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Digging up the West for shipment to Japan

by Bob Gottlieb and Peter Wiley

Major Western political figures, led by Montana Gov. Thomas L. Judge and Utah Gov. Scott N. Matheson are pushing hard to open the door to mammoth Western coal exports to Pacific Basin countries. To facilitate this new trade the Western Governors Policy Office, headed by Matheson, is studying the formation of what WESTPO Executive Director Philip N. Burgess calls a "Japanese-style trading company."

The trading company would bring together two or more Western states and

one or more of the major Western coal-producing companies in a public-private venture. WESTPO, an association of the governors of Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, the Dakotas, Utah and Wyoming, is leading the way.

The effort is linked, according to a report in this week's *Newsweek*, to a White House drive to get a commitment from America's major allies to switch to coal. Carter, who has set up an Interagency Coal Exports task force, is looking to federal lands in the West to provide most of the new coal exports, the report said.

Across the Pacific, 10 Japanese utilities, led by Tokyo Electric Power Co., the largest private utility in the world, have already formed the Japanese Coal Development Co. to explore overseas for new sources of coal to fuel electric power plants.

WESTPO estimates that the JCDC will purchase up to half of Japan's steam coal imports, while established trading companies will import the rest.

U.S. coal producers and state officials are also looking at Taiwan and the Republic of Korea as potential markets.

But Japan has taken the first steps to prepare for the purchase of Western coal.

Possible drawbacks to the plan include the low quality of much of the West's coal and the already-established export market for Eastern coal. And the possible environmental impacts of producing and transporting large amounts of Western coal have received little attention as yet.

JAPAN'S STEPS

While the idea of a Pacific market for Western coal has been in the wind since (continued on page 4)

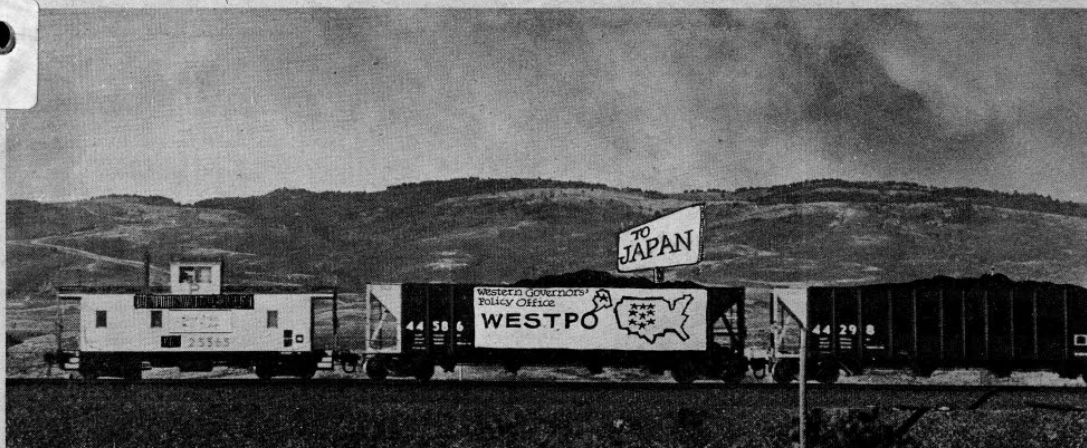


Photo by Michael McClure
The above photo has been altered and does not represent an actual situation.

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Developers are busy building around the clear water of this large lake, and some observers predict another Lake Tahoe.

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Tahoe of the Rockies

Bear Lake's high-growth future may drown rural past

by Michael Moss

GARDEN CITY, Utah — Bryce Nielson brakes for a scampering squirrel as he steers his green state truck north along Route 89. To the right is Bear Lake, shimmering turquoise under an overcast sky.

To the left is Bear Lake West, Inc., one of a score of recreational housing developments reaching into the Wasatch foothills.

And caught in the middle are Nielson, the fish and wildlife he's been managing for seven years, and the rural lifestyle older residents have cultivated for over a century.

To say Bear Lake and its environs are in flux is an understatement. For the

lake, just a two-hour drive from Salt Lake City, is the target of a fast-track recreational and energy boom that rivals the wave that swept California's Lake Tahoe.

There is a chance that growth along Bear Lake's shore may be slowed. But there are only a few defenders here of a natural lake environment, and development during the next years may leave only memories of what was once a Rocky Mountain gem.

AN AQUATIC CHAMELEON

The lake, 20 miles long with nearly 50 miles of shoreline, is an aquatic

chameleon, displaying moods from gray-blue to translucent turquoise. Born 28,000 years ago, Bear Lake was a purely natural body of water until the 20th century.

In 1909, the utility now called Utah Power and Light diverted into the lake the previously unconnected Bear River, which winds crazily from its headwaters in Utah, through Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho and back again to Utah.

The project stores the river's bounty in the lake to maximize power production, technically making Bear Lake a reservoir. Only the pumping plant is visible, however, and the lake's annual level fluctuation is less than three feet; by all appearances the lake still seems

natural. Its clear waters harbor large fish populations, including cutthroat trout, Bonneville cisco and whitefish, and its own Bear Lake whitefish and sculpin.

The bears for which it was named have long since headed for the hills. But still lingering are deer, fox, bald eagles, great horned owls, chukars, and in legend, a Loch Ness monster.

Gone with the bears are the Shoshone, Bannock, Ute, Sioux and Blackfoot Indians, who used the area for intertribal rendezvous. Another tribe of humans, however, has more than taken their place.

THE MORMON INFLUX

It all started in 1863, when the first Mormons settled on the lake's northwest shore. Despite a climate once described as nine months of winter and three months of late fall, with temperatures at the lake's surface — 5,922 feet above sea level — dipping to minus 40 degrees F., they stayed to form small farming communities.

Fish Haven, St. Charles, Paris, Garden City — these and other towns formed and farmers planted wheat, barley, oats and dairy cattle.

Phase two of the Mormon influx — tourism — began in the 1960s. Literally thousands of people now drive the 100 miles from Utah's crowded Wasatch Front every summer weekend, forming a bumper-to-bumper metallic chain winding down into the mountain basin on Friday evenings. The attraction is a variety of recreation possibilities, including boating, fishing, and scuba diving, with skiing and snowmobiling in the winter.

Bear Lake, straddling the Idaho-Utah border, is also Overthrust Belt country, and there is an escalating interest in searching the strata around and under the lake for oil and natural gas. Idaho, oil hungry and less interested in Bear Lake's recreational virtues, is leading the rush, and has leased its half of the lake bottom to Hunt Oil of Houston.

Hunt has obtained permits to slant drill from the lake shore under Bear Lake and has applied for permits to drill directly down from surface platforms. Oil industry workers are moving into the local communities in large numbers.

The effects of these two forces on Bear Lake can be summed in one word: boom.

A 24-HOUR JAIL

"When I started 10 years ago," Rich County Sheriff Thad Mattson said over the phone, "we had one sheriff and a part-time deputy. Now we have a 24-hour jail, nine staff, with four on the road all the time, and we could use 10 more. Drug arrests have tripled in the last five years, civil disturbances are up 3,000 percent, and there's not a vacant house in the county."

Elva Satterthwaite, a long-time Garden City resident, says they've had to build a new Mormon church in town to accommodate the quintupling of attendance during the summer. And a neighbor recalls waking up one sunny Saturday morning only to find a strange recreational vehicle parked in front of her home, with its owner hooking up her garden hose to its water tank.

To ease the housing shortage, second homes, motels and recreational vehicle parks are sprouting all along the shore. With names like Sweetwater, Butter-



THE RURAL LIFE at Bear Lake fades softly in the path of modern developments. "Own a piece of the water," advertise the owners of this Sweetwater, Inc. complex.

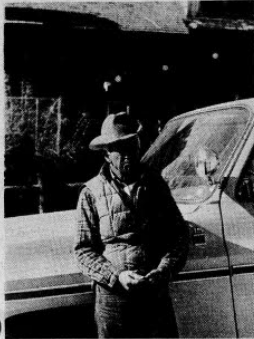


Photo by Ann Schimpf

FOR KEITH JOHNSON, a Laketown rancher, people and cows just don't mix. He's moving his cattle operation to New Mexico.

cup Farms, Mahogany Hills and Lakeside, developments and developers have arrived with tennis courts and saunas to cash in.

One of the smallest developers, an area rancher and landowner, wants to put 172 RV sites on his 28 acres. One of the largest, Bear Lake West, reportedly has 200 salespersons peddling 7,000 lots, in addition to the 3,000 they've already sold.

What do the locals think of all this? It's hard to say, but the most vocal seem resigned to adjusting to the discomfiture of boomtown living.

Keith Johnson, however, is leaving the valley. Born and raised just south of Bear Lake, he and his son Dee are moving their 1,000-head cattle operation south to New Mexico. "You just can't run cattle in a highly populated area," he says.

HELTER-SKELTER

Standing on the lakeshore near his research station, Bryce Nielson points out the gravel lake bottom. "There's

"The development is going to come. We'll just have to prepare for it."

