, we will not be replaced, and the West will be open for exploitation.

The Boyd Charter Family  
Delphia, Mont. 59073

## LEGISLATURE'S THE PROBLEM

Dear HCN,

Concerning your article of May 20 about the Montana Legislature, I would like to emphasize the problems the legislature itself presented against passing a coherent energy policy for the state. While the governor's position on his legislative recommendations for a state energy policy was important, the deciding votes lay with 150 house and senate members.

The energy initiatives faced a tough legislature — one that was at best interested in maintaining the status quo and at worst interested in trying to undo many protections for orderly coal development passed in previous years. Whether the governor's energy initiatives would have passed even with his strong support remains an open question. One bill he strongly pushed — the Coal Gasification Bill — went down to defeat anyway.

Certainly we expected the governor to adopt a more aggressive role in pushing his energy policy. However, it is unfortunate that my remarks, as quoted in your article, leave the impression that the governor's



Hannah Hinchman

strong support would automatically have ripped many energy policy bills from the jaws of defeat.

Sarah Ignatius  
Northern Plains Resource Council  
Billings, Mont.

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# Editorial



## Opportunity in the midst of crisis

In the midst of a crisis, anyone who can pause long enough to see its long-term message — and even the possible advantages of the situation — is to be commended.

Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus seems to be such a man. Although he's 2,000 miles away from his home state of Idaho, one of the states hit hardest by the drought, he has a deep-felt concern for the hardships the West will be enduring this summer.

However, he also sees the drought as an opportunity. In a recent letter to President Jimmy Carter, he said that the drought in the West coupled with the controversy over his dam "hit list" provides an "ideal catalyst to bring about water reform.... We ought not to lose the opportunity." Carter promptly agreed, and the Interior Department and other administrative agencies are now conducting an extensive analysis of federal water policy and preparing legislative proposals.

We hope that they act expeditiously. The sociologists have scolded environmentalists and the government for not taking advantage of an earlier crisis, the oil embargo. If a broad, hard-line energy plan had been proposed then and if people had been told what they could do to help, they would have been much more open to listening. Instead, the administration came up with Project Independence and by the time Carter proposed his conservation plan, many people were so jaded they no longer be-

lieved there was an energy crisis. In this drought crisis, some people are realizing that something more than the weather is wrong. The figures show that personal consumption in many areas of the arid and semiarid West exceeds the national average, despite the assumption that people here would be more conscious of water's value because of its scarcity.

Andrus dares to place the blame on two of the most revered concepts of Western water law: "use it or lose it" and "first in

time, first in right." Being a Westerner, he knows the ironic twist that the chronic shortage of water has created in the Western mind. Instead of conserving it, the Westerner says, "There isn't much of the stuff, so what's a fella to do except grab a hold of it fast and hang on."

As Andrus says in his letter to Carter, "Federal financing and an archaic water law system which rewards early development, no matter what the use, have been disincentives to water conservation."

Andrus has several ideas in mind of how to encourage conservation — and of how to force it upon the reluctant. One of the most basic, requiring water meters wherever federal funds are used for water, is the first necessary step toward encouraging the individual to save water. There is little incentive for homeowners to use dishwater for watering shrubs or to reduce the toilet's flush if they can't measure the reduction in their use.

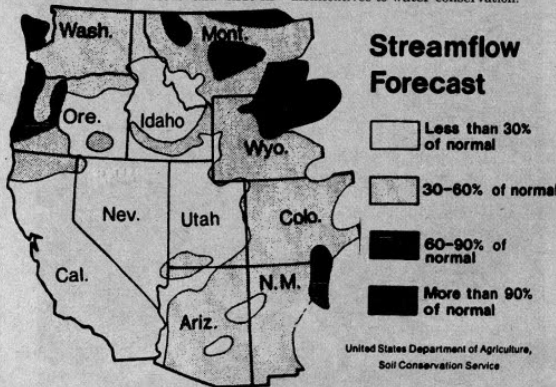
He also suggests that water efficiency requirements be established for irrigation as a condition to obtaining federal agricultural assistance.

While admitting that more water projects will be built, he urges Carter to propose increasing the irrigation districts' or the communities' share of the costs of the projects from which they benefit.

Such proposals will be discussed thoroughly with the Congress and with Western states before they are finalized, Andrus promises. This step was ignored with the so-called "hit list" on dams, which may have been the mistake that guaranteed failure.

We hope that our elected decision-makers will be able to pull themselves away from filling buckets with short-term answers long enough to work with Andrus on a long-term plan for saving water. And we hope they'll realize the crisis is serious enough to risk a little politically and take some of the harsh steps Andrus suggests.

—MJA



## Guest Editorial



### Utility uses luncheon technology

by Dr. John Bartlit

Christmas week at the San Juan Country Club in Farmington, N.M., was the scene of yet another episode in that continuing saga of Four Corners air pollution called "As the Words Churn." Arizona Public Service Company (APS) hosted some 100 business and government leaders for lunch on Dec. 21 to "clarify" for them just why APS plans to install pollution controls so much inferior to those used by Public Service Co. of New Mexico (PNM).

APS for the first time has felt criticism lately from the Farmington press for dragging their feet, and for their Four Corners stacks which stand in grimy contrast to the nearby stacks of PNM's San Juan Generating Station. How does APS handle such a depressing situation? Right. They host a luncheon, what else?

#### GROUP BARRED

After the grand concourse was announced, the Farmington chapter chair-

man of New Mexico Citizens for Clean Air and Water wrote the company to ask politely if he might attend also. Certainly the topic seemed appropriate to the affairs of the Farmington Clean Air Chapter. He was politely refused, which was duly reported in the *Farmington Times*.

The luncheon was the forum for APS president Keith Turley to enlarge on the company's handcrafted pollution story of wheal and woe. Turley's story, too, was duly reported in the *Times*. The most charitable description we can offer is the APS story had more gaps in it than a crocheted bathing suit. Our head man in Farmington — a professional helicopter pilot, Mike Arline — wrote a thorough rebuttal, which also made a spread in the *Times*.

#### THE REBUTTAL

Mike's eloquent response made, in part, the following points:

"APS decries the lack of targets (pollution control work). APS did not mention that this lack of 'targets' rests squarely on APS' doorstep. After extensive public hearings in 1974 the State Environmental Improvement Board (EIB) promulgated pollution control regulations requiring 90% sulphur dioxide removal and allowing 0.02 pounds per million Btu release of particulates. These goals were to be reached in accordance with a very liberal timetable.

"Did APS roll up its sleeve and go to work saying, 'We will do our best?' No! In accordance with APS' pattern of intransigence they go immediately to court.

"APS contends that the San Juan Generating Station can do better at pollution control because it is a newer plant. APS did not mention that nationwide there is a greater reservoir of expertise in cleaning up older power plants than there is in new plant technology.

"APS talks of the high cost of meeting the original goals. APS did not mention that the Four Corners Plant is one of the 10 cheapest in the nation to operate and by far the cheapest in either the APS system or the Southern California Edison System.

"APS is apparently upset that New Mexico is pushing for stricter pollution controls than required by federal law. APS does not mention that if only rather lax federal regulations were imposed and if that limit were reached, the average visibility would be around 12 miles.

"NMCCA&W does not believe that smog reducing the visibility to such an extent is in any way acceptable for the Land of Enchantment."

Thus concludes Book XII, Chapter IV, Episode VIII, entitled: "Luncheon Technology."

#### Reprinted from the LOS ALAMOS MONITOR

John Bartlit has been state chairman of New Mexico Citizens for Clean Air and Water since 1971. He is also a chemical engineer at Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory. His environmental activities are done entirely on his own time — evenings, weekends, and vacations.

Dr. Bartlit received his bachelor's degree from Purdue University in 1956 and his doctorate in chemical engineering from Yale University in 1963. He is currently a member of the National Coal Policy Project



Four Corners Power Plant. Photo by Terry Moore

sponsored by the Center for Strategic and International Studies of Georgetown University.

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**Hang it on the wall!**

## Sweetwater...

(continued from page 1)

land, and later Oregon, Trails. Eleven years later, General William H. Ashley of the Rocky Mountain Fur Co. set off with a party from St. Louis. They, too, followed the Sweetwater. When one of Ashley's trappers tasted the water and declared it fresh and pure, Ashley, it is said, gave the river its name. Another version says the name came from the Indian name for the river. A third version has it that the river got its name when a mule loaded with sacks of sugar fell into it.

In 1832, Capt. Benjamin Bonneville became the first man to take wagons along the Oregon Trail over South Pass. The Oregon Trail and Pony Express Route cut across the Sweetwater at Chimney Creek (which is at the foot of the canyon and just inside the eastern boundary of the study area), wander along a ridge that roughly parallels the river, then cut west across the sagebrush desert to South Pass. If the trail had followed the canyon bottom, that section of river automatically would be eligible for designation and protection on historic grounds.

But U.S. government regulations require that the history be crammed within one-quarter mile of the river or at least be in the line of sight (and, except at Chimney Creek, it never is because the canyon walls are too steep). Thus, the canyon is not automatically eligible to become a part of the river system, even though there is little doubt that the pioneers visited it in their search for water and game.

### LOCAL HISTORY

We bumped in five four-wheel-drive vehicles past sagebrush and antelope along a part of the Oregon Trail, then cut off on another dirt road that took us to the head of the canyon. We stood in a circle, stamping feet and rubbing hands to keep warm in the wind and scattered snowflakes, while Casey Snyder of BOR, who with Sandy Rowe of BLM is coordinating the Sweetwater Canyon study, explained the purpose of the two-day hike through the canyon.

We were there, he said, to decide whether the river was outstandingly remarkable, and if so, whether it should be wild, scenic, or recreational. A wild river, says the act, should be free of impoundments, generally accessible only by trail, have essentially primitive shorelines, and unpolluted water. A scenic river also should be free of impoundments, but its shorelines need only be largely primitive and largely undeveloped, and it may be accessible by roads in some places. A recreational river may have some impoundments, may have some development along its shores, and may be readily accessible by road or rail.

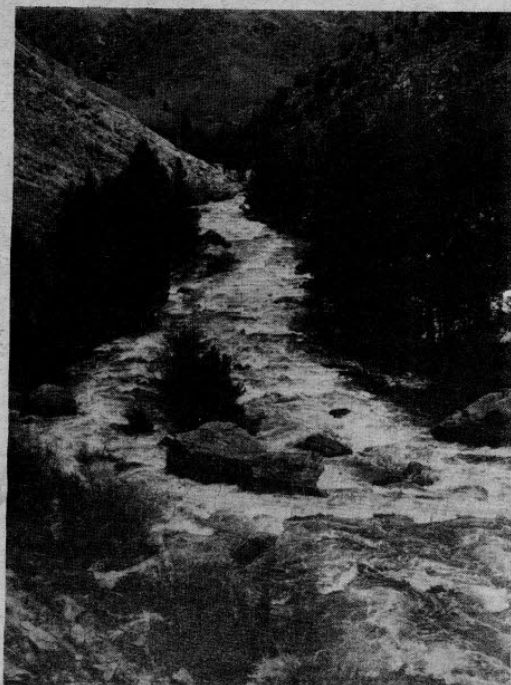
So far, sections of 19 rivers, totaling 1,655 miles, are so wild, or scenic, or recreational that they are part of the National Wild and Scenic River System. Another 53 are being studied for possible inclusion. If the Sweetwater Canyon section were designated, it would be the shortest within the system. That would make it outstanding, or remarkable, or both.

We walked past the leveled ruins of Teddy Hurst's old house and along a trail littered with metamorphic rocks until we reached his abandoned gold mine. Hurst, part-recluse, part-mystic, had blasted a tunnel into the cliffside. He had hauled an air compressor down the cliff, and laid down rails for his ore cars. Wearing a wet suit, he used to dive into the river and look for gold nuggets wherever his dead wife in

his dreams told him to look. It is said he didn't find enough gold to amount to much. It is said, too, that his wife must have hated him.

Was this significant history? Well, locally, perhaps a good story. There are other stories of prospectors in the 1860s taking sackloads of gold-rich dirt from the Sweetwater.

The river twisted along the canyon, and we worked our way over the rocks until the trail became dirt and followed a grassy ledge along the bank. A mile downstream, we stopped for lunch where a rutted, rocky dirt road worked its way down a steep hill to the river. A pit containing hundreds of



HOW MUCH TO STUDY. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is studying a 9.5 mile stretch of the Sweetwater, but President Jimmy Carter suggests 60 miles of it be included in the National Wild and Scenic River System. This would complicate the issue, since much more land is privately owned along the upper Sweetwater. Photo courtesy of the BLM.

bottles and rusting beer cans had been dug into the earth.

A hoary marmot rested its head on a rock above us and watched as we ate lunch and nibbled on the wild onions that grew there. Richard Boulette, then with the Wyoming Recreation Commission, chewed on a puffball. He had grown up in Lander, Wyo., and had spent a lot of his time in the canyon.

"What bothers me," he said, "is that everybody's coming into my old stomping grounds. NOLS (the National Outdoor Leadership School) has got courses in here now. That guy," he pointed to George Hunker, "wants to guide fishermen in here. Everybody's starting to come in here."