— Donald Rex, commission president

only a very thin layer of rock and gravel along the shore that provides spawning grounds for the lake fish," he says. "Yet one of the favorite things home owners like to do is scrape away the gravel in front of their lot to make a nice, smooth sandy beach."

"The spawning areas are very limited and we're in danger of losing them very fast," Nielson says.

Later, leaning against his truck on the relatively undeveloped east shore of the lake, he points out the visible scars along the west shore hills where roads have been built for new homes. "The development just doesn't have to look like that," he says.

Nielson, a Cache Valley, Utah, native and a graduate of Utah State University in Logan, has worked at Bear Lake for the Utah Wildlife Resources

Division for seven years. His latest project is a native cutthroat trout stocking program.

Just north of Garden City, on the Idaho side, Dave Morrow works as superintendent of Bear Lake state parks. In addition to managing existing facilities, which include 1,000 acres of state-owned land around the lake, Morrow is working on a land use inventory that he hopes will "show our planners why we need to preserve some areas."

Morrow and Nielson are both concerned about the impact the recreational and energy boom is having on Bear Lake's natural world. They also both feel ignored by environmentalists.

"Environmental groups haven't shown the least bit of interest in Bear Lake," says Nielson. "And the people who especially should care, the anglers, scuba divers and other lake users, are not vocal and are not organized."

As a result, he says, "we're seeing helter-skelter development with little thought about the impact on the lake environment. Every development that has been proposed has gone in."

WELL PLANNED GROWTH

Donald Rex pushes his chair back from the table. Wearing slacks and cowboy boots, with a striped shirt covering a large midsection, he has just chaired the monthly meeting of the Bear Lake Regional Commission.

On the table, along with notepads and papers, are cookies and soda, staple items wherever Mormon church members gather.

Rex, a retired dairy rancher with land north of Bear Lake near Georgetown, Idaho, disagrees with Nielson.

"I don't think we've been tough with developers, or outright turned anybody down," he says. "But we do discourage the worst ones and head them off before they become formal proposals. We are committed to well-planned growth."

One of the obstacles to such planning is the political geography of Bear Lake. It is a classic case of political boundaries that totally ignore ecological systems.

Bear Lake lies in two counties, two states, and two Environmental Protection Agency regions — half in and half out, no matter how one looks at it.

In 1973, the Bear Lake Regional Commission was set up to sift through the inevitable turmoil such mixed representation creates, or, more specifically, "to coordinate and enhance the development and protection of Bear Lake and its environs." Seven persons from the two counties make up the core of the commission, with seven more ex officio members from state agencies. A staff of three runs the day-to-day operation.

The commission goals delicately balance the themes of "utilization" and "preservation." The key objective, as Rex sees it, is: "To prevent unneeded or premature development of land by establishing a pattern for orderly growth and development."

But while the broad commission goals are understandably vague, so is the commission's main tool for implementing those goals — The Rich and Bear Lake County Landuse Guides.

Published last November with federal funds provided through the Rural

Development Act of 1972, they are lavishly bound in two volumes with expensive paper. Take home copies are not available to the general public or the press.

The counties' primary objective, according to the guides, is to protect the area's agricultural industry. They also instruct, "Removing land from agricultural use through approving premature subdivision should be approved only where the prospects for development are high and not where land is being subdivided for speculation."

There are several possible interpretations of this policy, one being that you do not allow someone to subdivide a farm unless the subdivider really wants to develop it — a system that does little to prevent farm land conversion.

The Bear Lake Commission staff planner, Craig Thomas, admits that the

Bear Lake is the target of a fast-track recreational and energy boom that rivals Lake Tahoe's.

guides are vague. "The key is going to be our unique implementation," he explains. "We're going to use a density bonus system, whereby if a developer wants to put in so many lots per acre, we'll give him a higher density if he contributes so much open space or wildlife mitigation in return."

This type of horstrading has been tried before, however, resulting in some cases with the developer performing very minor mitigating measure in return for large concessions.

In San Francisco, for example, builders of high-rise buildings are given extra stories over the standard height limit in exchange for providing public open space on the street level. Such high rise parks, however, are notorious for being totally shaded, lifeless, and unused.

And the guides enable the commission staff to make case-by-case decisions on development proposals — a power that worries Morrow and Nielson.

"The problem," says Nielson, "is that the folks making those decisions are

rural, agricultural people unaccustomed to dealing with development interests and pressure. And they're getting snowed."

The commission's credibility is strained already. The commission's annual meeting last summer, to which they invited the governors of Idaho and Utah in the hope of raising more funds, was held in the conference rooms of a developer, Sweetwater, Inc. (This year, in a decision that one commission member termed as being 'fair,' they are going to hold the meeting in the conference facilities of another developer, Bear Lake West.)

THE ODDS

If the Bear Lake Regional Commission succeeds in allowing heavy development while maintaining an ecological balance at Bear Lake, they will make regulatory history.

Planners at Lake Tahoe, some 600 miles to the west, on the California-Nevada border, are trying desperately to repair the impacts of several decades of uncontrolled development, which have included serious water and air quality degradation.

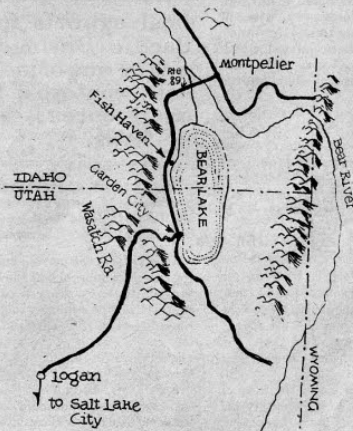
The political parallels between Bear and Tahoe lakes have been drawn before; they even physically resemble each other.

A regional commission similar to Bear Lake's was set up at Tahoe, but it has failed to resolve the complex struggle between development and preservation interests. Today, the Tahoe commission has essentially folded, and legislation is moving through Congress to reassert federal authority over the Lake Tahoe region.

Whether federal intervention will help cure Tahoe's ills remains to be seen.

For Bear Lake, the need for such assistance may be several years down their road. But only a few individual counties in the United States, unimpeded by the political complexities at Bear Lake, have succeeded in effectively coping with development pressures and impacts. And Donald Rex and the rest of the Bear Lake commission seem to reject the notion of ever accepting federal intervention.

With a determination that must have been shared by those first Bear Lake Mormon settlers, Rex says, "The development is going to come, period. And we'll just have to prepare for it."



Coal to Japan...

(continued from page 1)

the 1973 Arab oil embargo, the latest effort was triggered by changes in Japanese policy that have forced the island nation to look for new sources of energy.

Last year, Japan announced that it would cut its use of foreign oil from 75 percent of its fuel mix to 51 percent by 1990. This means the Japanese will need new sources of coal as early as 1983. Right now, Australia, followed by China and the Soviet Union, is Japan's most important source.

According to one estimate, Japan will need 90 million tons of new coal annually by 1989.

Japan's next step, according to WESTPO Director Burgess, will be the formation of a new energy development organization sometime next fall, fi-

The governors asked Japan to view the Western states as a major resource-producing nation with a unified outlook on coal exports.

nanced by both the government and private companies, to "subsidize the investigation and expend loans for the exploration of foreign steam coal resources."

WESTPO, in the meantime, has been playing a major role in dealing with the many questions generated by the suggestion of gearing up Western coal for the export market. In the spring of 1979, Gov. Judge met with federal officials in Washington, including a White House representative, the National Coal Association, and the Rocky Mountain Coal Mining Institute, and got strong support.

Last fall, Judge headed a WESTPO delegation to Japan and Taiwan. The delegation met with government officials and representatives of utility, financial and trading companies. In Japan, the WESTPO delegation asked its hosts to view the West as a major resource-producing nation with a unified outlook on coal exports, rather than 11 separate states.

Business leaders were initially skeptical of WESTPO's efforts. An Amoco executive, for example, dismissed Judge's export advocacy as an attempt to offset the consequences of Montana's 30 percent severance tax on coal, which has created, the executive said, sales problems for Montana in the domestic market.

But WESTPO's efforts have gained credibility through discussions about coal export with numerous regional producers, among them Exxon Coal USA, Kemmerer Coal, Peabody, TOSCO, Rocky Mountain Energy, Atlantic Richfield and Westmoreland Coal.

WESTPO officials have also been discussing rail and slurry transportation with Southern Pacific, Burlington Northern, New Milwaukee Road Lines, and various companies involved in slurry transport. Major West Coast ports have been approached about the feasibility of constructing coal-loading facilities.

These discussions led to the idea of the public-private trading company, an entirely new approach to the marketing of American coal. A public-private

company would represent a significant step beyond the promotional activities of existing state trade offices.

According to WESTPO, the trading company would strengthen the private companies' position in the export market. It would also provide a way around anti-trust provisions in the present trade laws prohibiting a number of coal producers and shippers from working together to export.

PROBLEMS AHEAD

Western coal exports still face numerous problems.

If response in the early 1970s to the idea of exporting Alaskan oil to Japan is a good index, coal exports to the Pacific Basin could well be one of the most hotly contested Western resource issues of the 1980s. Alaskan oil was particularly sensitive because of the Arab oil embargo, but with coal's increasingly important role in domestic energy production, similar objections could be raised.

There is also the problem of coal quality. Most Western coal is not high enough in BTU-content for the Japanese market. The highest quality and most readily available Western coal is in the underground-mining areas of central Utah, in addition to deposits in Wyoming and western Colorado.

That would seem to exclude the lower-quality coal from Montana and Wyoming's Powder River Basin. But if Western states take a unified stance, they may force the Japanese to accept a mixture of high- and low-BTU coal.

Whatever the quality of export coal, it must be located and carried to the Pacific Coast, either by rail or slurry, and there loaded on ships.

Boeing Construction and Engineering, a subsidiary of the aviation giant, has been working with federal funds to slurry coal from central Utah to Oxnard, Calif., where it would be loaded for shipment across the seas.

Boeing's Leonard Kopeikin returned recently from a trip to Taiwan, where the publicly-owned Taiwan Power Co. has indicated its interest in purchasing a large quantity of Western coal.

According to Kopeikin, central Utah has a tremendous competitive advan-

Coal exports to the Pacific Basin could well be one of the most hotly contested Western resource issues of the 1980s.

tage over other sources. "You would have to give Montana's coal away free, and it still would not be able to compete with central Utah's," he commented.

Kopeikin sees the private-public trading company approach as the best way to deal with the quantity of coal desired overseas: no one company could supply the entire market. A single trading entity could simplify the many-sided negotiations involved in such large transactions.

Kopeikin also suggested that involving a state like Montana in such a project could lead to modification of some of the state regulatory processes that

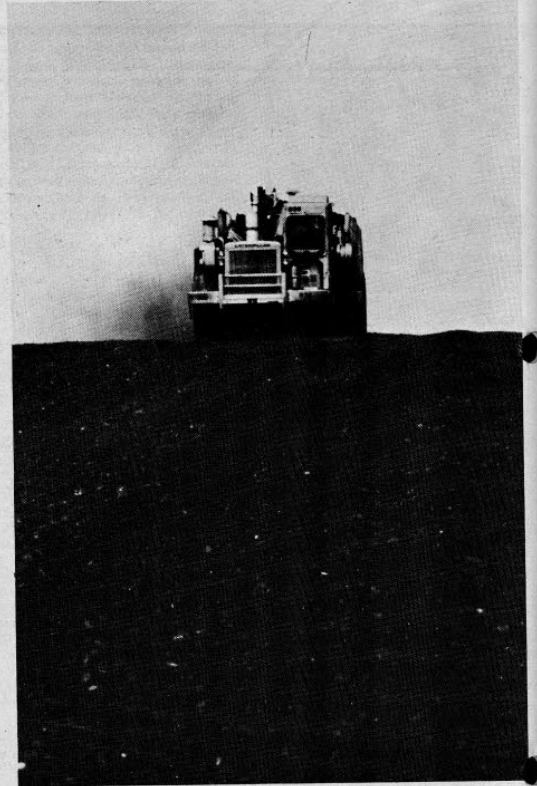


Photo courtesy of Bechtel

WESTERN COAL may be headed across the Pacific to Japan, if Western governors get their way.

trouble coal operators today. That possibility is feared by environmentalists.

SLURRY WATER

Slurry lines, in which coal is ground up and conveyed in a pumped liquid, usually require water, although WESTPO says it is exploring slurry technologies that use methanol and carbon dioxide.

After extensive lobbying in the Utah legislature, Boeing was assigned 8,000 acre-feet of what Kopeikin describes as "brackish underground water in central Utah." Although Gov. Matheson told these reporters that Utah "wouldn't let a drop of water go to California," he signed the Boeing water bill last year.

At Oxnard, Boeing plans to treat the water and sell it to the city for municipal use.

At present there are no West Coast port facilities for the export of Western coal.

At one point, Southern Pacific Railroad and an engineering firm were discussing the construction of a facility on the San Francisco Waterfront. The plan was dropped when it was pointed out that the huge volume of coal would create boomtown-type rail traffic along the peninsula south of San Francisco and disrupt Southern Pacific's suburban passenger lines. Sites in Long

Beach, Calif., and the Northwest are also being explored.

Japanese producers want to diversify their energy sources in part to avoid supply disruptions caused by strikes. This may explain why they are not simply increasing coal purchases in the eastern United States, where most mines are unionized, and where foreign utilities have been buying and shipping high-BTU coal for years. The Japanese want long-term contracts and some assurance that no one source could seriously interrupt their supply.

WESTPO's Burgess says the Japanese are concerned with "supply stability — especially with regard to interruptions owing to labor unrest and/or environmental concerns."

WESTPO has not researched the possible reaction of environmentalists to plans for a massive increase in Western coal production to supply foreign markets. In fact, WESTPO officials expect their organization to play a major role in smoothing differences among states that presently take different approaches to environmental regulation. The Japanese expect WESTPO, the coal producers and shippers to solve all the problems, environmental and other, before an actual contract is signed.

Bob Gottlieb and Peter Wiley are free-lance writers working on a book about energy development. This article was funded in part by a grant from the Fund for Investigative Reporting.

Symms bid to oust Church takes top billing

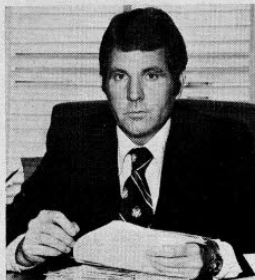
Idaho votes

by Michael Moss

SODA SPRINGS, Idaho — The Trail Cafe sits on the edge of town, near the junction of Route 34, which winds north and east through the Caribou Mountains to Freedom, Wyo.

This is cattle country, underlain by extensive deposits of phosphate. And in the cafe is a mixture of ranchers, mill and mine workers, and a few wives or girlfriends.

Oliver Lloyd, sitting at the counter, straightens up to the \$3.25 Working Man's breakfast. Sixty-four years and two heart pacers later, after he began



REP. STEVE SYMMS, a former apple grower, is amassing a million dollar war chest to defeat Frank Church.

working at six, Lloyd has left the job of running cattle to four of his seven sons.

He still votes, however, and in between bites he checks off his list of ills. "Inflation, taxes, too many laws. An egg goes down. Gun control is stupid. I hate the metric system. Foreigners are buying all our land." A fork full of potatoes, and then he concludes, "Everything is out of balance."

The Trail Cafe and the rest of Soda Springs is the conservative stronghold in Idaho, if not the entire West. There is little doubt that Reagan will sweep the election this fall here and throughout the state.

The betting money is on whether his presidential coattails will be long enough to give Rep. Steve Symms (R) the votes he needs to beat Frank Church (D) for the senior senator's seat.

And right now, the smart money is betting even odds.

"I've voted Democratic all my life," Lloyd says. "But I'm going to vote for Reagan this year just for a change. He did a lot for California in getting people off the dole. But as for Symms, I just don't know. Frank Church doesn't meet all my views, but he is a smart man and has a lot of experience."

Before Nov. 4, Steve Symms must convince Idahoans that he is worth the loss of a powerful voice in Washington.

A DO-NOTHING CONGRESSMAN

"Idaho's hero?" a recent letter to the Boise *Idaho Statesman's* editor inquired. "Who's responsible for helping dismantle the CIA?... for giving away the Panama Canal?... for practically



SEN. FRANK CHURCH, first elected in 1964, has been targeted for defeat by the National Conservative PAC.

raping the defense budget?... for advocating nationalization of the oil industry as an option to our energy problem? Not Symms. The hero of these 'reforms' happens to be none other than Idaho's senior senator, Frank Church."

"Church has called Steve Symms a 'do nothing congressman,'" another reader wrote. "Well, Sen. Church, Steve is doing and has done exactly what he told us he would do — reduce the size of government... If Steve Symms can be as good a do-nothing senator as he has been a do-nothing congressman, let's get behind him and elect a great do-nothing senator."

These are typical of roughly one-half the election letters the *Statesman*, Idaho's largest newspaper, has been running almost daily for months. The other half favors Church.

In announcing his candidacy last fall, Symms said he viewed Church as a threat to the "American way of life," and that to defeat him would be "one of the more noble things I could do."

Since then, Symms is well on the way to amassing a projected \$1 million war chest. Both candidates were unopposed in the June 3rd primary, and are yet to unleash the bulk of their campaigning on the Idaho voters.

Symms, who at 42 years old is one year younger than the median state voting age, was elected to the House of Representatives in 1972. A former apple grower and a believer in free market economics, according to the *Almanac of American Politics* he has formed a small coalition of like-minded congressmen that is considered too conservative even by the Republican leadership.

His voting record is near perfect, as scored by the American Security Council, Americans for Constitutional Action, the National Associated Businessmen, and other conservative groups, and is seriously flawed as charted by the liberal Americans for Democratic Action, the AFL-CIO, and Ralph Nader's Public Citizen. The League of Conservation Voters has consistently rated him less than 10 percent for his votes on key environmental issues.