Around the campfire later that night, Snyder and Ken Czarowski, also of BOR, were asked if rivers that are designated become more popular as a result of the designation.

"Yes, they do," Czarowski said. "But I think we're fooling ourselves if we think we can hide this for ever." So why designate at all?

Because, under the act, a river that is designated or under study is protected from

dams, reservoirs, powerhouses, transmission lines, or any other projects that might have a "direct and adverse effect on the values for which such river might be designated."

Because, too, "There has been increasing recognition of the necessity for maintaining water in the streams for uses such as recreation, fish and wildlife production, and esthetic enjoyment. The need is particularly critical in the face of increasing water demands for energy and expanded agricultural production," according to Robert L. Eastman, chief of BOR's Division of Resource Area Studies.

There had been vague talk in the past

Armstrong, a water quality expert from the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, was asked about the status of those ideas.

"So long as there's money behind it, it's very much alive," he said.

### MAYBE BLUE RIBBON

After lunch, Czarowski waded to an island and cast a worm into the clear, deeper water near the opposite bank. He cast eight times, and each time a fish took his worm. The ninth time, his worm took a fish, and he brought in an eight-inch brown.

A little further downstream, the river bent, and we could see hundreds of granite rocks, many of them visible this spring only because a very light snowmelt had reduced the river to about half its normal flow.

There, Hunker and Kerry Connell of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, both purists, were taking turns with the graphite fly rod Hunker had made. Each brought in a small brown from the faster riffles.

"Game and Fish rates the Sweetwater as a Class III river," said Connell. A Class III river is considered "important trout waters — fisheries of regional importance." But that was the rating for the whole river, Connell said. "If we rated just the canyon, it might be blue ribbon," Connell said — "premium trout waters — fisheries of national importance. There are only eight stretches of blue ribbon trout stream in Wyoming.

We walked on past willow bushes chewed by moose and limber pine chewed by porcupines, over rocks and along narrow meadows thick with the leavings of cattle and moose that had grazed among the sagebrush, wheatgrass, bluegrass, junegrass, death camas, strawberries, gooseberries, and wild mint. About four miles downstream, we crossed Strawberry Creek, reduced to a trickle of its normal spring flow, and set up camp for the night in a meadow dotted with willow.

A few of us climbed into vehicles, drove out of the canyon on the steep rocky road that forded the river, and drove along the ridge to spot two vehicles at the lower end of the canyon. We exchanged greetings with eight instructors from NOLS coming out of a course in the canyon.

"Environmentalists don't seem to have much interest in recreational rivers," Snyder said during the ride. "BOR studies rivers. Wild, scenic, recreational. There's got to be something for everybody." So far, how would he classify the Sweetwater? "Maybe wild, maybe scenic," he said. "But I'm not sure if it's even eligible for designation."

### FURIOUS AND BOILING

A mist hung over the river in the morning, but the sun had burned it away and the wind had risen by the time we set off again. We rounded an elbow and I looked at the rock where, two years ago, I had grounded and lost an overloaded canoe and all its baggage in a futile attempt to run the river, then furious and boiling. The rock stood three feet higher out of the water now, and I could still see the aluminum scrapings on it.

Armstrong inspected the water. "There's a lot of algae in there," he said. "It could be natural; it could be man-made. But the Sweetwater's not really impacted. The water's low now. It may not get high enough to wash off the algae. But next year, with normal water, it will. This is a young river, a turbulent river. It cleans itself."

The canyon had changed now. Instead of the slate-gray metamorphic rock above Strawberry Creek, pink granite now to



wered as much as 500 feet above the river. John Elliott picked a few shooting stars — delicate, pink-to-violet flowers — and chewed the blossoms. "They're sweet and they've got lots of vitamin C," he said. He climbed up into the granite and soon became a small, green figure moving among the pink rock.

For miles, the river rushed over granite rocks — enough to build a small town — and formed deep pools behind them. Snyder had lent me his rod and I fished this stretch. There was a bite on virtually every cast and I managed to bring in a fish — a six-inch brown — only after I'd lost two dozen worms.

Gradually, the canyon walls changed again. The granite cliffs gave way to sagebrush hills, the meadows became longer and wider, and the river slowed and even made a few oxbows.

We left the canyon at Chimney Creek, so called because where the creek runs into the Sweetwater, there stands a stone chimney, all that remains of a house. Along

the entire 9.5-mile stretch, that and the Hurst mine (and dozens of discarded bottles and cans) had been the only signs of human habitation. The river had not been channelized or dredged or dammed — it has very few valuable minerals.

It produced good fishing. It bore signs of moose, elk, and deer. Mountain lions have been seen in it. Ducks are plentiful. Prairie falcons and other hawks are common, and golden eagles are seen there.

The almost extinct black-footed ferret and the endangered bald eagle and Rocky Mountain wolf reportedly have been seen in the canyon, but those sightings have not been documented.

Esthetically, the canyon is pleasing, though hardly spectacular.

But is it "outstandingly remarkable?" "I don't know," said Snyder and Czaranski. Their agency, BOR, is the lead agency for coordinating river studies that fall under the Department of Interior. In this case, the study is conducted jointly with BLM because that agency adminis-

ters more than 90% of the lands bordering the canyon. They, together with Sandy Rowe and other BLM specialists, will recommend whether Sweetwater Canyon should be designated a part of the National Wild and Scenic River System.

A main reason for Czaranski's and Snyder's uneasiness is the shortness of the stretch now under study — a mere 9.5 miles. If it were longer, they would feel more comfortable about recommending designation.

On May 23, five days after the study trip, President Jimmy Carter delivered his message on the environment. In it, he proposed that the section of river all the way from Sweetwater Gap, where it rises, to Teddy Hurst's mine, also be studied for possible inclusion in the system. That would make the total length an acceptable 60 miles or so.

It would also complicate matters. For one, the U.S. Forest Service administers some of the land and so would be pulled into the upper Sweetwater study. Much more

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land is privately owned along the upper Sweetwater than in the canyon. The ranchers there would have a substantial say in whether the river is designated.

And the state is less than enthusiastic about the prospect of designation.

Dan Spangler, a staff member of the State Planning Coordinator's Office, said Gov. Ed Herschler opposes neither the Sweetwater Canyon nor the upper Sweetwater study. "But he has not reached a decision," Spangler said, "on whether he'd ultimately want it (the river) included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. He wants to wait until the state water planning assessment is completed to see whether designation would fit in with the state's water development program."

In other words, if the state decides it wants to dam the Sweetwater, the governor probably will oppose designation.

## Rivers. . .

(continued from page 1)

the Dolores to start out, plus \$90,000 annually thereafter.

Looking at costs like these, the Ford Office of Management and Budget started to press BOR with questions: Just where is this system of yours going? What is its extent and scope going to be? What's it all going to cost? Who's it going to benefit? Is it going to be worth the bill?

In response, in 1976 BOR initiated a coast-to-coast inventory of the nation's free-flowing rivers. Unlike the Forest Service's Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE) of the late '60s and early '70s, the BOR inventory starts with a systematic base. The U.S. has 86 defined physiographic sections with characteristic topography, geology, climate and — most important — river types. The inventory is seeking representative examples of each type and, in the process, a broad geographic balance.

The inventory is already under way east of the Mississippi where it's scheduled to be done by the end of 1977. It began in BOR

### The bureau insists that its survey will be a starting point for and not a lid on the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Southeastern Region (Atlanta) with a massive map review which has identified rivers and river segments 25 miles long or longer. This was STEP 1 of the inventory and has already been done nationwide. Anything shorter than 25 miles has, at this point, been dropped.

The actual inventory is well along in BOR's Lake Central Region (Ann Arbor, Mich.) and gives a good preview of what to expect here in the Rockies. The Lake Central Region began with a list of 55,000 miles of rivers longer than 25 miles and continued the process of elimination.

STEP 2 was also done on maps, which were checked for water resources developments — dams, diversions, channelizing, dredging, etc. Rivers with these kinds of "improvements" on them were also dropped, although if there was a remnant of a 100-mile river — a stretch longer than 25

miles between two reservoirs, for example — it stayed in.

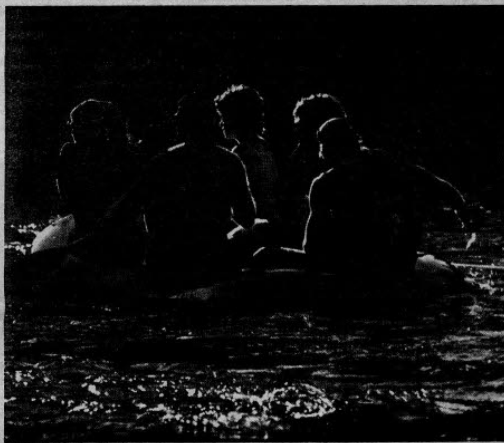
STEP 3 followed a similar pattern for development in river corridors (½ mile wide). An arbitrary point system was devised which assigned numbers for roads, bridge crossings, parallel roads, cities and towns of various sizes, garbage dumps, factories, outdoor theaters, you name it. This was a huge list. Still in the office on maps, the rivers that made it through Step 2 were scored for their degree of development — the more of it along a river, the higher its score. Then a cut-off level was picked, and all rivers that scored higher than that level were dropped. This left about 20% of the original 55,000 miles of rivers. It was a much smaller universe.

STEP 4 was a refinement. BOR personnel reviewed the current aerial photo files of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (a branch of the U.S. Agriculture Department) in each state capital. These photos are much more up-to-date and detailed than maps, and provided a base for further elimination, as well as a review of the previous two steps.

In STEP 5, BOR went public with the inventory on a "by invitation" basis. Conservation groups, canoe associations, planning regions, state agencies — anyone the BOR thought would have knowledge or interest — were asked to review and comment on the list that remained after Step 4. The purpose was to catch omissions, make additions, and also subtractions. If, for example, a 14-mile stretch of river turned out to have some unique limestone cliffs or hair-raising rapids, it was returned to the list. On the other hand, if a 70-mile reach was found to be dry 11 months of the year, it was dropped.

The BOR has had a bad time with its public relations on proposed wild and scenic rivers. Private river front landowners have too seldom been approached with adequate personal consideration or tact, especially on sensitive matters like scenic easements, which may be condemned. In part because of this, locals have voiced much hostility to "federal meddling," "land grabs," and the like. The reason only an "invited public" was involved at this stage was to forestall massive or shrill general protest in the inventory stage. At the end of this step, according to Bob Martin, who is heading up BOR's Lake Central inventory, "we had a pretty decent list of high quality, natural, free-flowing streams."

STEP 6 involves field work. BOR personnel have been flying the rivers that have made it through the previous five steps (or "filters," as Martin calls them).



GETTING THE FEEL OF IT. Some of the critics of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation approach to studying rivers say no one can really judge a river completely by examining it from maps and from the air. They say the only way to know what a river is really like is to get wet.

Photo by Lyn Jensen

Photographs and more detailed observations are being made. Rough evaluations in terms of the language of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 are being made with a special eye toward "outstandingly remarkable" values. This emphasis is being placed on exemplary rivers from each physiographic section.

Finally Step 7 will rank rivers within those sections. "Say," explains Martin, "that we come up with seven rivers in physiographic section A. Well, we'll maybe find that two are superior, three merely so-so and the other two definitely inferior." This ranking will be somewhat subjective. The end result will be a list of rivers for possible inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Doing a vast inventory like this is a tricky job; there are 3.52 million miles of river, creek, stream, fork, branch, and the like in the U.S. There's no way the job will satisfy everyone. However, at this point, critics have voiced the following key concerns.

#### DIVERSITY

The use of the physiographic section approach raises some questions. There are

other river typologies, none with universally accepted terms, that could possibly provide for a more balanced and precisely defined diversity for the National System.

More seriously, the fact that rivers are being ranked by section could lead to some omissions. In Colorado, for example, the Elk, Encampment, Piedra, Los Pinos, Cache le Poudre, Conejos, and Big Thompson Rivers all have basic physiographic similarities. They rise in the alpine zone of the central Rocky Mountains and flow through the subalpine down into the montane zone. All are Congressionally authorized for Wild and Scenic Rivers study because of what BOR would call "politics," yet many people believe each and every one deserves protection. If a certain physiographic section is loaded with "outstandingly remarkable" rivers, then all should somehow be recognized as such by the inventory, many believe.

#### TOO FEW

Howard Brown, director of the American Rivers Conservation Council, a small, underfunded Washington-based group, fears the inventory could "do more harm than

(continued on page 6)

## Big Thompson residents want compensation Colo. officials cautious about rebuilding after flood

by Glen R. Smith

It has been nearly a year since the July 31 flood disaster in Colorado's Big Thompson Canyon took 139 lives. U.S. Highway 34 has been rebuilt and paved from Loveland to Estes Park and floodplain planning is moving ahead, but compensation for property to homeowners in the floodplain zone is tied up in state and federal bureaucracy.

The floodplain zoning regulations instituted by the Larimer County Commissioners in February prohibit the reconstruction of homes in the floodway that were more than 50% destroyed. The floodway zoning comes from a study based on a "100-year flood" of 16,900 cubic feet per second river flow, rather than upon the July 31 flood, which is considered to be a 333-year flood. The "100-year flood" is computed by engineers based upon topographical and historical considerations and refers to the size of flood that would likely occur within 100 years.

Most of the canyon is in the floodway for the 100 year flood, so many residents will have to relocate.

Newly elected Larimer County Commissioner Nona Thayer defends the floodplain regulations, which have upset many former canyon residents. "The chances of convincing governmental officials of peoples' needs for all kinds of state and federal disaster and reconstruction funds are better if we are also protecting the floodway because that is federal and state policy," she says. She also points out that under federal law, if the county does not designate floodplains and limit developments within the floodplain, people throughout the county may have trouble getting flood insurance and bank financing.

Although the floodplain regulations prohibit rebuilding, the Larimer County Commissioners recently passed policy that would allow overnight camping in select areas of the canyon. This policy pleased the residents who see potential economic benefits from using their land for campgrounds. But because many of the 139 people killed in the July flood were tourists camped in overnight campgrounds, the Colorado Land Use Commission has asked

the commissioners to rescind the overnight camping policy.

The imposition of floodplain regulations makes the canyon residents' search for money tougher and more urgent than before, because of the loss of development value of their land. Shortly after the flood the Inter-Faith Disaster Recovery Task Force raised nearly \$350,000 in funds to be used in long-term recovery assistance. Inter-Faith conducts bi-monthly meetings in Loveland for canyon residents who are trying to figure out how to pay for damages.

According to the Reverend Bob L. Schelling, director of Inter-Faith, the overall assessment of damage caused by the flood is \$43 million. About \$27 million of that is public damages and \$16 million is private. A total of 686 homes in the canyon were damaged, 252 beyond repair.

At first residents turned to the Forest Service because much of the land above the canyon is in the Roosevelt National Forest. But Forest Service officials at a meeting with canyon residents indicated they would only be interested in purchasing a few select lots in the floodway to improve access to Roosevelt National Forest. And

they cannot pay more than post-flood value for the land they do purchase.

The canyon residents then turned to the Colorado legislature for help. During the first weeks of March, state Sen. Fred Anderson and state Rep. Jim Lloyd, both of Loveland, introduced legislation to provide \$862,000 for compensation at 10% of per-flood value.

This legislation is part of a larger proposal in conjunction with the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR), the Four Corners Regional Commission, and Larimer County to raise \$2.53 million for the purchase of 288 parcels of private property in the canyon. This property may then be made into a public park and recreation district, managed either by the state or by Larimer County.

Additional recreational alternatives for future land use in the canyon are also being considered. But none seems to satisfy the residents. As one resident wrote in a letter to the Colorado Congressional delegation, "Don't make each day a problem. Help the people to re-establish their lives in the Big Thompson Canyon. Even with the floodplain study, let the individual judge if they

want to return to their past location. Why should a few people set a final decision for those who lost so much?"

Commissioner Thayer disagrees with that line of thinking. "We really ought to try and learn from our past experience to make the canyon a safer place," she says. She says it is not solely a matter of an individual's right because the extent of public involvement in the recovery effort has been considerable and expensive; therefore, the public has a "stake in trying to prevent those kind of expenditures from occurring again and again."

### ENDANGERING PROPERTY

Another concern about the future of the canyon is with the river system itself. Dave Rosgen, a U.S. Forest Service hydrologist, has urged a coordinated effort by all recovery agencies and private individuals to prevent further deterioration of the canyon environment. Building a wall or bank to protect one property may straighten the river channel, endangering property downstream, he says.

Another serious environmental problem in the canyon is water well and septic tank replacement. Most residents, before the flood, were either using cisterns or wells for water and septic systems for sewage disposal.

But now many residents cannot receive a health department permit for a standard septic system because the waters removed much of the topsoil. Instead, many residents will have to replace their washed-out systems with engineer-designed systems costing \$5,000, which is \$2,000 more than a standard system. An engineer-designed system is one which is designed to work within the sub-soil environment to meet discharge regulations at a particular site.

A possible, but highly unlikely, solution to the resident's sewer problems would be to build a canyon-length system with a treatment plant at the canyon's mouth. But Dave Weitzel, a Larimer County commissioner, said he doesn't think a sewer district the length of the canyon is feasible because of the expense to residents. "We're dealing with people with limited resources and limited valuations," he says.



IN A DANGEROUS POSITION. This motel, devastated by the flood in Big Thompson Canyon last July, won't be rebuilt. The Larimer County Commissioners are prohibiting reconstruction of buildings that were more than 50% destroyed by the flood. Photo by Mark Reid

## Rivers. . .

(continued from page 5)

good, because BOR is coming up with too small a number of rivers and may be saying that's the biggest the National System is going to be." Inventories like this always run the risk of imposing lids. Rivers left out by the seven-step procedure could easily be excluded from further consideration. Brown admits that his concerns are based in part on the way the Ford Office of Management and Budget was pushing BOR to define the ultimate extent of the National System. He hopes that President Carter's administration will be more open to the values of river preservation.

Bernard Collins, who is coordinating the entire BOR inventory from the agency's headquarters in Washington, D.C., indicates this is indeed the case. Says Collins: "We're trying to identify those basic kinds of rivers that should be at least within the National System." The emphasis is

Collins'. He adds, "This inventory is not to put parameters on the system and say, 'That's all there should be. That's all you really need.'" Collins also notes that this job is now being called "a basic inventory," words that underscore his view that the job is a starting point, not a lid.

But the American Rivers Conservation Council's Dave Conrad remains uneasy and emphatic. "It is critical," he says, "that the BOR and river people treat the inventory as a base system to be added to and not allow it to become a ceiling which excludes meritorious rivers."

### NO IMMERSION

The BOR approach, which emphasizes map, aerial photograph, and "examination" of rivers from the air, may well be missing much. The only way to know what a river is really like is to get wet.

### ONE-SHOT INVOLVEMENT

The limited opportunities for public participation in the inventory demand vigil-

ance. The procedure followed in the Lake Central Region allows for one-shot involvement only and ARCC's Conrad reports that public notice was poor and participation low. This need for public vigilance may be particularly essential for BOR's Mid-Continent Region (which includes Montana, Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming). That region co-authored the controversial Dolores River Wild and Scenic River study, and critics say it has proceeded in an indifferent manner, so far, on several others. Mid-Continent Regional Director Darrell Thompson has had very

little direct involvement in these important projects — and in river protection in general.

Environmentalists are saying that regardless of whether BOR's "basic inventory" of potential Wild and Scenic Rivers is leading to a ceiling or a floor, it is vital that people with river interests become immediately involved, being sure they are, at the least, members of the "invited public" that participates in the inventory. They contend that many small, inconspicuous rivers in the Central Rocky Mountains are — in their quiet, clear, tumbling ways — "outstandingly remarkable" and worthy of protection.

The inventory of this region's free-flowing waters is slated to begin and end in 1978. Write: Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Mid-Continent Region, P.O. Box 25387, Denver Federal Center, Denver, Colo. 80225. The address of the American Rivers Conservation Council is 317 Pennsylvania Avenue S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.

**The Bureau of Outdoor Recreation has had a bad time with its public relations on proposed wild and scenic rivers.**



Carter message gives clues:

June 17, 1977 — High Country News-7

# West may get more mining protection, wilderness

Environmentalists hailed President Jimmy Carter's environmental message delivered May 23, saying it marked "the sharpest shift on environmental matters since Theodore Roosevelt (who created the national parks system) was President."

While it did not include particularly innovative ideas, it did endorse several controversial proposals now in Congress. Its most important direct impacts will likely be through the executive orders on floodplains, wetlands, and off road vehicles, which do not have to be approved by Congress.

Carter's message was met with mixed reactions in the West. His strong endorsement of wilderness has been sharply criticized by Utah's two senators, Jake Garn and Orrin Hatch. Hatch said the message appeared to be "just one more program in a long series of environmental acts which stifle and limit planned development in the West and particularly in Utah."

Endorsing all of the over 70 existing wilderness proposals totaling 24 million acres pending before Congress, Carter also recommended four new National Park wilderness areas, including three in Utah — Arches, Canyonlands, and Capitol Reef.

He also recommended immediate attention to the Aravaipa Canyon in Arizona, which would be the first wilderness area on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land.

In addition to the wilderness proposals already being considered by Congress, he recommended enlarging the following Western wilderness areas or study areas: Idaho and Salmon River Breaks in Idaho, Guadalupe Escarpment Wilderness in New Mexico and Texas, Beartooth-Absaroka in Montana and Wyoming, and the wilderness in the Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona.

Lamenting that only 19 free-flowing rivers have been designated as part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, Carter recommended that segments of eight rivers be added to the system and that 20 river segments be studied "before they are dammed, channelized, or damaged by unwise development."

Carter proposed adding segments of the following Western rivers to the system: Bruneau River in Idaho, Dolores River in Colorado, and Salmon River in Idaho.

He also proposed designating studying the following Western rivers: Gila River in New Mexico, Green River in Utah, Sweetwater River in Wyoming, Yellowstone River in Wyoming and Montana, Salt River in Arizona, Gulkana River in Alaska, Delta River in Alaska, and the Madison River in Montana.

### WATER POLICY

Sen. Hatch's fear that Carter wants to stifle development in the West, however, may have been inspired more by the President's statement on water policy than upon his wilderness and wild river ideas. Carter directed the Secretary of Interior to prepare a nationwide evaluation of the water supply needs and availability for development of various energy resources. The President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) explained that Carter thinks these uses of water may "impose unacceptable cumulative demands, particularly in water-short regions."

The water policy reform will also mean more attention to environmental and indirect economic costs from water development projects. A joint study by the CEQ and two other federal agencies on water

policy is to be completed within six months.

To protect water quality, Carter recommended that Congress authorize \$4.5 billion in each of the next 10 years for municipal waste water treatment facilities.

### MINING, LEASING

Many environmental and mining groups waited with interest to hear details of Carter's recommendations for mining of both coal and hardrock minerals. The effects of his statement on both are expected to be significant in the West.

Carter agreed with Western environmental groups' contention that 16 billion tons of federal coal is already under lease. The federal government normally responds to this argument against further leasing by saying that production on these leases is extremely limited. Existing leases were not covered by most of the provisions

would have to pass a law allowing such condemnation powers.

Andrus is not to lease any new tract until he is satisfied that the environmental impact of mining would be acceptable and that the federal government will receive a fair market value for the lease.

If Congress approves the reforms that Carter suggests for hardrock mining laws, the federal government will have the power to use similar leasing procedures for minerals such as uranium, gold, silver, iron, copper, lead, zinc, etc. Presently, under the Mining Law of 1872, anyone who wants to mine on public land can acquire exclusive rights by simply filing a notice of claim in the local county courthouse. The government can't refuse a mining permit and lacks clear authority to establish any environmental standards to protect public lands, according to the CEQ.

BLM officials have said privately that the proposed leasing system will protect

agency determines that use of off-road vehicles (ORVs) will cause or is causing "considerable adverse effects on the soil, vegetation, wildlife, wildlife habitat, or cultural or historic resources" of particular areas or trails, he shall immediately close that area to the type of vehicles that are causing the damage. He may open the area again if he determines that the adverse effects have been eliminated.

U.S. Rep. Teno Roncalio (D-Wyo.), who agreed with many of Carter's other positions, said he objected to any areas being closed without public hearings. He also objected to the President's statement on predators. Carter said he supports the executive order prohibiting routine use of poisons for killing predators on public lands and that he favors focusing on the individual predators causing the problem rather than on the species.

### WETLANDS

As a boost to other wildlife species, Carter proposed a budget increase of \$295 million for wildlife refuges and an increase of \$50 million over the next five years to purchase wetlands.

In addition, he announced the federal government will no longer "subsidize" the destruction of wetlands. He issued an executive order directing all federal agencies to not give any financial support to proposed developments in wetlands unless the agency determines that "no practicable alternative sites exist."

These measures are expected to generate opposition in states such as North Dakota,

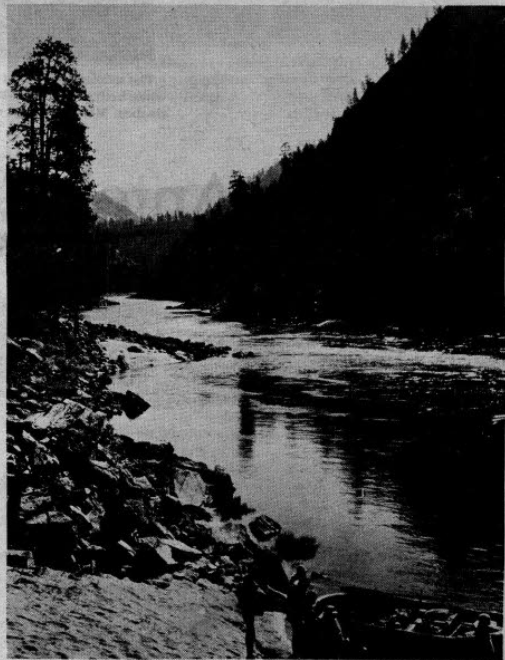


which has recently passed laws intended to limit federal acquisition of wetlands.