Frank Church, on the other hand, has received moderate scores from all those groups, ranking slightly lower than average on the conservative scales, slightly higher than average on the liberal. The League of Conservation Voters has scored him in the 60th percentile for his environmental votes.

Indeed, Church is merely an average voter on national environmental issues. Marion Edey, director of the League of Conservation Voters, says her board of directors has not yet decided whether to support Church.

THE WORST WRONG VOTE

"Personally, I'm dubious," she says. "He's been terrible on energy issues, voting wrong on two out of three key votes on the Energy Mobilization Board legislation. I'm hesitant to give the signal that a congressman can vote wrong on the most important vote of the year and still get our support."

Idaho conservationists feel differently, however. Dennis Baird, a long time wilderness advocate from Moscow, Idaho, says that Church is a clear choice, and has voted correctly on the issues "most critical to Idaho, especially wilderness."

Ken Robison, a long-time state conservationist and currently a state senator from Boise, agrees. "It's true that Frank Church has worked with other interest groups, including mining and timber industries. But he has provided leadership on some of the most critical conservation issues of our time."

"Symms, on the other hand, has totally ignored the concerns of the Idaho people on conservation issues. He's worse than a zero, he's an anti-environmental zealot," Robison says.

Symms denies that he is anti-environmental. His press secretary, Bill Fay, commenting on the recently approved River-of-No-Return wilderness legislation (see story, p. 11), argued, "The congressman is not anti-environmental. We're simply looking for a more balanced approach to preservation that will save jobs and keep the economy healthy."

The River-of-No-Return legislation had become a major political battle between Symms and Church, each of whom introduced legislation, with Church's more protective bill finally winning out in the democratic Congress.

"Symms is worse than a zero. He's an anti-environmental zealot."

— Ken Robison

But Symms may have made considerable political headway back home by attacking Church's bill as a blow to the timber and mining industries, and the state economy in general.

These issues, to which Symms also adds taxes and over-regulation, are easily spurred by campaign sloganeering. And Frank Church has had to walk a delicate line in a state that in 1964 gave Barry Goldwater 49 percent of the vote (his best showing out of the Deep South and Arizona), and in 1968 gave George Wallace 13 percent (his best west of Texas).

With the experience of four winning Senate races behind him, the 55-year-old senator has succeeded thus far.

But this year Frank Church is one of five U.S. senators targeted for defeat this year by the National Conservative Political Action Committee in Arlington, Va. The group has spent over \$120,000 against Church thus far, a Ralph Nader report says.

The out-of-state sources of campaign contributions for both Church and Symms are certain to be an election issue. Church is said to be funded by "eastern liberals," while Symms is the delight of "Texas oil boys."

Ken Robison thinks environmental issues in the campaign will probably be limited to wilderness and the Sagebrush Rebellion, on which Church and Symms have squared off.

Back in the Trail Cafe, however, neither wilderness nor the rebellion are on anyone's minds. The issue is taxes and a federal government perceived as bloated. And voters here, while clearly more conservative than the rest of the state, may be a cipher to the state mood.

OTHER RACES

The other noteworthy congressional race is the contest for the seat being vacated by Symms. State Sen. Larry Craig (R) and Glenn Nichols (D) both won narrow primary victories for the right to face each other this November.

Craig is a conservative who follows closely on the philosophical heels of Symms, while Nichols is a slightly more moderate rancher, whose environmental views have not been tested, says Robison. The seat is traditionally Republican and Nichols will have an uphill fight.

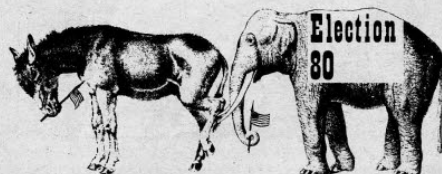
Ballot initiatives in Idaho are presently restricted to gubernatorial elections. But a referendum on this November's ballot, approved by the legislature earlier this year, would amend the constitution to allow initiatives and referenda to be placed on the general elections roster as well.

The Idaho state legislature has to date been heavily conservative and controlled by Republicans. But for the first time in years, Democrats are within a two seat margin of gaining control of the state senate.

A Democratic majority in the Senate would be good news for environmentalists, says Pat Ford, head of the Idaho Conservation League in Boise. "It would mean several new, more environmentally conscious chairmen for important committees," he says, "as well as make our overall reception in the legislature that much better."

The top of legislative agenda for Ford's group next session are a state natural and recreational rivers bill, a beverage container deposit bill, and

(continued on page 12)



6-High Country News — June 13, 1980

ENERGY

In situ uranium project springs leak, but pumps again

by Bob Tkacz and Geoffrey O'Gara

The fate of Wyoming's first commercial-size in situ uranium mine remains uncertain following a Nuclear Regulatory Commission decision giving the operator 90 days to prove it can operate without polluting ground water near Buffalo, Wyo.

Wyoming Minerals Corp. presented a plan to the NRC last month that it claimed would prevent more "excursions" of toxic chemicals from the mine's production zone.

In situ uranium mining involves pumping chemicals down wells into a uranium deposit; there, the chemicals dissolve the mineral in solution. The uranium and the chemical leaching agent — called a "lixiviant" — are then pumped to the surface through other wells. In the case of Wyoming Minerals, the lixiviant was ammonium bicarbonate, a toxic substance that environmentalists fear may reach livestock or human water supplies.

When test wells around the site showed signs of chlorides, uranium and ammonia in April, the NRC briefly shut down the mine. NRC demanded cleanup of the stray chemicals and a new plan for preventing future leaks.

The NRC is allowing the mine to operate again for three months using a different lixiviant, sodium carbonate-bicarbonate, which would be less harmful to groundwater. Sources in the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality say the start-up was allowed before shallow sands in the area were thoroughly cleaned up. Presently, fresh water is being pumped into the contaminated area to clear contaminants. Margie Holbert of DEQ said the test wells that showed chlorides — an indication of leaks — were still within drinking water standards. One test well, she said, indicated low-level uranium and ammonia contamination.

The DEQ could close down the mine on its own, though for the moment Holbert said her agency would "go along with the NRC." But the state may move

independently. Joe Ronan, an attorney for the state, said, "The basis on which (the NRC) permitted (Wyoming Minerals') plan may not have been correct. We're re-evaluating."

Two sources in DEQ, who asked that their names be withheld, said that the decision to allow the mine to continue operating was, like its initial approval in 1978, "political." They said that despite numerous technical questions raised by DEQ, Gov. Ed. Herschler decided to let the operation move ahead.

The NRC has given Wyoming Minerals 90 days to present more sophisticated data proving that a confining layer of impermeable material is present above the ore zone and that the company can control the lixiviant, according to John Linehan, section chief for operating uranium recovery facilities for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

But previous leaks will not be cleaned up right away. "Until we know exactly what the geology is between surface and ore zone, it'll be difficult," said Linehan. "Once we know that, we'll have a pretty good idea of how to clean it up."

Ten to 15 acres were affected by the leaks. If Wyoming Minerals presents data at the end of the 90-day period indicating it can control excursions, it could be permitted to expand its operations to the 50 acres for which it was licensed. Eventually, Wyoming Minerals wants access to even more acreage.

But Ronan is skeptical. "We won't let them (expand)," he said.

Ronan's attitude is reflected among staff at DEQ, but they are less certain that the decision will be theirs. Their technical questions about the Wyoming Minerals operation have been overruled before, said one, when "it looked like (the company) just couldn't control the excursions."

Said another DEQ source: "That area is so messed up it may never get back to normal."

Reed Zars of the Powder River Basin Resource Council, which has publicized



Photo courtesy of Wyoming Minerals Corp.

INJECTION WELLS, like the one above, are used to pump chemical solutions into uranium ore bodies in the in situ mining process. After use, well heads are taken away, the well is plugged, and casings are removed to below ground level.

the pollution dangers of Wyoming Minerals' in situ mining, said his organization may go to court. "If we feel the contamination is continuing and not cleaned up, we would strongly consider legal action," he said. But Zars said it was difficult to know how serious the contamination had been, or would be, because monitoring wells couldn't fully

measure the extent of the problem.

"You don't have any numbers," said Zars, "just these little idiot warning lights like you have in your car."

Bob Tkacz is a freelance writer based in Casper, Wyo.

Incipient in situ

Despite the problems Wyoming has experienced with its first commercial in situ uranium mining operation, a second such operation was approved last week, and a third is expected to gain approval this summer.

Exxon Corp. recently got a go-ahead from the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality for a 70-acre in situ uranium mining operation near its Highland surface mine in the southern Powder River Basin.

Exxon will send the leaching chemical sodium carbonate-bicarbonate 400 feet down to one uranium ore body and 500 feet to another.

Exxon applied for permits 17 months ago, only to have DEQ toughen its requirements midway in the process. Initially, the agency required that the water in the mining area — which is now within federal drinking water standards — would have to be restored only to a quality suitable for livestock. Now DEQ is demanding that the water regain its original drinkability. The water is well below the aquifers presently tapped for domestic and livestock uses.