Entering an even more controversial arena, Carter stated his support for the Endangered Species Act, asking that all critical habitat be identified as soon as possible.

### FLOODPLAINS

In another executive order, Carter announced that the federal government will also no longer subsidize development in floodplains. While Congress is considering legislation to gut even the present limitations on development in floodplains, Carter ordered more stringent controls. Citing the danger to human life, health, and property, he pointed out that unwise development of the floodplains also destroys agricultural lands.



SALMON RIVER in Idaho was one of the rivers listed by President Jimmy Carter to be added to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, if Congress approves. Photo by Verne Huser

of the new leasing program that went into effect last year since they were "grandfathered out."

Carter directed Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus to take "appropriate action" on existing leases, to assure that they will be developed in a "timely and environmentally acceptable manner." He suggested Andrus could offer to exchange environmentally unsatisfactory leases for environmentally acceptable coal lands of equivalent value or, as a last resort, condemn the leasing rights upon payment of reasonable compensation if necessary to prevent environmental damage. Congress

the public, but will tend to discriminate against individual prospectors, who can't afford to bid for the resource in a competitive system and who can't afford proper reclamation procedures.

### ORVS, PREDATORS

Carter's executive order on off-road-vehicles seemed to generate the most interest from the public. The actual impact of the order, however, will depend largely on each federal land manager's interpretation of it.

Carter said that whenever the head of a

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8-High Country News — June 17, 1977



Spring thaw in 1972 revealed the bodies of thousands of antelope along fence rows in the Red Desert. Photo courtesy of Wyoming Game and Fish Department.



This antelope fawn must learn to survive on a sparsely-vegetated land. At three months of age, it will be able to run with the herd for long distances.



The antelope is mostly fawn-colored, with a creamy white belly. The throat has alternating white and tan slashes. Mature bucks such as this one have dark brown or black noses. Photo courtesy of Wyoming Game and Fish Department and Travel Commission.

## Antelope losing home on

by Sarah Doll

Wyoming has about half of North America's pronghorn antelope, and the Red Desert area of southwest Wyoming contains the largest migratory herd in existence. This land is mostly managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). In the northeastern part of the desert, the Seven Lakes-Ferris Planning Unit, BLM is currently reviewing its management policies. Most people interested in the area recognize the antelope herd as unique and important. However, the Seven Lakes area has grazing and rich mineral resources, and conflicts between present and potential users and the antelope are surfacing.

A brief natural history of the pronghorn antelope should be helpful in understanding present-day problems. *Antilocapra Americana*, literally, the American goat-antelope, is the only member of its genus. It is not a true antelope, representatives of which are found only in Africa. It is more similar to the goat than to the deer. Like sheep and goats, the antelope has a gall bladder and hollow horns. The horns' outer shells are discarded annually, and those of the male divide once, and once only, no matter how old the animal. It is among the smallest big game animals, averaging 110 to 115 pounds. Under the skin is a complex set of muscles which allows the animal to raise and loosen its hair to catch the breeze in summer, or to snug down against winter gales, a remarkable adaptation to the temperature extremes found in antelope habitat. The animal is fawn-colored with a white belly, and has a white rump patch consisting of much longer hairs that are spread out like a warning flag when the antelope is disturbed.

The eyesight of the antelope, an adaptation to the wide-open spaces where it lives,

is comparable to that of a man using six-power magnification binoculars. Other adaptations are huge lungs, heart, and windpipe, and the habit of breathing with the mouth open while running. All these adaptations bring antelope extra oxygen, enabling them to reach their legendary speed. They can keep up a 20 to 30 mile-per-hour pace for miles, and bursts of speed up to 50 mph. have been reported.

The antelope's great mobility makes it easy for it to take advantage of sparse shrubs and leafy plants on very arid lands. Unlike many domestic grazing animals, antelope don't find it necessary to stay within one half mile of water. In fact, they seem to recognize watering holes as being dangerous because of predators, and spend as little time as possible there.

Sage is the most important food of antelope. Often in winter the leaves of the big sage are the only food that is available over the snow cover.

Because of its chosen home on the flat, treeless plains, the antelope has not evolved a jumping ability. Some researchers feel this is a psychological rather than a physical barrier, since antelope have been observed jumping fences in an emergency when being chased. Occasionally, when the fence is not too high and an antelope herd has time to adapt to it, the herd will be seen jumping it regularly. Ordinarily, however, antelope will move up and down a fence until they find a spot which allows them to pass underneath.

The history of antelope in this country after white man's arrival follows a sad parallel to that of the buffalo. Early reports were of "millions." As the land was settled, farmers and ranchers hired hunters to exterminate these animals that they saw only as unwelcome competition to their livestock. Antelope skins aren't useful, as the skins of buffalo are, and in many in-

stances the whole animal was used for clothing, and sport to bring in all the game camp workers, and antelope populations decimated.

By the early 1920s, antelope were left in the Red Desert. These were so scattered a real possibility.

Sport hunting was popular, however, and sport to save the antelope. Congress declared in several areas to recover, and to planting programs which there would be no shoot, total war was coyote, golden eagle, and animal that might prey on the fawn.

The antelope population is recovering admirably. Although they vary widely, there are 400,000 antelope in the Seven Lakes area.

Wyoming's antelope population is high of 200,000 in 1971-72 decimated. The Seven Lakes area of the Seven Lakes Planning Unit lost about 3,900 animal fence rows. Recent, however, allowed the former numbers.

Concern over BLM actions for the Seven Lakes area stems from two main reasons: the grazing and mining of the land for fall and winter are discouraged over the years and their inhabitants. They would like to see summer cattle grazing in the cold desert's forage. This summer more water develop-





or black noses. Photo courtesy of Wyoming Commission.



Visitors to Wyoming find the open spaces that are the antelope's habitat to be awe-inspiring and seemingly endless. However, the exploitation of other resources

that are present on the land is creating severe competition for this animal.

## Home on the range

six-ther and with these gen, lary nile-peed es it arse inds, nals, stay they eing pend f ane big over flat, not ear-ather elope in an ision-and ant, the y. Orve up spot th. ntry a sad ports ttled, to ex- saw their ul, as ny in-

stances the whole animal was wasted. In mining boom areas, market hunters set out to bring in all the game possible to feed the camp workers, and antelope were among the populations decimated.

By the early 1920s, only about 30,000 antelope were left in North America, and these were so scattered that extinction was a real possibility.

Sport hunting was becoming very popular, however, and sportsmen's clubs rallied to save the antelope. Closed seasons were declared in several areas to allow populations to recover, and trapping and trans-planting programs were carried out. So that there would be plenty of antelope to shoot, total war was launched on the coyote, golden eagle, bobcat, and any other animal that might pick off an antelope fawn.

The antelope population bounced back admirably. Although population estimates vary widely, there are somewhere around 400,000 antelope in our country today.

Wyoming's antelope population reached a high of 200,000 in 1970. The hard winter of 1971-72 decimated the herd. The Chain Lakes area of the Seven Lakes-Ferris Planning Unit lost about 60% of its herd, or around 3,900 animals. Many died along fence rows. Recent mild winters have, however, allowed the herd to approach its former numbers.

Concern over BLM management decisions for the Seven Lakes-Ferris Unit stems from two main uses of the land: cattle grazing and mining. Ranchers who use the land for fall and winter sheep grazing are discouraged over sheep losses to predators and their inability to find sheepherders. They would like to convert to more summer cattle grazing. However, not only is the cold desert's forage less well suited to cattle, this summer use would demand more water developments, with resulting

habitat destruction around the wells. It will also call for two fences to control cattle movement. At a recent hearing held in Rawlins, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department opposed these fences, which are directly in the path of antelope migration to wintering areas. Even fences that are designed with plenty of clearance for antelope to crawl under become barriers in a heavy snow. Let-down fences, which are designed to avoid this problem, can be let down by ranchers during migration seasons. While good theoretically, the fences are often inaccessible to ranchers until after a crisis in the weather is past.

Oil, gas, coal, and uranium companies are all interested in the Seven Lakes area. The BLM plans to allow coal exploration, but no leasing at this time. Oil and gas development will be carried on as it has for the past 40 years, with some restrictions in areas of crucial game habitat. Uranium development could become very important in the future, with the possibility that mining and water developments could drastically change the plant life of the area. Although it seems that human activity doesn't disturb antelope as much as it does some wildlife, the influx of people that accompanies increased mining activity usually leads to an increase in poaching and harassment of game animals, according to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

The department would like to maintain the status quo for this large, open range. The National Audubon Society, going a step further, has proposed the area be set aside as the Great Divide Basin Natural Area, with the goal of maintaining wildlife in its natural state as the highest priority. The concept has the support of local members of other environmental groups. The plan, if implemented, would assure a relatively fence-free habitat for antelope for generations to come.

**Through intensive management, the antelope was brought back from near-extinction in the 1920s. Now it faces a double threat as mining and grazing interests destroy its habitat.**



Uranium exploration and mining as it is currently being carried out north of the Seven Lakes-Ferris Unit. Uranium companies are showing much interest in the unit. Photo courtesy of Bureau of Land Management.

10-High Country News — June 17, 1977

## Reckoning from Washington

### LANDOWNER VETO POWER

by Lee Catterall

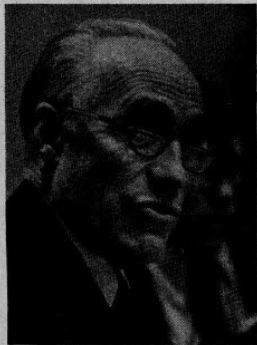
Ranchers sitting atop the wealth of federally-owned coal deposits in the Powder River Basin must continue to do just that — sit, awaiting the word from Washington.

As the federal strip mining bill approaches enactment, those ranchers' crucial question remains unanswered: Will they have the final word on whether their land is stripped for federal coal?

The issue appeared resolved several weeks ago when the Senate Energy Committee agreed to the House answer: yes, the ranchers should have the final word. However, over the objections of all four Wyoming and Montana senators, the Senate more recently decided to give the last say to the Secretary of Interior. A conference of senators and congressmen must now work it out.

It is a large issue in terms of both the principle of landowner rights in the West

and the sheer amount of coal at stake, because the rules by which the West was settled early in this century resulted in widespread split ownership of land and minerals. No conflict was foreseen, because no one had thought of strip mining. More than



Wyoming Sen. Cliff Hansen (R) has announced he will not seek reelection in 1978. He cited health and family reasons for his decision.

Photo by Lee Catterall

half the coal in the Powder River Basin is owned by the federal government.

As Sen. Clifford Hansen sees it, it boils down to whether Congress should protect "some people who just happen to like the way of life they have lived out there and who happen to think they would like to be able to pass that same privilege on along to their kids. . ."

As Sen. Bennett Johnston (D-La.) sees it, it is "whether a private person can sell the government's coal or lock up the government's coal." Hansen once argued against allowing landowners such veto power because, he said, a single landowner crucially located could block a mine. He leaped to the other side two years ago and now is among the strongest proponents of surface owner consent.

The Senate bill would provide the landowner twice the value of his land, two years' loss of profits, relocation costs for his family, plus other damages. That's not a bad price for land, particularly since the landowner gets his land back at the end, what's left of it. However, that price doesn't consider the fact that coal is beneath it, a factor that is not being ignored in today's deals between companies and landowners.

The House bill allows the landowner not only the right to say no to strip mining but the opportunity to set his own price for

permitting it. An attempt is expected in the conference to settle on the House version. If that fails, a compromise will be sought that could allow the landowner the veto power but would limit the price he could demand for permitting strip mining.

Environmentalists are not happy with the bill. Last year, they warned the coal industry and the Ford administration that if they continued to block the bill, the environmentalists would come back under a Democratic President with a much stronger version.

That has not happened. Congress has rejected some of the suggestions by the Carter administration to toughen the bill, and has actually relaxed some parts of it.

"Industry came in this time cognizant that the bill was going to be signed, with boatloads of gutting amendments, and the Congress responded," complained Carl England, a Montana environmentalist lobbying for the bill in Washington.

Much of the final version remains to be written in the joint conference. More than 200 differences need to be settled between the House and Senate bills, including both the surface owner consent question and the issue of whether to allow strip mining in alluvial valley floors of the West.

## Wallop defends clean air votes

Sen. Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyo.) is defending himself against charges that he can't be counted on by environmentalists. Wallop told HCN that "I'm being criticized by some environmentalists who insist on speaking for me about what they think I think."

Wallop has been criticized for his votes on clean air issues in the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. Wallop says that his commitment to clean air remains strong, but that he doesn't support installation of sulfur dioxide scrubbers on all new power plants, regardless of the type of coal burned. He says, "If we require scrubbers on every stack — as a concession to Appalachian coal — we may be saying to some states that they can't have heavy industry, because smaller industry can't afford it. I'm in favor of establishing air quality levels and timetables."

Wallop believes this would be a concession to Appalachian coal because it is generally of higher sulfur content than Western coal. Some coal-fired plants can now



meet some sulfur standards by burning low sulfur coal without having scrubbers — even though the Western low sulfur coal is often low in Btu also.

Wallop's staff says that he recently voted against a measure, already passed by the House of Representatives, that would allow 18 days of dirty air (below Class I and Class II standards) in regions designated as clean.

Wallop also says, however, that the Administration's energy and clean air proposals may be in conflict, especially in the clean air states. He says, "The Midwest and East are non-attainment areas. They can have a waiver from burning coal, if

they can't make the clean air standards. With these waivers, they are going to send the clean fuels to dirty areas and the clean air states will suffer by burning coal."

Wallop also said that he supports designating national parks, wilderness areas, and national forests as Class I air quality regions. "But," he says, "national monuments are different. The Sheridan Inn in downtown Sheridan (Wyo.) is a national monument. It doesn't need that designation." (The Sheridan Inn is actually a national historical site.) Wallop voted against a measure that would have declared national monuments of 10,000 acres or more as Class I air regions.

On other issues, Wallop says that he supports the idea of coal slurry pipelines, "with the proviso that the state has a veto power over water," if there is an adverse impact.

Wallop also says that he would be willing to trade off slurry pipelines in exchange for fewer power plants in the state. "People should be aware," he says, "that the state already has the equivalent of 20 pipelines consuming water with Dave Johnston and Jim Bridger power plants. The high-tension lines are nothing but slurry pipelines."

The Administration hasn't responded as yet to Wallop's call for a halt to further coal leasing in the state. "I haven't heard from the President on anything," he says, "but, with 200,000 acres of federal coal under lease, the due diligence regulations should come into play." Due diligence rules require that a lease holder actively attempt to develop the coal in the lease area, usually within 10 years.

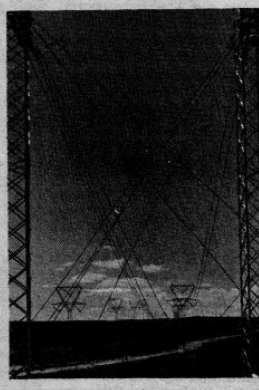
Wallop's call for no further leasing is getting less than enthusiastic support from fellow Wyoming Sen. Clifford Hansen, also a Republican. When HCN asked Hansen if he supported Wallop's position, he said, "I haven't called for a halt to coal leasing. But, no one could charge accurately that we were about to deny ourselves access to coal," referring to the amount in the state already leased.

Hansen and Wallop were interviewed while opening a new state office in Riverton, Wyo.



### MPC OFFERS TRIBES MILLIONS.

The Montana Power Company has offered the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes \$1 million down and \$200,000 per year over 50 years for a power line corridor right of way through the Flathead Reservation, according to the Missoulian. Ronan Tribal Councilman Joe McDonald told the paper that he personally opposed the projects because he believes the generator and lines are "totally unnecessary." He said, however, that the tribal council probably wouldn't make a decision on the offer without a complete referendum. McDonald said, "The United States can't continue to rip off natural resources in this way anymore . . . We have to stop someplace."



Transmission lines from the Jim Bridger plant in Wyoming.

Photo by Jack McLellan

**COLSTRIP CONSTRUCTION TO BEGIN.** The five utilities planning the Colstrip 3 and 4 power plant units have decided to go ahead with construction on the units, despite court challenges still pending. The consortium, led by Montana Power Company, said construction would begin because of the "critical power supply situation which is developing in the Pacific Northwest," according to the Billings Gazette. The project has been challenged in court by the Northern Plains Resource Council (NPRC), the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Northern Cheyenne Indian tribe. The tribe is seeking a Class I air quality designation for the reservation, which lies 20 miles south of the plant. A Montana judge ruled earlier this year that the plant was exempt from the Class I standards. NPRC has gone back to court in the wake of the construction announcement to try to halt building until appeals of that decision are settled.

**OIL SHALE SNAFU.** A U.S. District Court Judge in Salt Lake City has issued an order preventing the Interior Department from enforcing its lease rules on two Utah federal oil shale leases. Because of a "clear and present danger" to the validity of the leases, Interior was enjoined from collecting a \$24 million bonus payment scheduled for June 1, 1978.

There are two other claims on the oil shale that could imperil the federal government's right to lease the lands at all. First, according to the Deseret News, the state of Utah claims a 157,000 acre area, including 10,240 acres covered by two oil shale leases. Second, the area is "blanketed" with old placer claims made under the Mineral Lease Act of 1920, which may take precedence over the federal government's claims.

The leases had been suspended last year by mutual consent of the Interior Department and the companies until September 1, 1977. Five companies — Phillips Petroleum, Sunoco Energy Development, Sohio, Gulf Oil and Standard Oil (Indiana) — are seeking indefinite suspensions of the leases. Two others — Ashland Oil and Occidental Petroleum — say that they will begin production as soon as their suspensions expire.



# Coal lease nominations uncover little competition

by Dan Whipple

When the U.S. Interior Department introduced the coal lease nominations process, it was designed in part to increase federal revenues from coal companies buying federal leases. Through the nominations, the theory went, lease tracts would be identified that several companies wanted to bid on. The competition from the lease bids would drive up the revenues to the government.

Now that the nominations process is complete, and the names of the nominators released, it appears that the agency met with only limited success in this endeavor. In most places, only one or two companies nominated the same tracts, though occasionally as many as 12 companies would ask that a particular lease be offered for sale.

One thing that can be learned from the nominations process is that several companies who currently don't have active coal operations in the West would like to start some. A few names stand out in the nominations process — notably Getty Oil, Western Slopes Carbon, and Energy Resources Group — as companies that nominated tracts in several states. These companies and others currently have little or no coal activities in the West.

Another factor that stands out in the nominations is that several utilities want to expand their coal holdings. Idaho Power, Colorado Ute, American Electric Power, Arizona Public Service, and Arizona Electric Power Cooperative all nominated large tracts of Western coal lands.

In most states, environmentalists and ranchers involved in conservation organizations boycotted the nominations, even though they were asked to point out "areas of public concern," because they felt that there wasn't enough time allotted to consider all of the acreage that could come under lease. The Western Coalition said that there is no need for further coal leasing and that environmentalists would have only 60 days to analyze 92 million acres of federal coal lands, a task the Interior Department itself hadn't even undertaken.

Ranchers in several states did, however, nominate their own ranches to be leased. One Powder River Basin rancher said, "I nominated my land because I want it mined." This trend was most noticeable in Wyoming's Campbell County and in McCone County, Mont.

According to Bureau of Land Management sources, the area nearest to being offered for actual lease sale is the Powder River Basin. The agency has completed an environmental impact statement (EIS) on the area, and feels that its planning is far enough along to hold a sale. About eight tracts of land totaling 28,000 acres will be offered around Wright, Wyo. The BLM sources say that the area was chosen primarily because the planners want to avoid any further socio-economic impacts on Gillette, Wyo., to the north or Douglas, Wyo., to the south. In addition, BLM has identified 25 tracts totaling 50,000 to 75,000 acres in the Powder River Basin in southeastern Montana.

In Wyoming, the companies that nominated the largest tracts were those that don't have coal mines operating in the state. The largest single nominator was Idaho Power, which suggested 124,500 acres in southwest and south central Wyoming. Very few of these tracts will be leased, however, BLM says. Only 10 tracts totaling 67,000 acres will be sold in south central Wyoming and none in southwest Wyoming.

In the area around Wright, 13



"PURDIEST BLUNCH A BULLS I EVER SAW."

## 250 Powder River Basin ranchers have formed their own coal mining company, combining their private leases and vying for federal coal leases.

nominators would probably be bidding on leases. They are: Atlantic Richfield, Energy Resources Group, Getty Oil, Mike Elmore, Kerr-McGee, MacMillan King-Free Oil, Pacific Power & Light, Peabody Coal, Franklin Real Estate (a subsidiary of American Electric Power), Shell Oil, and Western Slopes Carbon. Of these nominators, only four — Atlantic Richfield, Kerr-McGee, Pacific Power & Light, and Systems Fuels — currently have mines in Wyoming.

Analysis of the nominations reveals that several Powder River Basin ranchers nominated their own lands for leasing. One of the ranchers, Mike Elmore, says that 250 ranchers have formed their own coal mining company, combining their private coal leases and vying for federal leases. The

ranchers are completely independent, Elmore says, not relying on any major coal or oil companies for financial support.

Elmore says the ranchers' company, Ranchers' Energy Corporation will begin mining in 1978. They plan as many as four mines, one of them reaching a capacity of 10 million tons annually. Elmore says, "It's the only way a farmer or rancher can keep title to his land."

In Montana, Burlington Northern nominated the most land. BN urged the leasing of 1.27 million acres of land in nearly every coal area of the state. The company also nominated 346,000 acres in North Dakota, making it by far the largest nominator of western coal lands.

BLM sources say that the only areas that

it will lease in the near future in Montana are in the Powder River Basin in the southeastern portion of the state.

In North Dakota, in addition to BN's nominations, North American Coal nominated 337,800 acres; Coteau Properties, an agent for North American Coal, 275,800 acres; and Consolidation Coal, already operating in the state, 97,800 acres. The Natural Gas Pipeline Company of America, which is planning a gasification plant in the state, nominated about 44,000 acres in Dunn County, presumably in the hope of supplying its plant.

BLM sources indicate, however, that areas actually put up for lease in North Dakota will be limited. The federal government will submit its recommendations to the state for approval and the state will reportedly approve only those acres that have firm plans for development. Since five companies dominated the land nominated in the state, it seems unlikely that a great deal of competition will be generated.

Colorado had a wide variety of industry nominators. However, two utilities, Idaho Power and Colorado Ute, urged the leasing of the most land, with 79,500 acres and 106,600 acres respectively. Other large nominators were W. R. Grace, 41,980 acres; Western Slopes Carbon, also a heavy nominator in Wyoming and Utah, 51,200 acres; Getty Oil, 20,800 acres; and U.S. Steel, 15,900 acres.

The only section of land in which a great deal of competition could be generated seems to be in southwest Colorado near Durango. Six companies nominated the same general tracts in that area.

Eastern sections of Carbon County attracted the most attention in Utah. Thirteen of the 26 nominators suggested that the government lease tracts in that section of the state. Among the leaders in Utah nominations was the Intermountain Power Project, which wants to build a 3,000 megawatt power plant. Utah Power & Light has its eye on coal in the same area.

Further action on leasing will depend upon the Carter Administration's decision on whether or not to proceed with Western leasing at all. BLM is apparently going ahead with identification of suitable lease tracts, however, should Washington give the green light for sales.

(See separate story on Carter's environmental message.)



### The HCN Hot Line

energy news from across the country

**MHD BREAKTHROUGH IN TENNESSEE.** The Associated Press reports that scientists at the University of Tennessee are producing electricity from high sulfur coal without pollution. The research scientists say that their magnetohydrodynamics (MHD) plant can run on high sulfur coal, catching 95% or more of the sulfur without scrubbers. The thermal efficiency of the plant is potentially 75%, compared with a conventional power plant's efficiency of 35% when equipped with scrubbers. The sulfur is removed by injecting potassium into the fly ash. The potassium traps the sulfur and can be removed by centrifugal force.

**CARTER'S ENERGY PLAN.** President Jimmy Carter's energy proposals have been dealt several weakening blows by the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee. The committee rejected a 50 cents per gallon standby gasoline tax and rebates for purchasers of fuel efficient cars. United Press International reports that Carter had not expected the special interest lobbyists, such as the oil and automotive industries, to be as effective as they were in fighting his plan.

**BREEDER REACTOR REVIVED.** Despite President Jimmy Carter's call for a halt to development of the breeder reactor, the U.S. House Science and Technology Committee voted 38 to 0 to continue funding of the Clinch River, Tenn., plutonium breeder reactor. The Senate subcommittee on energy research and development will begin hearings on the breeder in July. The Audubon Leader reports that the Senate committee apparently also favors the appropriation.

**CANADIANS STUDY GAS ROUTE.** A report that could put an end to the Canadian Arctic Gas Pipeline Ltd. proposal to bring natural gas from Alaska through Canada to the U.S. was released to the Canadian government in May. The report advises Canada not to allow pipelines to cross the environmentally-sensitive northern Yukon and to put a 10-year moratorium on pipelines farther south, in the Mackenzie River Valley. Canadian cabinet ministers have said that while the report is not binding, it will be an important consideration in dealing with U.S. proposals to bring gas from Alaska's North Slope to the lower 48 states. The report was directed by a member of the British Columbia Supreme Court. It also recommends allowing time for the settlement of Indian land claims and establishing sanctuaries to protect caribou and migratory waterfowl in the Mackenzie Valley.



12-High Country News — June 17, 1977

## NRAG: born in controversy, growing in support

by Marjane Ambler

The birth of any environmental group seems to inspire antagonism from some factions of the general public. Sometimes the group will also get involved in minor skirmishes with other environmental groups over strategies and money.

However, the Northern Rockies Action Group (NRAG) must be unique in the West for the amount of controversy it has stirred within the environmental movement by its mere existence.