Exxon will post a bond — which a DEQ spokeswoman called "an insurance policy for the state" — of about \$71,000 for the first year of operation,

in addition to \$16 million in bonds already put up for its Highland operations in general. The bond is held until the area is reclaimed after extraction is completed, sometime in 1991.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has already approved the Exxon project.

In addition, Ogle Petroleum is about six weeks away from DEQ approval for a 56-acre in situ uranium project in the Bison Basin in Fremont County.

The Ogle operation, according to DEQ's Ed Francis, will use sodium bicarbonate as a leaching agent, or, perhaps, some more advanced technique. While sodium solutions are considered fairly safe environmentally, experts say more benign solutions are being researched.

Francis said the process of publishing Ogle's mine plans and making some adjustments will take about six weeks. Unless objections to the operation are raised during that time, DEQ will approve the plan and Ogle will begin mining.

According to DEQ's Becky Mathison, the two new operations will bring total in situ uranium mining in the state to three commercial operations and 14 smaller research and development operations.



THREE COMMERCIAL in situ uranium projects are operating, approved to operate, or nearing approval in Wyoming.

Hot Line



LOTS LURED TO LOTTERY. While U.S. Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus was shutting down the federal non-competitive lottery for oil and gas leases, managers of state lands in Wyoming were realizing a windfall. Andrus complained that many of the filings for federal leases were fraudulent — after some indictments and a change in regulations, he reopened the lottery. But during the shutdown, Wyoming's state lottery suddenly became very popular. Lottery applications for oil and gas leases on state lands doubled to about 60,000 a month; at \$15 per filing, that could earn the state about \$12 million this year. Middleman companies have been running ads all over the country offering, for \$30, to assist folks in making an "overnight fortune" on state leases. What the ads don't say is that of the 60,000 entrants in the lottery, only 25 or so will win. Even Las Vegas offers better odds than that.

POWER LINE ZIGZAG. The huge power lines planned to ship juice from Colstrip, Mont., to the Northwest are only the beginning, according to Ted Doney, Montana's director of the Department of Natural Resources and

Conservation. Doney, addressing a meeting of the Clark Fork Basin Protective Association, said projections of future power corridors across the state "scare us to death." A 1977 study by the Bonneville Power Authority (the federal utility serving much of the Northwest) indicated a need for four new power corridors from Montana west by the year 2020, even if the region's growth rate is conservative. Each of those corridors, according to Doney, would contain up to six double-circuit 500-kilovolt lines, or three 1,200 kilovolt lines or three coal slurry lines.

NEW OIL FIND. Amoco Production Company, the busiest oil-driller in the Rocky Mountain Overthrust Belt, reported recently a new find of natural gas near the Whitney Canyon field in southwest Wyoming. The find, on land owned by Champlin Petroleum Co., a Union Pacific Railroad subsidiary, has increased speculation that a large reservoir of natural gas exists between Amoco's Whitney Canyon field and Chevron, Inc.'s discoveries in the Carter Creek area north of Evanston.

CONSERVATION KILLER. A well-insulated, airtight house may shave dollars off an electric bill during the winter — but it may also shave years off your life, according to experts at the federal Environmental Protection Agency. Conserving energy often means poor ventilation; that, in turn, can mean fumes from cigarettes, furniture polish, hair spray resin and other



LURGI PROCESS coal gasification is the only commercial-level synthetic fuel process — now in use at two South African plants (one is pictured above). The United States drive toward synthetic fuels is moving from the talking stage to the building stage, or, at least, the spending stage. The \$20 billion synthetic fuels corporation legislation will be on the President's desk by next month, according to sources in Congress, where a conference agreement now awaits final approval. And the Department of Energy, which is offering private industry \$200 million in grants for feasibility studies on synthetic and alternative fuel plants, reports that it has received 1,000 applications.

pollutants stay in the air. In addition an EPA expert told the *Newhouse News Service* that radon, a radioactive gas often given off by building materials, is more apt to find its way to a homeowner's lungs if it builds up in a

poorly-ventilated home. Federal officials are suggesting heat exchangers — which hold indoor heat and still bring in fresh air — as a way to make well-caulked, well-insulated homes as healthy as they are comfortable.

Idaho's future in hot (underground) water

by Glenn Oakley

Idaho's energy future may be in hot water — literally. The proof lies in several projects:

— This month the state plans to drill a test well that could lead to the entire capitol mall complex being heated by geothermal water.

— The mountain town of Stanley and its largest business — the Stan Harrah Co. — are considering tapping a nearby hot springs to provide heat at a savings of at least \$78,796 a year.

— The Department of Energy is experimenting with geothermal electrical production at its Raft River site near Malta.

— Thirty to 40 homes west of Twin Falls in the Banbury Hot Springs region get their space heat from the ground, and many have naturally heated swimming pools.

Idaho is hot. From the dense, mountainous forest of the northern panhandle to the high desert of Owyhee County bordering Nevada, warm springs bubble to the surface.

But underground heat is unpredictable. Its location, temperature, and association with water that can be tapped is not uniform. State and federal government agencies have taken the lead in the complex task of evaluating Idaho's potential for generating geothermal electricity, space heat, industrial process heat and even heat for gasohol production.

The information being turned up by the various agencies gives prospective drillers an idea of where to drill and an idea of what temperatures may be hit. But there is no guarantee of hitting water — hot or otherwise.

An Idaho Department of Water Resources study of the Nampa-Caldwell

area, for example, identified four aquifers that may hold hot water. The shallowest aquifer, at 400 to 1,000 feet below the surface, has a suspected temperature of 68 to 86 degrees F. The deepest is more than a mile underground — 6,000 to 7,000 feet — and may have water 266 to 302 degrees F.

But the subsurface geology is complex, geologists point out. Much of the project's time and money has been spent to "rent" existing data owned by the oil companies that have drilled test holes for oil and gas. That data has enabled government-funded geophysicists to make highly educated guesses about what is down there. But the proof is in the drilling.

INHIBITING PROBLEMS

Few lending institutions are willing to finance such risky drilling, however. Another problem is that only two banks, the Bank of America and the Bank of Montreal, "have employees who even understand what they are being asked to fund," according to Senate Energy Committee staff member Lee Wallace.

Two pieces of legislation introduced by Sen. Frank Church (D) should "answer a lot of the inhibiting problems that are slowing geothermal development down," Wallace says.

One bill, S. 1388, is designed to increase geothermal leasing acreage limits on federal land and encourage development, Wallace says.

Another Church-sponsored bill, to set up a loan guarantee program, is tied up in the national synthetic fuels legislation, Wallace said.

One of the hottest geothermal areas in Idaho is the Island Park area west of Yellowstone Park. The largely undeveloped, forested, mountainous area

that includes portions of Montana and Wyoming is home to 51 species of wildlife that are of "special concern" to U.S. Department of Interior and the National Audubon Society.

In addition, the relationship of the geysers in Yellowstone Park to the geothermal resource in Island Park is not understood, but, according to the Island Park environmental impact statement, "commercial geothermal development in other areas of the world has had profound effects on thermal basins."

The EIS notes that "Of the 10 major geyser areas in the world, Yellowstone ranks first. In the last three decades seven of these 10 areas have been destroyed or damaged by geothermal exploration or development."

It is possible geothermal development would have no effect on the Yellowstone geyser system. But the EIS does list a number of other unavoidable impacts that would accompany such development. Much of the disturbance would result from the extensive pipeline and transmission line network associated with geothermal electrical production.

- soil loss
- stream turbidity and possible chemical spills into streams
- loss of wildlife habitat
- chemical or hot water spills that could harm fisheries
- loss of visual esthetics
- loss of recreation
- increase in noise
- release of noxious and odoriferous gases.

The use of hot water for space heating presents fewer problems. Nevertheless, the city of Boise must prepare an environmental impact statement before developing the geothermal resource

believed to lie beneath the city, according to a Department of Energy official.

Disposal of the geothermal water is expected to be Boise's biggest worry. Like most geothermal water in Idaho, the capitol's is likely to be high in fluoride. A little fluoride helps fight tooth decay. But at high levels the element can cause mottling of the teeth, according to Dr. Fritz Dixon of the state Department of Health.

The geologists and planners are pretty sure the Boise aquifer exists and is hot enough for heating. What they do not know is production capacity of the aquifer — the number of gallons per minute it can deliver. The test well is expected to provide the missing information.

The initial cost of drilling the commercial well and retrofitting the capitol mall buildings is \$499,000, according to William Eastlake of the Idaho Office of Energy. Of that, \$300,000 is for the well and piping, for which the federal government is willing to pick up 75 percent of the tab. Eastlake said the remaining \$190,000 for retrofitting the buildings has already been appropriated by the legislature.

Once the system is installed, the only cost is for pumping and maintenance.

The state spends \$320,000 a year to heat the capitol complex with natural gas, Eastlake says. By comparison, the pumping costs for geothermal would run only \$75,000 a year, he said, resulting in a savings to the state of \$245,000 a year.