Some insist that the environmental movement in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming has matured and found a regional cohesiveness that never would have been possible without NRAG. At the same time, critics are equally convinced that NRAG's

\$104,000 annual budget has siphoned funds away from other groups and that NRAG has misguided people away from the crucial issues of the region.

NRAG calls itself a "support team" — a concept new to the West but found in other parts of the country. Funded primarily by the Rockefeller Foundation and other foundation money, NRAG staff members have offered professional services at little or no cost to public interest groups in the region since 1972. Bill Bryan, NRAG's founder, holds a Ph.D. in Environmental Advocacy, and many of the other staff members also have high academic credentials. One has a master's degree in accounting from Stanford. Another has a master's degree in environmental communication. Their salary levels are high — among professional environmentalists — and reflect their credentials; the 1977 budget showed seven staff members getting \$70,800.

NRAG takes no political stands itself, thus preserving its tax-free status. It sends staff members from group to group, only on request, to share its skills. Among its many services, NRAG has helped the Idaho Conservation League (ICL) set up its book-

keeping system; helped the ICL, the Environmental Information Center (EIC), and the Wyoming Outdoor Council (WOC) design newsletters; advised WOC and the Powder River Basin Resource Council on a media campaign to encourage a coal export policy; worked with Indians interested in setting up an Indian media service; and helped each group broaden its membership base through "constituency building."

The salary levels, the avoidance of advocacy positions, and the emphasis on constituency building have all been part of the controversy surrounding NRAG through the past five years.

One very vocal critic sees it as an "organization helping other organizations to organize." While admiring the dedication and sincerity of staff members, she says she questions the value of any group that won't take political stands. "Putting the emphasis on organization for its own sake can delude people into thinking the world is out there waiting to be organized," she says. Contrary to this, she believes that most adults who care about some cause find a way of doing something about it. She argues that anyone who would be attracted

by constituency building techniques would likely be a "Sunday environmentalist — a person who will put in a few bucks to save a favorite fishing hole but who isn't ready to take the knocks."

Other critics say they fear that by trying to attract many people who have previously been uninvolved, environmental groups will have to choose political stances that are the "lowest common denominator" and avoid vigorous positions on controversial issues. An NRAG critic says she knows of at least one case when NRAG advised a group not to get involved in litigation to avoid offending anyone.

In response, Bryan, NRAG coordinator, says that NRAG recognizes litigation as a major tool in environmental advocacy. He says there have been many significant wins for environmentalists in this arena, but when NRAG started, there had been little success in the legislative arena. He thinks both are important and that changing laws — political change — should be tried first.

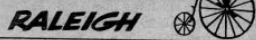
He says NRAG doesn't advise groups to avoid controversial issues just to avoid controversy. Instead, he says, groups that are constituency-based should carefully evaluate political stances to be sure they reflect the thinking of their members. He points to the Powder River Basin Resource Council in northeastern Wyoming, which has taken stands and gotten involved in lawsuits that have "ticked off" lots of people. However, he says, the decisions were made by the Powder River board, which

(continued on page 16)

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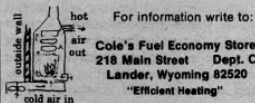
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## EQC says Wood River special, considers system for designation

In a 4-3 decision, the Wyoming Environmental Quality Council (EQC) voted June 3 to designate the Wood River Valley near Meeteetse, Wyo., as an area of "rare and uncommon" value. The area is being explored extensively by AMAX and by Exxon for copper and other minerals. The Meeteetse Preservation Organization (MPO) sought the designation in hopes of preventing AMAX from opening a large open pit copper mine there.

After making the decision, EQC chairman Don White said he felt uncomfortable about the way the council is being "used as a vehicle for deterring projects," which he doesn't think was the intent of the legislature. The statute says the council shall "designate at the earliest date and to the extent possible those areas of the state which are very rare or uncommon and have particular historical, archaeological, wildlife, surface geological, botanical, or scenic value." The only other time the statute was used by the council was when a group of residents near Story, Wyo., wanted to prevent a gravel mine.

EQC member Lynn Dickey says a statewide inventory would help avoid the problem of having to react only to crisis-inspired pleas. However, she says this can't be conducted until the legislature appropriates the funds.

As a partial solution to the problem, the council asked the director of the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality to write to each county planner seeking input. Anyone interested in suggesting areas should contact the department at the Hathaway Building in Cheyenne.

EQC member Lee Keith was also upset with the decision and the way it was made. "All we're trying to do is stop a mining operation," he said. He considered it a taking of private property without due process since much of the designated area is private land, some of it belonging to AMAX. "If we're going to take it, let's take it all (the whole range) so we don't have to go through the whole thing again," he said. Testimony at the hearing indicated there

are extensive mineral reserves in the Absaroka Mountains.

Other council members protested that they had carefully avoided considering the mining when making the decision, although one member said he didn't see how anyone could think that mining would not harm the scenic values of the area.

DEQ Director Bob Sundin says that scenic, historic, and geologic values are considered in any decision the department makes, but he expected that with the designation, the department would give these values more weight and there would be more of an effort to document them.

Most of the debate centered upon whether or not the valley values were rare enough to warrant designation. EQC member John Davis argued that while there are other beautiful valleys, they should be considered like gifted children, each deserving protection. Keith, Don White, and David Park all said the valley was pretty — but "not unique enough" to warrant special protection by the council. Davis, Tim Fleming, Ronald Surdam, and Dickey voted for designation.

Fleming said he was impressed by the testimony of people in the Meeteetse area and the letters received by the council, which were "overwhelmingly" for designation. He said he was upset at the hearing when one witness presenting a scientific study admitted that the study had been changed at AMAX's suggestion.

In addition to the scenic value of the valley, EQC members who supported the designation also mentioned historical and geological value. The boundary of the designated area was marked by the "visual corridor" — what can be seen from the bottom of the valley — which includes much of Bald Mountain. AMAX had said its mining operation would remove the top of Bald Mountain.

AMAX attorney Mike Sullivan said after the meeting that it would be premature for him to say whether or not AMAX will appeal the decision until he sees the findings of fact, which are expected within four to six weeks.

### Eavesdropper

environmental news from around the world

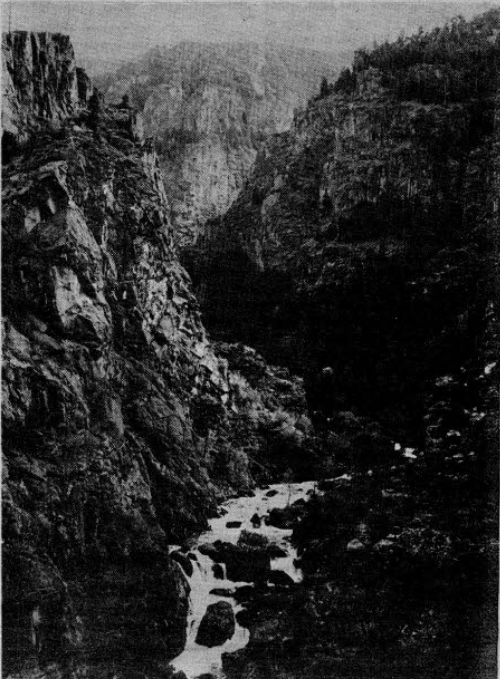
**SENATE FAIR ON AIR.** The Senate has passed clean air amendments that protect the integrity of the original Clean Air Act, according to conservationists in Washington. Conservationists were pleased that the Senate bill was stronger than the version passed in the House, but disappointed that the Senate postponed for the fourth time the 1976 deadline for tighter controls on auto emissions. Supporters also applauded the Senate's rejection of a provision adopted by the House to weaken the protection of pure air over national parks and other public lands.

**CARTER WINNING WATER BATTLE.** President Jimmy Carter now clearly has the upper hand in the dispute with Congress over water projects. Congress hasn't gone so far as to agree to cut funding on the 18 water development projects on Carter's hit list. But a House vote on an amendment supporting Carter's position introduced by Rep. Silvio Conte (R-Mass.) gained more support than expected and proved that the House wouldn't be able to muster the necessary two-thirds vote to override a Carter veto of the public works bill, if it contained full funding for all projects. The 194-218 vote was "far closer than we had hoped for," says Sheldon Kinsel of the National Wildlife Federation. Meanwhile, the Senate appropriations subcommittee on public works is rumored to be preparing a compromise version of the bill, which would acquiesce to Carter on eight of 18 projects on the hit list. The compromise is expected to recommend no funding for the Savery-Pot Hook dam in Colorado and Wyoming and the Oahe Unit in South Dakota, among others.





# Western Roundup



**DAM SITE?** Wyoming officials would like to build a dam in Rockwood Canyon on the Tongue River for irrigation purposes. If they don't industry will use up available water at a site downstream, they fear.

## Tongue dam controversial and unlikely

In an attempt to beat industrial interests to Wyoming water supplies, the state is studying the possibility of a dam for irrigation purposes on the upper Tongue River in scenic Rockwood Canyon near Sheridan. The dam is one of the projects envisioned by the state's Tongue and Little Bighorn River Water Development Project. The project was born out of concern that Pacific Power and Light Co. might use up most of the available water in the basin for a proposed 2,000 megawatt coal-fired power plant, precluding other kinds of water development.

Two federal agencies and a conservation group are vigorously opposing the Rockwood Dam. Fred Fitchener of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service told state officials at a May 9 meeting in Sheridan that the area around the site is winter range for elk and moose. A Forest Service land use plan for the area being drafted this month is expected to recommend that the Rockwood site be managed in its primitive state. Bart Koehler of the Wilderness Society says the project would be "a disaster."

It seems unlikely that the project will be built. In addition to this strong opposition, project sponsors are facing tough funding problems. Myron Goodson of the state's Department of Economic Planning and Development (DEPAD) says that he doesn't think either the legislature or DEPAD, which funds some irrigation projects, are likely funding sources. Frank

Trelease, chairman of the Governor's Interdepartmental Water Conference, says he is looking into federal financing through the Soil Conservation Service and Farmers Home Administration loans, however.

## Drought and dams drying up Colorado

Thousands of people have been forced to postpone trips on the Colorado River through Grand Canyon, according to a copyrighted New York Times story. In addition, the more than 100 visitors already in the canyon have been stranded and commercial outfitters have lost hundreds of thousands of dollars — all due to low flows on the Colorado.

The problems may be as attributable to hydroelectric dams as they are to the dry spell, according to the Times. The Bureau of Reclamation is currently storing most runoff in Lake Powell rather than letting it flow downstream, to meet this summer's power demands. "In other words," says Times reporter Grace Lichtenstein, "a vacationer from Los Angeles or Phoenix may have gotten beached in the middle of the Grand Canyon in May because federal officials wanted to make sure he would get enough electricity to turn his air conditioner on full blast in July."

## Judge says Bighorn suit stays in state

The state of Wyoming has succeeded in convincing a federal judge that a court suit it has brought to adjudicate the water of the Bighorn River Basin was not directed specifically against the Indian tribes of the Wind River Reservation (See HCN, 4-22-77).

Because the tribes were named in the court action and because their reserved rights are a matter of federal law, and not of state law, the U.S. government argued

the issue should be decided in federal court. U.S. District Court Judge Ewing Kerr, however, referred to U.S. Supreme Court and state court cases that indicated it could be decided in state court, adding, "It has been the consistent policy of this court to protect state court jurisdiction in those cases where there is doubt."

He argued that the federal forum would be "relatively inconvenient," that it would be desirable to avoid piecemeal litigation, that the state court first obtained jurisdiction, and that there were extensive state and private claims involved.

Water of the Bighorn River Basin is covered by the Yellowstone Compact. Kerr ruled although the compact involves three states, its existence didn't mean the Wyoming court couldn't have jurisdiction over the Bighorn water adjudication. "If there is any collision between compact provisions and the rights awarded by the state court, these issues can ultimately be reviewed by the U.S. Supreme Court," he said.

Wyoming Attorney General Frank Mendicino expects the case to go to the U.S. Supreme Court on at least one issue — the date of the Indian rights. Mendicino called Kerr's decision a "major victory."

## Canyon preservers rap 4-lane road

The Coalition for Canyon Preservation is calling for an alternative to the four-lane super highway proposed for U.S. No. 2 from Hungry Horse to West Glacier on the southern border of Glacier National Park. The group favors an "extended" two-lane facility with scenic turnouts to accommodate passing and a summer pedestrian and bicycle path that could double as a snowmobile and ski touring route in the winter.

A four-lane road would be "overbuilt and insensitive to the existing rural conditions," according to the group.



**EAGLE EXPERT** Morley Nelson says that as the rabbit population in Western states increases, ranchers' problems with golden eagles will disappear. Sheep ranchers in Montana, Wyoming, and Texas have been complaining to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service about eagles preying on their sheep. The agency is preparing an eagle management plan, considering options to aid ranchers ranging from trapping and transplanting to killing the eagles. Killing is a "last option," according to the agency.

Biologist Nelson says that he doesn't view the management study with great alarm, because he doubts that any eagles will be killed. He thinks the ranchers will be protected by the growing rabbit population and the eagles will be protected by a public outcry if the killing option is chosen. The most serious threat to eagles, Nelson says, is not sheep ranchers but general encroachment by man.

Colorado Game, Fish and Parks Division photo by Don Domenick

## Saratoga hearing: 4 to 1 for wilderness

Testimony was four-to-one in favor of wilderness at congressional hearings in Saratoga, Wyo., early in June. At issue was the Endangered American Wilderness Act (H.R. 3454) and the inclusion of Wyoming's Savage Run area in it as a wilderness study area or as an instant wilderness.

Rep. Teno Roncalio (D-Wyo.), who presided at the hearing, called it "the most meaningful dialogue I've ever listened to between wilderness advocates and the timber industry." The hearing was almost devoid of the "usual tension between wil-

derness and timber interests, according to a Casper Star-Tribune report.

Most of the 56 people who testified for wilderness favored instant wilderness designation for Savage Run, a 15,000 acre roadless area in the Medicine Bow National Forest in southcentral Wyoming. H.R. 3454 would establish Savage Run and seven other roadless areas in the West as wilderness study areas and 14 other roadless areas as instant wilderness. Roncalio said that if enough support were shown, Savage Run might be proposed for instant wilderness rather than wilderness study.

14-High Country News — June 17, 1977

## DISTAFF CORNER

by Myra Connell

### THE CASE AGAINST GRASS (CON'T)

In the last issue I reported the case of *Q. Hommoaner v. G. Grass*, in the Court of Last Resort, Judge I. M. Partial residing. Attorney for the plaintiff stated in his case; the argument for defendant Grass was postponed to this issue.

Statement by attorney for the defendant:

"Your Honor, on behalf of my client and myself I thank Mr. Hommoaner and his attorney for the friendly remarks in their opening statement. Mr. Grass is proud to be recognized for his work in preventing erosion and nourishing livestock. We return the compliment; we believe Mr. Hommoaner to be conscientious and public-spirited. He would never knowingly damage his neighbors."

G. Grass is called to testify in his own behalf.



"Mr. Grass, please tell the court your side of the feud."

"Mr. Hommoaner has forgotten how I took over the raw earth all around his house after he built it. I soon had it covered with a springy green carpet. Ever since, I have slaved for him, holding the dust down, keeping the mud out of his parlor, helping to cool his house and yard all summer. I furnish Hommoaner with badly needed exercise whenever I need mowing and I provide his neighbors' kids with jobs."

"I have grievances against Hommoaner, too. He neglects to give me any water when he wants to go fishing; he sets the mower too low and cuts me down to my roots. He even wipes his feet on me!"

"You may step down, Mr. Grass. I call Mrs. Hausfrau."

"Mrs. Hausfrau, does G. Grass help you to keep house?"

"Yes, he does. He helps me battle against dirt. But for him I would have to work twice as hard."

"You may step down."

"Your Honor, it is impossible to understand how anyone, ANYONE, could have a reasonable grievance against our hard-working citizen, G. Grass. He has even been praised and memorialized by nationally known poets — Carl Sandburg, for example, who wrote 'Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo, Shovel them under and let me work — I am the grass; I cover all.' Can you imagine the desolation

of battlefields and cemeteries without Grass?"

"Your Honor I move that the case against Grass be dismissed."

Judge I. M. Partial took the case under advisement and 11 weeks later gave a verdict:

"In deciding this case I have been hung on a three-pronged dilemma: in favor of Hommoaner, in favor of Grass, in favor of neither. The fact that all arguments heard are valid and reasonable only confounded the confusion."

"I cannot decide for the plaintiff because Grass is here to stay and there is no getting rid of him. The only alternative that I can see for Hommoaner is to find a cave in the mountains. I doubt he can find one that is wired for electricity."

"Neither can I decide for the defendant. He is a bully who tyrannizes over everyone, even me! Henceforward Grass shall demand cutting only upon reaching a height of six inches. Also, he shall be rationed to a bare minimum of water."

"Therefore, my third and only choice in disposing of this case is simply to dismiss it."

## Classifieds

"CANYON COUNTRY HIKING AND NATURAL HISTORY." Barnes, 176 pages, illustrated, \$3.95ppd. Hiking trails and routes in southeastern Utah. F. A. Barnes, Box 963, Moab, Utah 84532.

SOLAR RELIANT GREENHOUSE and Solar Food Dehydrator Plans. Complete blueprints to build 12x16 ft. passive solar greenhouse or 2x6 ft. dehydrator with passive air heater. Includes photo, construction drawings, materials list, and other relevant information. \$7.50 each, guaranteed, Send 25 for catalog. Solstice Publications, P.O. Box 2043, Evergreen, Colorado 80439.

HELP HCN get the word out. One way HCN keeps going is by introducing itself to new people. HCN needs volunteers to write or type names onto mailing labels. If interested, write HCN, Box K, Lander, Wyoming 82520. Thank you.

## native plants



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### STATE OF WYOMING PUBLIC NOTICE

#### PURPOSE OF PUBLIC NOTICE

THE PURPOSE OF THIS PUBLIC NOTICE IS TO STATE THE STATE OF WYOMING'S INTENTION TO ISSUE WASTE WATER DISCHARGE PERMITS UNDER THE FEDERAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1972 (FWPCA), P.L. 92-500 AND THE WYOMING ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (35-502 et. seq., WYOMING STATUTES 1967, CUMULATIVE SUPPLEMENT 1973).

IT IS THE STATE OF WYOMING'S INTENTION TO ISSUE WASTE WATER DISCHARGE PERMITS TO (4) FOUR OIL TREATER FACILITIES, AND TO MODIFY (1) ONE OIL TREATER AND (2) TWO INDUSTRIAL DISCHARGE PERMITS WITHIN THE STATE OF WYOMING.

#### APPLICANT INFORMATION

(1) APPLICANT NAME: WALTER DUNCAN OIL PROPERTIES  
1300 WRITERS CENTER IV  
DENVER, COLORADO 80222

FACILITY LOCATION: REYNOLDS FEDERAL NO. 1, FEDERAL  
NO. W-24753, NE, NE, SECTION 1,  
T52N, R65W, CROOK COUNTY,  
WYOMING  
Wy-0026921

(2) APPLICANT NAME: DIAMOND SHAMROCK COMPANY  
5730 WEST YELLOWSTONE

FACILITY LOCATION: CASPER, WYOMING 82601  
EAST RENO FEDERAL 1-23,  
LEASE NO. USA-W-4435, SW,  
NW, SECTION 23, T45N,  
R79W, JOHNSON COUNTY,  
WYOMING  
Wy-0026948

(3) APPLICANT NAME: PROVIDENT RESOURCES  
821 - 17th STREET, SUITE 821

FACILITY LOCATION: DENVER, COLORADO 80202  
BEALL NO. 23-26, TANK BATTERY NO. 1,  
SW, SECTION 26, T57N, R97W,  
BIG HORN COUNTY, WYOMING  
Wy-0001582

(4) APPLICANT NAME: TOCO CORPORATION  
26 SOUTH SENECA AVENUE

FACILITY LOCATION: NEWCASTLE, WYOMING 82701  
ROGERS LEASE, NE4,  
SECTION 16, T44N, R63W,  
WESTON COUNTY, WYOMING  
Wy-0028956

FACILITY LOCATION: STATE LEASE, NW4,  
SECTION 16, T44N, R63W,  
WESTON COUNTY, WYOMING  
Wy-0001414

All facilities are oil treater units in which the produced water is brought to the surface and separated from the petroleum product through the use of heater treaters and skim ponds. All must meet Wyoming's Produced Water Criteria limits effective immediately, and all discharge to Class III waters.

All proposed permits are new with the exception of Toco Wy-0001414, which is a modification to correct the lease name and change the expiration date to December 31, 1981.

The expiration dates for the proposed permits correspond to the expiration dates of other oil treater facilities in the area.

(5) PERMIT NAME: CORDERO MINING COMPANY  
MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 1449  
GILLETTE, WYOMING 82716  
FACILITY LOCATION: CORDERO MINE,  
SECTION 25, T47N, R71W,  
CAMPBELL COUNTY, WYOMING  
Wy-0023761

Cordero Mining Company is developing an open-pit coal mine approximately 25 miles south of Gillette, Wyoming. A discharge permit which allows the discharge of a combination of mine water and sanitary waste from a series of two settling ponds was issued in November of 1976. The Company has now decided to utilize three additional settling ponds to treat this water and has requested that the permit be modified to change the location of the point of discharge.

Proposed permit allows the requested change in discharge point location. The discharges from this point and from a separate settling pond which will handle overburden runoff will both be to the Belle Fourche River (Class I warm water stream) via unnamed drainages. Permit requires compliance with National Best Practicable Treatment Standards effective immediately and the submission of self-monitoring reports monthly. The permit will expire June 30, 1982.

(6) PERMIT NAME: ASH CREEK MINING COMPANY  
MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 6528  
SHERIDAN, WYOMING 82601  
FACILITY LOCATION: NORTH OF SHERIDAN, WYOMING,  
NE4, SECTION 22, T58N, R84W,  
SHERIDAN COUNTY, WYOMING  
Wy-0025810

Ash Creek Mining Company is in the process of developing an open pit coal mine located approximately ten miles north of Sheridan, Wyoming, on the Wyoming-Montana border. Water encountered in the mining process is pumped to a series of two small settling ponds which discharge to Little Youngs Creek (Class II stream).

A discharge permit for this operation was issued to the Public Service Company of Oklahoma in January of 1976. Since that date the permit has been transferred to the Ash Creek Mining Company. In addition, preliminary self-monitoring data indicated that the original concept of using a single settling pond was not providing sufficient suspended solids removal, therefore, the Company plans to route Little Youngs Creek around the second settling pond, thereby moving the official point of discharge from the first to the second settling pond outfall. The proposed permit modification allows this change and makes the following additional changes:

1. A daily average limitation of 20 mg-1 total suspended solids is added to bring the permit into compliance with Wyoming's best practical treatment policy for mining activities.
2. The effluent limitation of sulfides is dropped since the pollutant is not present in significant quantities.
3. A limitation of 10 mg-1 of oil and grease has been added.
4. The self-monitoring requirement for total suspended solids has been increased from monthly to weekly.

5. Self-monitoring reports are required monthly rather than quarterly.

#### STATE-EPA TENTATIVE DETERMINATIONS

Tentative determinations have been made by the State of Wyoming in cooperation with the EPA staff relative to effluent limitations and conditions to be imposed on the permits. These limitations and conditions will assure that State water quality standards and applicable provisions of the FWPCA will be protected.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments are invited any time prior to July 17, 1977. Comments may be directed to the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, Water Quality Division, Permits Section, Hathaway Building, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002, or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VIII, Enforcement Division, Permits Administration and Compliance Branch, 1860 Lincoln Street, Denver, Colorado 80203. All comments received prior to July 17, 1977 will be considered in the formulation of final determinations to be imposed on the permits.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information may be obtained upon request by calling the State of Wyoming, (307) 777-7781, or EPA, (303) 327-3874, or by writing to the aforementioned addresses.

The complete applications, draft permits and related documents are available for review and reproduction at the aforementioned addresses.

Public Notice No. Wy-77-08





## HCN Bulletin Board



June 17, 1977

### LOONEY LIMERICKS

by Zane E. Cology

We told every son and each daughter,  
That we just didn't have enough water,  
But the line with the slurry  
Was in such a hurry  
That they didn't heed as they oughter.

### ECO-TOWN, OREGON

Fifty students will help build a new town based on ecological principles near Eugene, Ore., under the direction of the Cerro Gordo Center for Creative Community. Students will work in the areas of energy alternatives, habitat design and construction, organic food production, resource utilization and recovery, transportation, communication, and growth. College credit is available for the 8-week summer program, July 9-Sept. 3. Tuition is \$475 plus \$175 for meals and camping facilities. For more information write the Cerro Gordo Center for Creative Community, Dorena Lake, Cottage Grove, Ore. 97424.

### SOLAR LAB

The Energy Research and Development Administration's (ERDA) Transportable Solar Laboratory (TSL) will be in Cheyenne, Wyo., June 27 through July 10 at the First Wyoming Bank. The TSL will be open for public viewing from 11:00 to 4:30 p.m. daily. A solar lab will be held July 6 and 7 in conjunction with the visit by Honeywell and ERDA at Holding's Little America, junction of I-80 and I-25. Registration and information available from Linda Cyrus, TSL Workshop Coordinator, Honeywell Inc., Energy Resources Center, 2600 Ridgway Parkway, Minneapolis, Minn. 55413; telephone (612) 378-4077.

### ELK WILD AND SCENIC RIVER STUDY

Representatives from the Routt National Forest and the Colorado Water Conservation Board will explain what effects the designation of the Elk River into the Wild and Scenic Rivers System could have on private and national forest lands. The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 30, at the Glen Eden Ranch in Clark, Colo., 18 miles north of Steamboat Springs on the Elk River Road. Further information available from David Hoefler (303) 879-1722 and Danny Merriman (303) 892-3441.