In the meantime, a number of Bruneau-Grandview area farmers continue to irrigate their fields with 184 degree F. water.

Glenn Oakley is a free-lance writer and a photographer for the *News-Tribune* in Nampa, Idaho.

WESTERN PEREGRINE REVIVAL AHEAD

by Dave Hall

SALT LAKE CITY — Just north of here on the state's Ogden Bay Waterfowl Refuge, a wooden tower stands among mudflats, potholes and islands of marsh grass. Unimpressive in itself, the tower is the key to an ambitious attempt to reintroduce peregrine falcons to northern Utah.

The project's goal sounds simple: Establish a breeding population in an area that once had many of these dazzling birds of prey and now has none. But officials of the Peregrine Fund in Fort Collins and Utah's Division of Wildlife Resources, sponsors of the project, say this will take two or three years, probably more.

They also admit a little luck will be required. For the first time in a Western state, young peregrines have been reared on an artificial tower in sight of ancestral cliffs, rather than on the cliffs, as has been done in Colorado and South Dakota. And once they've fledged, young peregrines still face high natural mortality — near 60 percent in some seasons. So officials are pleased that four of the five birds bred in captivity and released last summer are still roaming northern Utah. The fifth died of unknown causes.

In a few years, if all goes well, these birds will reach breeding age and return to historic nest sites on the Wasatch Range to the east. Additional birds released this summer and later will increase the chances of successful nesting.

Falco peregrinus is a cosmopolitan bird. It breeds on every continent but Antarctica, and 18 subspecies are found throughout the world. Falconry was popular with the ancient Chinese, Egyptians and Persians, and the sport spread to Europe, where it was the pastime of noblemen. In North America three subspecies exist — the Arctic peregrine in Alaska, Peale's subspecies in the Pacific Northwest and the American race, or **anatum**, elsewhere. Only Peale's peregrine has escaped the endangered species list.

Called the duck hawk by some early falconers and naturalists because it can take waterfowl on the wing, the peregrine favors smaller avian prey such as shorebirds, flickers, doves and meadowlarks. And occasionally peregrines feed on frogs, bats or rodents.

The marshes of the Great Salt Lake, with their abundant prey, are but a few miles from the nesting cliffs of the Wasatch — good reason for the northern Utah reintroduction. These craggy slopes bear silent testimony to a time when peregrines were better off. Thousands of years ago, the Pleistocene shores of Lake Bonneville twisted through much of present-day northern Utah and southern Idaho. Sometime during this period, peregrines arrived and found the high cliffs and abundant bird life ideal.

As Lake Bonneville rose and fell with changing climates, eventually drying to leave the Great Salt Lake, peregrine populations responded. In warmer and drier periods, when shorebirds such as willets and avocets were less plentiful,

peregrine numbers dipped. In wetter times, marshes spread, and peregrines flourished. This balance continued, mostly unaltered, into the 20th century.

The decline of these aerial gymnasts during this century, however, is an embarrassing tale for Utah, as it is for other states. Never abundant, peregrines were popular among falconers and egg collectors, and indiscriminate shooting was not uncommon. Drier weather probably contributed to the decline during the last several decades, but if there were hopes of maintaining a stable population by the 1950s, the accumulating effects of pesticide contamination squelched them. Except for a few stragglers, the Utah population was gone by 1960.

Of 22 known nest sites in northern Utah, none are active today. There are about 20 more sites scattered around the state, a few of which are occupied, their locations known to only a handful of biologists.

Other Western states have fared no better. State nongame biologists report that of about 100 known nest sites in Nevada, Idaho, Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota and Montana, only 12 are active today. Most birds seen in these states are either migrants or wintering birds.

Peregrine reintroductions began in the East, which had lost all of its nesting pairs by the mid-1960s. By that time, researchers were blaming pesticides, which thinned peregrine's egg shells, for the species' lack of reproductive success. And outside the scientific community, with the help of Rachel Carson's **Silent Spring**, the public was also learning the dangers of indiscriminate pesticide use.

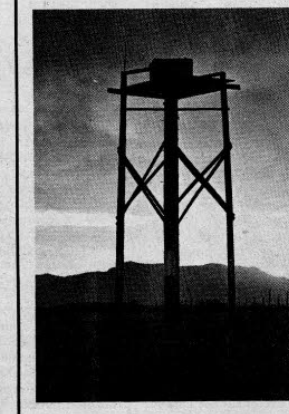
In response to the peregrine decline, the "hawk barn" at New York's Cornell University began breeding birds in captivity in 1970. After extensive research, the first birds were hatched in 1973. Trial reintroductions followed the next year, with large-scale releases beginning in 1975.

In the West, the Fort Collins branch of the Peregrine Fund hopes to hatch more than 100 birds in the next few years for reintroduction efforts in cooperation with state and federal agencies.

Many people are watching the Utah project. In the past the rugged Wasatch Mountains have had one of the highest peregrine concentrations in the West. The Peregrine Fund and the Division of Wildlife Resources plan to "saturate" northern Utah with young birds to increase the chances of a mature pair returning to breed later. They will place four to six birds atop the Ogden Bay tower again this summer and have located two other release sites nearby. Each will receive four or five young peregrines in July.

Additional releases are possible in Idaho and Wyoming this year. And with other states following later, there is hope yet that flourishing peregrine populations will return to the West.

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Dave Hall is a free-lance writer in Salt Lake City.



CLOCKWISE, FROM LEFT: The Ogden Bay tower. The hands on the posts are predator guards. Photo by Jim Weis, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources; Immature peregrine, photo by Joe Keller, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Photo by Jim Weis, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources; Photo courtesy of the Peregrine Fund.

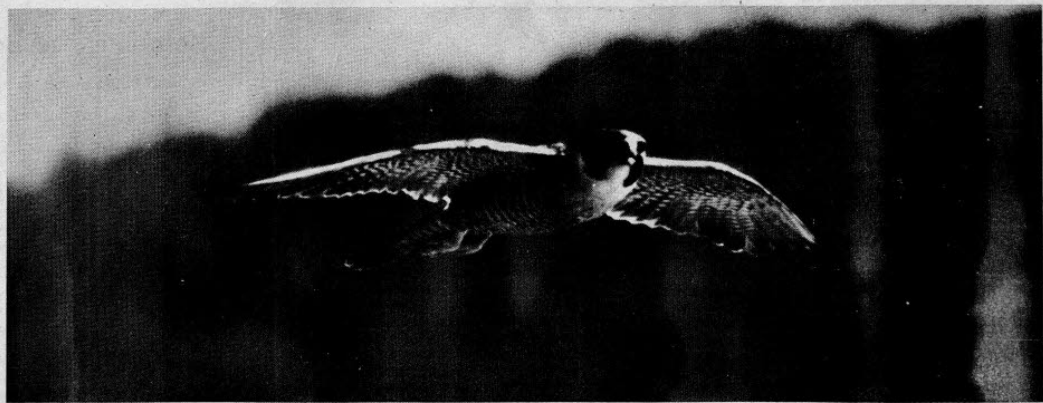
Utah builds a halfway house

AHEAD?



The disappearance of these aerial gymnasts is an embarrassing tale. But now researchers think they know how to bring them back.

CLOCKWISE, FROM LEFT: The ten Bay tower. The bands on the birds are predator guards. Photo by Jim Weis, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources; Immature peregrine, photo by Joe Keller, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Photo by Jim Weis, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources; Photo courtesy of the Peregrine Fund.



Halfway house for city-bred falcons

The Jackson Hole Airport: Taking off or taken out?

by Geoffrey O'Gara

A move to untangle the various regulators with an interest in Wyoming's Jackson Hole Airport is said to be afoot in Washington, D.C.

The regional office of the Federal Aviation Administration has recommended in a draft environmental statement that jet service be allowed at the airport, which is now served by Frontier Airlines propeller planes.

The National Park Service has opposed jet service — the airport lies within Grand Teton National Park — and is writing a final version of a noise abatement plan that would block commercial jet traffic.

The Council on Environmental Quality, according to sources in the Park Service, is trying to bring the FAA and the Park Service together to form a unified federal front.

They would then face the Jackson Hole Airport Board, which recently began implementing its own noise abatement plan — which does not include the Park Service provisions banning the jets, setting curfews, and limiting use of the airspace over the park.

But these are only a few of the battles in the aerial war over the Jackson airport's future.

REDRAWING BOUNDARIES

Sen. Alan Simpson (R-Wyo.) has filed legislation that would redraw the park's boundaries to skirt the airport, thus removing Park Service jurisdiction.

Laurence Rockefeller, whose family gave 33,000 acres — including airport land — to the park in the 1930s, has

said that if Simpson succeeds the Rockefellers will enforce a provision in the park's deed that allows the family to take their land back if it ever ceases to be part of the park.

Not to be outdone, Frontier Airlines announced that it, too, would take its goods and leave: If jet service is not allowed by 1983, Frontier will discontinue its Jackson service, a Frontier vice-president told the **Jackson Hole Guide**.

Hovering in the wings are lawsuits: The airport board may sue the Park Service over park officials' refusal to allow more hangar and parking space at the airport. And the Sierra Club has prepared a suit against the Federal Aviation Administration and the Park Service to be filed if jets are allowed to fly in this summer.

Assistant Park Superintendent Jack Neckels says that the uncertain jurisdictions and high environmental and economic stakes involved in decisions about the airport will probably land the issue in the courts.

MOVE THE AIRPORT?

The airport issue exploded last year when Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus announced that he would allow no commercial jets within the park and said the airport should be relocated outside Grand Teton by 1995.

Local merchants and the Jackson Hole Airport Board argued that such a move would ruin the local economy. Disputes erupted over whether the Boeing 737s would make more noise than the presently-used Convair 580s. Some sound experts testified that it was the small sightseeing planes, not the commercial fliers, that had the most serious visual and aural impact on the park.

Environmentalists, led by Bill Hocker of the Sierra Club and Howie Wolke of Friends of the Earth, say that jet service would give the airport an even more secure foothold in the park

Trackings

followups on previous stories

Oil probe OK

(see HCN 3-21-80 for previous story)
No one expected that the U.S. Forest Service would block all oil and gas activities in the rugged Palisades area southwest of Jackson, Wyo. But conservationists had envisioned something much more limited than the plan outlined in the agency's June 5 environmental assessment.

The Palisades is one of Idaho conservationists' top priorities for wilderness designation. It is also in the Overthrust Belt, an area that industry says has high oil and gas potential.

For these reasons, and because it is the first "further planning" area in the agency's Intermountain Region to be considered for new oil and gas leasing, the Palisades has drawn considerable attention. The "further planning" status assigned to the area in the latest roadless area review puts it in limbo: it has wilderness potential, but its oil and gas potential is unknown. A decision about wilderness status is still pending.

Meanwhile, the Forest Service has decided that oil and gas leasing will proceed on the 60 percent of the Palisades that is not already leased. On 49 percent a "no surface occupancy" stipulation will be attached to each lease. On the remaining 11 percent, surface activities will be allowed.

The surface activity ban is not absolute, however. "I prefer the term 'conditional no surface occupancy,'" said Bill Johnson, regional minerals director with the Forest Service in Ogden, Utah, to the Associated Press. "Once the operator (oil company) presents his operating plan, the whole issue is looked at on a site-specific basis."

Oil companies may not be pleased with the idea of any surface restrictions, but Bruce Hamilton of the Sierra Club says the decision is akin to "handing the area over to the oil companies." Hamilton had hoped that only a limited number of sites on the periphery of the Palisades would be leased to gather the necessary information about the area's oil and gas potential.

Copies of the Palisades environmental assessment are available at Forest Service offices in St. Anthony, Idaho, and Jackson, Wyo. The public is allowed 30 days to comment and 45 days to appeal the decision.

Bombing the Bob

(see HCN 5-2-80 for previous story)

The sides are lining up for a showdown in a landmark wilderness-versus-energy controversy on the Overthrust Belt in Montana.

The oil and gas exploration firm, Consolidated Georex Geophysics, hasn't given up its plan to run seismic lines through three Montana wildernesses, despite an initial rejection from the U.S. Forest Service.

In mid-June CCG filed a notice of intent to appeal Northern Regional Forester Tom Coston's decision to ignore its request for a prospecting permit. The firm, which would need to detonate 270,000 pounds of explosives in the Bob Marshall, Great Bear and Scapegoat wildernesses to carry out its proposal, has until July 2 to file its statement of reasons.

The Mountain States Legal Foundation and the Rocky Mountain Oil and Gas Association have already asked to intervene on the side of CCG. At least one environmentalist group, the Bob Marshall Alliance, plans to intervene on behalf of the Forest Service.

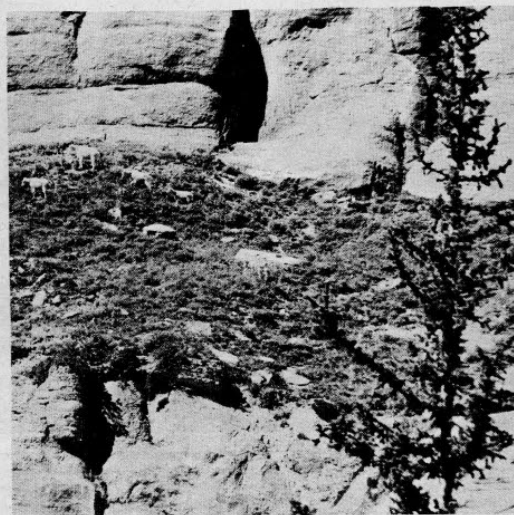


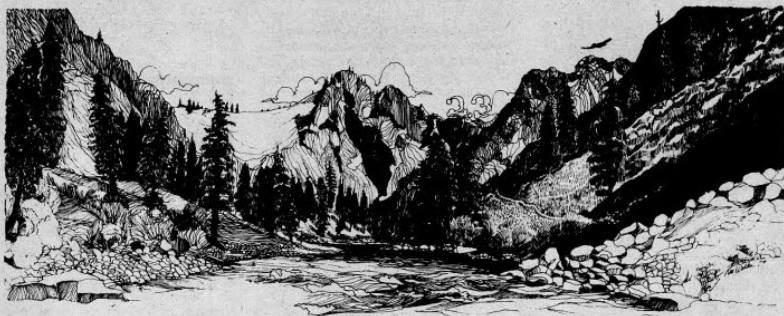
Photo copyright 1980 by Ann and Myron Sutton

THE BOB MARSHALL wilderness, once considered untouchable by environmentalists, is the proposed site of seismic testing by a persistent Colorado firm in search of oil and gas.

— MM

Western Roundup

Idaho's River-of-No-Return gets congressional endorsement



Drawing by Ron Walker
THE LARGEST WILDERNESS area in the lower-48, known as the River-of-No-Return, has been approved by congressional conferees. With only one weakening provision, the final agreement designating the 2.3 million acre wild area is the strongest legislation conservationists had hoped for.

Hurdling its last major legislative obstacle and effectively ending a decade-old conservation campaign, a bill creating a 2.3 million acre River-of-No-Return wilderness area in central Idaho has been approved by congressional conferees.

A political coup for Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho), who had been fighting the rest of the Idaho delegation on the issue, the final legislation closely resembles the Senate-passed version of the bill, which was backed by conservationists.

The controversial 55,000 acres on the Clear Creek drainage, believed to contain cobalt deposits, were included in the wilderness boundaries.

However, some two-thirds of the Clear Creek area is classified a "special management area," and if economic deposits of cobalt are found, deep mining will be allowed.

"It's a very unpleasant concept," says Tim Mahoney, a Sierra Club lobbyist in Washington, D.C. "But our belief is that it's a one shot deal" and won't set a precedent for other wilderness legislation and management.

Under the conference report, the area's prized bighorn sheep population is to be protected regardless of any mining activity. "If they do find cobalt and mining occurs, one could guess that the Forest Service will regulate it more carefully than in non-wilderness

areas," says Mahoney.

While conservationists admit the Clear Creek issue was a potentially serious concession, they were pleased that the Senate version was amended to ban dredge mining and dam construction on 53 miles of the North Fork and main Salmon rivers that were not included in the Wild and Scenic River designation that another 125 miles of the Salmon River received.

"Senator Church should be congratulated," said Jackie Maughan of Pocatello, who, with her husband Ralph, has been working for the bill's passage for nearly a decade. Dennis Baird of Moscow agreed. "It looks good," he said.

Voting against the report were Sen. James McClure and Rep. Steve Symms, both Republicans from Idaho.

"The bill is still unbalanced," said Symms' aide on natural resource issues, Bill Fay, "mainly because there was no statutory release included." (Release language, which opens non-designated wilderness areas to resource development, was included only in the committee report, a generally weaker legislative directive.)

Symms had unsuccessfully pushed his own version of a wilderness bill, which contained fewer acres, excluded the Clear Creek area, and included statutory release. Fay says the congressman is still weighing his options, which include contesting the conference report when it is voted on by each house later this month.

Most observers believe he would not have the votes for a successful floor fight, however, and that final passage and presidential approval are certain.

Rising Lake Powell floods 'safe' canyon

They said it wouldn't happen, but the rising waters of Lake Powell have flooded one of the most popular hiking areas in Glen Canyon, the *Deseret News* reports.

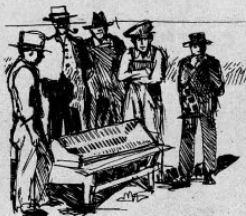
A half-mile stretch at the mouth of Coyote Gulch has been inundated by the growing reservoir, which is now 3,693 feet above sea level.

Adorned by hanging gardens, Coyote Gulch is an awesome sandstone-walled canyon that serves as a portal to many other high-quality backpacking areas. When Powell reaches its projected

3,700-foot level, the canyon area will be under 10 feet of water.

Official maps published by two federal agencies, however, show the Gulch Canyon area above the highest projected water level. Visitors to the area this month were shocked to find the canyon partly submerged.