### MEDIA ACCESS

A book aimed at citizen groups entitled, **Strategies for Access to Public Service Advertising**, is available from the Public Media Center, 2751 Hyde St., San Francisco, Calif. 94109. Cost is \$3.

### TESTIMONY CONTINUES

All concerned persons unable to testify at the Alaska National Interest Wildlands hearings may submit written testimony for the record and to their Congressman. Send testimony to: Honorable John Seiberling, Sub-committee on General Oversight and Alaska Lands, 1327 Longworth Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. The record closes at the end of June.

### SOLAR IRRIGATION

A national Solar Irrigation Workshop co-sponsored by the state of New Mexico, New Mexico State University, and the federal government will be held in Willard, N.M., near Albuquerque July 7 and 8. More information is available from Lyle Wetherholt, (505) 264-2130, or by mail at Organization 5710, Sandia Laboratories, Albuquerque, N.M. 87115. Registration deadline is June 24.

### WHOOPIING CRANES ON FILM

A 50-minute color film by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service pays tribute to the crane's struggle for survival against great odds, and also documents the work of persons dedicated to preserving the cranes. "A Great White Bird" is available for rental or purchase. Three-day rental is \$17.50 and purchase price is \$231.50. Additional information at the National Audiovisual Center, General Services Administration, Washington, D.C. 20409.

### SOLAR LOANS

Title I of the Federal Housing Administration loan program authorizes up to \$7,500 in unsecured loans for solar water heaters. If interested, ask a bank or lending institution for an FHA title I loan. Interest can be as high as 12%, and terms up to 12 years are available.

### ENVIRONMENTAL LITIGATION

A week long course of study on environmental litigation will be presented at the University of Colorado in Boulder, Colo., from July 17-22. Directed at practicing attorneys, it costs \$350, not including meals or lodging. It will deal with a variety of

types of environmental court and administrative laws, including the Clean Air Act, Federal Water Pollution Control Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and Toxic Substances Control Act. State laws and jurisdictional problems will also be discussed. For information, write Donald M. Maclay, ALL-ABA, 4025 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19104 or call (215) 387-3000.

### GREAT BEAR GROUP

A group called Citizens for the Great Bear Wilderness has formed to gain protection for 370,000 acres of Forest Service lands between Glacier National Park and the Bob Marshall Wilderness in northern Montana. A draft management proposal from the Forest Service is expected July 1st with public hearings in mid-August. To join the group send \$5 to "Citizens for the Great Bear Wilderness," East Shore, Bigfork, Mont. 59911. The Forest Service has a newsletter on the Great Bear area and is asking for comments on the issue involved. Contact Dick Smith of the Flathead National Forest, 260 North Main, Kalispell, Mont. 59901.

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In The Old Railway Yard

## Thorne Ecological Institute is sponsoring a Float Symposium of Utah's Green River with Rod Nash and Ann Zwinger.

Thorne Ecological Institute is sponsoring two river trip workshops in Desolation Canyon on the Green River in Utah. The workshops focus on the history and ecology of the Green River as well as the evolution and direction of the wilderness movement in the United States.

The first workshop, from July 31 to August 6, will be conducted by Ann Zwinger, author of Run, River Run. The second, August 7 to August 13, will have Rod Nash, author of Wilderness and The American Mind as the resource leader.

The cost of these educational workshops is \$450.00. An income tax deduction is allowed for education undertaken to maintain and improve professional skills

### Float Symposium Registration

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Association, Organization, \_\_\_\_\_  
Business \_\_\_\_\_

- Ann Zwinger—July 31 to August 6  
 Rod Nash—August 7 to August 13  
Number of people in your party \_\_\_\_\_  
 Enclosed is a check for \_\_\_\_\_  
 Please bill me

MAIL TO: THORNE ECOLOGICAL INSTITUTE  
2336 Pearl Street  
Boulder, Colorado 80502

For more information, contact Janet Beardsley or Carl Norbeck at Thorne Ecological Institute, 2336 Pearl Street, Boulder, Colorado phone 303-443-7325.

## While we still have time.

A WILDERNESS FLOAT SYMPOSIUM  
ON UTAH'S GREEN RIVER SPONSORED BY  
THORNE ECOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

### Ann Zwinger

Ann Zwinger, author, naturalist, artist, and teacher, has written Run, River Run, a book focusing on the history and ecology of the Green River. The book won both the non-fiction writer's award of Friends of American Writers of Chicago and the John Burroughs Memorial Association Award. Ann contributes periodically to several national publications.

Ann will enliven this special place, the Green, discussing the origins of the magnificent canyons, interpreting river and desert ecology, and relating stories of early explorers. Ann will also examine water management and share her nature drawing talents.

### The guides

### Rod Nash

Rod Nash is a professor of History and Environmental Studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara. One of his books, Wilderness and The American Mind, was named among the "Fifty Best Books" published in 1967 in the U.S. Reviewing Rod's book, then Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas wrote: "... this book is a mandatory prelude to any modern treatment of conservation problems." As a national leader in the field of conservation and environmental management, Rod has a special interest in problems relating to wilderness and its preservation. He is also considered one of the most experienced whitewater boatmen in the American West.

### The run

The Green River through Desolation Canyon, Utah, remains one of the few areas in this country where man's presence is humble before nature. Wilderness abounds on the 100-mile float trip. The canyon, deeper in places than the Grand Canyon, is alive with deer, beaver, eagles, fish and other wildlife. Side canyons along the route invite exploration, hikes, and overnight camping.

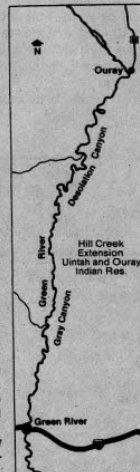
### The equipment

The run is made in single-person sportyaks. These 7-foot skills are indestructible, unsinkable, oarpowered craft with built-in air chambers. They are ideally suited to this segment of the Green River and will bounce over rocks without damage. Sportyaks enable everyone to safely maneuver the boat for real participation.

A support raft will accompany the trip carrying all food, cooking, and camping equipment.

### The trip

A cookout on Saturday night, August 6, in Green River, Utah, will give both groups a chance to meet with Rod and Ann together. Tales of past and future adventures of the unique experience of the Green will certainly be one topic of discussion.



16-High Country News — June 17, 1977

## Northern Rockies Action Group...

(continued from page 12)  
was elected by the membership. "You must be accountable to your board — not just to yourself," he says.

Leslie Petersen, a member of the NRAG board of directors, fully supports the emphasis on constituency building. "The day of the small, elitist kamikaze group leading the environmental movement is over," she says. "We need to move into the mainstream."

She believes that increasing the participation is not only healthy for the movement but also necessary for its political survival. Environmental lobbyists in all three states this year had a tough battle just protecting environmental legislation passed in previous years. "Legislators were initially impressed by the small bunch of hot lobbyists, but now they're beginning to think they (the environmental lobbyists) don't represent much of a power block. . . . They still rely heavily upon them for information, but they don't pay as much attention anymore," Petersen says.

Initially, she says she distrusted the value of a support team, thinking it would compete with the "front line groups" for money. However, now she says she is sold on the idea of a "super brain trust," which she thinks the NRAG staff represents.

In addition to the professional skills they offer that other groups can't afford to hire on their own, Petersen thinks NRAG has helped stimulate the development of a regional identity. The group has sponsored regional workshops. At one in 1975, environmentalists met with ranchers and Indians to discuss common goals and iron out some of their differences. Although the meeting wasn't as successful in building alliances as had been hoped, it did establish contacts among the groups that have led to limited coalitions on specific issues. At another workshop held in 1976, groups from several Western states compared media and public opinion strategies that had been used to promote industrial siting legislation. In addition to the local experts who had been involved in the campaigns, NRAG invited national experts to train workshop participants on public service announcements, media access, and survey techniques.

These workshops, in addition to the regular advisory meetings of regional en-

vironmental leaders who work with NRAG, have helped shape the regional identity, Petersen believes.

"Through establishing more definite communication links among regional groups, and offering the training necessary to put that extra polish on our activities, we are a tighter-knit, more professional community of activists," Colleen Kelly, a relatively new executive director of WOC, says. Judging from her experience with NRAG, she thinks the group has largely succeeded in getting over a big hurdle: earning the confidence and not the resentment of the existing groups. "Entering a movement with many strong personalities, NRAG has to avoid appearing to these 'seasoned' fighters as know-it-alls," she says. She thinks the NRAG staff members' dedication to the issues and their willingness to jump in and roll up their sleeves to help have helped them avoid this problem.

She and another new executive director, Bob Kiesling of the Environmental Information Center, agree that NRAG save "complete rookies" from making a lot of mistakes.

Bob Kiesling and Colleen Kelly and others like them in the region are becoming more sophisticated and more professional, according to Joe Lamson of the NRAG staff. Where once there were a few scattered citizen groups with only a couple of paid staff members in the three states,



NRAG STAFF members (left to right) Laurie Lamson, Carol Courter, Joe Lamson, Adam McLane, Linda Wood, and Bill Bryan. Bryan is NRAG's founder and coordinator. McLane is fiscal manager and advises other groups on financial management, accounting, and tax-exempt status. Wood specializes in office management, grant program administration, and purchasing. Joe Lamson specializes in mass media communications. Laurie Lamson is leaving the staff, and Courter has left. Kit Muller, formerly of Northern Plains Resource Council, and Jim Crowfoot (not pictured) are both working on special NRAG contracts.

there now are over 40 paid staff members with budgets totaling more than \$300,000. The result is that NRAG must seek even more professional abilities in its new staff members to keep ahead.

The Rockefeller Foundation, however, is reducing its support of the group. Although an intensive review of the NRAG by a paid consultant was generally favorable, according to Petersen, the Rockefeller's grant

was intended to be "seed money" to get the organization started and not to be a continuing source of revenue. Because of funding questions and of the growing skills of the region's groups, NRAG views the coming year as a year of transition. It is reevaluating how best to serve the region and pursuing sources of funding, such as other foundations and possibly charging fees for the services it provides to groups.

## Dear Friends,

Most of us here at **High Country News** are known for our skills at sitting, reading, talking, getting by on a shoestring, and plunking away at typewriters. What most readers don't know, however, is that we also fancy ourselves athletes. We admit it. We've been caught in our T-shirts and tennis shoes.

We also admit that we never ponder environmental issues when we sneak out for these short, daily escapes. We just juggle along mindlessly, like healthy animals. A physical shake-up has become so important to us that we rarely schedule interviews during lunch time. It's too precious for getting outside and getting our blood circulating.

Last winter Sarah suggested that we celebrate our increasing fitness and run in one of the well-known cross-country races down in Colorado — or better yet that we get something like them started in Lander.

Energy and time considerations made us opt for our own five-mile race in Lander. We figured we knew half a dozen people who would probably run in it, besides the fanatics on our staff. Four times that many people finally entered, including a member of the Olympic biathlon team, a group called the "Powder River Runners" (all exceedingly fit members of the Powder River Basin Resource Council), a young woman who carried her six-week-old baby in a backpack, and a couple of people who each confided (before the race) that they were sure they could "dust" everybody.

As it became clear we were sponsoring a full-fledged event, the joggers at the office grew noticeably nervous and met each other more often than usual on the Big Hill. There were strangers

on the Big Hill now, too. Some walking, some running — but all were very intense. Although nobody at HCN had ever run in a race before, we suddenly felt we were about to hold the next most important thing to the Boston Marathon. Should we contact **Sports Illustrated**, **Runner's World**? Or just let them discover us on their own? We developed cottonmouth, shortness of breath, the sniffles, and fear of heat stroke.

For HCN readers who are also sports fans, here's a brief accounting of how we did. To our amazement, all six of the HCN entries finished. Bruce Hamilton (our news editor until a few weeks ago) did it the fastest — in just over 35 minutes. He finished 10th behind 19-year-old David Heuer, the overall winner, who finished in 30 minutes and 42 seconds. The only way we could describe the rest of the HCN runners (Sarah, August, Marjane, Dan, and Joan) was that we did it, like many others at the race, with enthusiasm.

Forty-five people entered. Curiously, they spent more time talking running before and after the race than they did actually running. The event became more a celebration of foot power than a race. The entrants had been plodding along at their own pace all year. For one day a year, it was exhilarating to do it together.

As you may have guessed, we're going to do it again. We think it ties into our work — keeping us tough, happy, and fit enough to be effective environmental watchdogs.

Do we seem particularly clear-headed this week, our phrases lean, our layout sleek? If so, chalk it up the First Annual Lander Citizens' Footrace.

We owe thanks to Sarah, who made it happen. And to others: Donna Smith, top timekeeper; Mary Morehouse, fleetfooted poster maker; Lorna Wilkes, award and party giver; Mary and Gary Milano, the race rescue team; Ollie Duncan, who created the walking class; Bill Nice, the spirit behind HCN's runners; Colleen Kelly, Lynn Dickey, and Terry Williams, record keepers; Bart Koehler and Bart Smith, who glorified us with their cameras; Harold Hopkins, who showed the way; and Richard Pallister, who splashed us after the Big Hill.

—the editors



Sarah Doll at the finish line. Photo by Bart Koehler

## In The News

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