Spokesmen for the Water and Power Resources Service admit their maps are incorrect, and that they've known it for some time. Saving the remainder of Coyote Gulch would cost the government two percent of Glen Canyon Dam's power revenue.



Wyo. farm labor supply shrinks

The farm labor supply in Wyoming has dropped 20 percent from last year's levels, with most of the decrease in fewer family members working on farms and ranches, a study by the Wyoming Crop and Livestock Reporting Service shows.

The study did not attempt to reason why, but evidence shows the drop is probably due to farming's long hours (averaging 54.4 a week) and low pay (averaging \$3.19 an hour) — remuneration that cannot compete with the energy industry pay scales.

Farmers in Colorado recently cited shriveling farm labor supplies as one of their most critical obstacles to staying in business.

Wild burros given 60-day notice

The National Park Service, having decided to remove the remaining wild burros from the Grand Canyon, has set a 60-day time limit on a plan to live-capture the animals.

If that program fails to remove the some 350 burros, Park Service officials will shoot the animals — an action that has caused extensive public concern.

The plan to follow up the live removal with shooting, if necessary, resulted from a 2½ year agency study during which, officials say, alternatives and public involvement were considered.

Alaska bill up in Senate July 21

The congressional stage is set for another battle on the Alaska wild lands legislation. On July 21, the full Senate is scheduled to consider the bill drafted last November by the Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

The Alaska Coalition, representing conservationists, complains that the bill would allow commercial development in wild areas now protected under executive actions.

The coalition is supporting both a

series of amendments to the committee version, and an alternative known as the Tsongas-Roth Substitute.

Coming so late in the session, there is some doubt that the Senate, and subsequently the conferees, will have time to deal with the legislation. If they do not, the strongly preservation-oriented bill passed by the House last session would be voided and the Alaska lands campaign would start over at ground zero — a prospect few conservationists involved would relish.

Denver dump found unsuitable

The Lowry landfill near Denver should not be used to store hazardous wastes, a governor's task force has recommended.

Water contamination, including dissolved nitrates and sodium and chloride concentrations, has increased over levels observed in 1976, the panel found. It recommended moving the wastes to the eastern Colorado plains or another site with "proper geology."

12-High Country News — June 13, 1980

Symms vs. . .

(continued from page 5)
new state energy conservation initiatives.

1982

Future scenarios for Idaho electoral politics portend big changes. Former governor and now Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus is resigning his post and returning to the state early next year.

Still a popular figure despite his pro-environment stands, Andrus may decide to run for governor if two-term incumbent John Evans (D) decides not to seek reelection (a decision made more likely by the recent defeat of two-term Governor Thomas Judge in Mont., largely on the basis of general opposition to three-term governorships.) Andrus may also opt for a challenge to Sen. James McClure's seat in 1982.

If Steve Symms loses his bid this year, he will certainly be scouting around for a 1982 contest, which could include a shot at the governorship. McClure's seat, or a recapture of his own.



Arizona's Udall under fire

Morris Udall, the chairman of the House Interior Committee and long-time environmental champion, is facing the toughest reelection campaign of his career.

The 58-year-old Democratic congressman, who has represented Tucson and the rest of Arizona's 2nd District for almost 20 years, is being challenged by Republican Richard Huff, a real estate developer.

Udall's seat has become increasingly insecure — he barely won his 1978 reelection bid, with only 54 percent of the vote against a weak opponent — and Huff is running hard.

Huff reportedly has pledged \$150,000 of his own bankroll to the campaign and has made one fundraising trip to Alaska, where development interests,

angry at Udall's key role in the Alaska wild lands legislation, are eager to see the congressman defeated.

Udall is also being targeted by national conservative groups, including the National Conservative Political Action Committee and the anti-abortion movement.

"Congressman Udall is a hero to a lot of people," says Marion Edey of the League of Conservation Voters in Washington, D.C. Edey's group has donated \$10,000 to Udall's campaign, the maximum allowed under the guidelines governing political action committees.

Udall's credentials with the environmental community have been established by his leading role in the Alaska wild lands preservation fight, his attempt to keep the Energy Mobilization Board accountable to environmental laws, and his defense of the strip mine reclamation act, which he shepherded through the last Congress.

Udall's only major break with environmentalists has been his support for the Central Arizona Project.

If Udall should lose, the Interior chairmanship will probably go to second-ranking Phillip Burton (D-Calif.), an equally strong environmental defender.

Montana results

To the surprise of the prognosticators, Lt. Gov. Ted Schwinden clobbered Gov. Tom Judge in the Montana Democratic primary, setting up a race in November between Schwinden and Billings attorney Jack Ramirez.

Schwinden told the *Billings Gazette* that he "out-peopled" Judge, and there were few other explanations offered. Judge and Schwinden disagreed on few issues during the campaign — their main disagreement was over who would be the better administrator. Schwinden's margin was impressive: 66,462 to 55,820.

But some observers wonder if Schwinden's primary win might pave the way for Montana's first Republican

governor in 12 years. Ramirez is a moderate, a good campaigner, and an advocate of controlling government growth, development of the state's coal resources, and tax reductions generally. Both candidates support the state's 30 percent coal severance tax.

As in the primary race, Schwinden is showing a reluctance to pinpoint differences with Ramirez on environmental issues, fearing, in his son's words, that "(the Republican) campaign will probably try to push us more to the left — into the environmental corner." That, they apparently feel, is a dangerous corner to be in.

In other races, Rep. Pat Williams (D) swept to one of the biggest primary victory margins in the state's history, defeating state Rep. Bill Hand, of Dillon, who attacked Williams' support of

legislation that would protect wilderness areas such as West Big Hole and Rattlesnake.

Williams will face Jack MacDonald, a former state legislator who spent only \$157 in the Republican primary to beat two opponents. MacDonald says he will continue the attack on Williams' wilderness stands. MacDonald also supports the \$300 million Libby re-regulating dam project, which Williams has attacked as "pork barrel."

In Montana's eastern congressional district, Rep. Ron Marlenee (R) won re-nomination on the Republican ticket, and will face Democratic winner Tom Monahan, a former Public Service Commissioner, in the fall.

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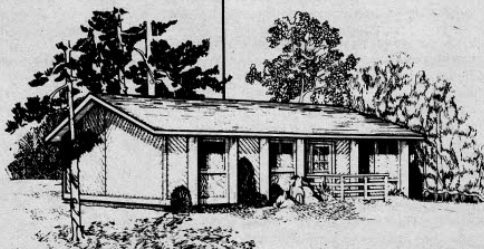
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POSITION OPEN: Colorado's statewide conservation coalition wants an executive director. Responsibilities include administration, fundraising and supervision of staff on wilderness, mining, air and water issues. Requirements include knowledge of issues, administration and supervision experience, organizing skills and public relations ability. Position starts Sept. 1 at \$12,000 plus benefits. Send resume by July 7 to Colorado Open Space Council, c/o Clint Jones, 317 S. Ogden, Denver, CO 80209.

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Bulletin Board



AIMS BEYOND DOLLARS

Club 20, a powerful prodevelopment lobbying organization, doesn't represent everybody in western Colorado, according to the founders of the Western Slope Public Interest Congress. The new group was formed in Montrose, Colo., at the end of May to take a non-business-oriented look at local air and water quality, full employment, energy development and conservation, community self-determination, appropriate resource utilization, public land management, agricultural land conversion, alternative transportation and renewable resources. "We are advocating things that can't be equated to dollar signs," said Wes Light, a member from Crested Butte, Colo.

FILMING WILDLIFE

The University of Montana is sponsoring a fourth annual International Wildlife Film Festival. The entry deadline is March 14, 1981, with the winning films shown to the public in April. Contact: Festival, Wildlife Biology Program, University of Montana, Missoula 59812.

CONSERVATION ECONOMICS

Energy conservation is economical, a new study by the Colorado Coalition for Full Employment concluded. **Conservation Has Startling Economic Benefits and Energy Savings** is available for \$1.00 from the coalition, 2239 East Colfax Ave., Denver 80206.

POPULAR ECONOMICS

A half day's work on a farm plus \$75.00 will buy you five days and evenings of discussion on alternative economics. The seminar is being conducted by the Denver-based Committee for Popular Economics and is designed for politically active people in the Rockies interested in applying economics to such issues as energy, labor, neighborhoods, and the environment. The seminar date is August 17-23; application deadline June 20. Write the committee, c/o SCS, Inc., 1459 Ogden St., Denver 80218, or call (303) 832-3525.

FOR THE DIGGING

The Bureau of Land Management in Utah is offering trees and shrubs at low fees to the public. Prices vary from \$1 to \$40 for aspens, junipers,Joshuas and cacti, and are available from several BLM offices throughout the state. You have to dig your own hole, though.

BOOMTOWN TALK

The pressures of energy development on rural communities is the subject of a conference sponsored by the Western Organization of Resource Councils. The date is June 21-22 at Dickinson State College. Contact the council at P.O. Box 254, Dickinson, N.D. 58601 or call (701) 227-1851.

MANAGING PESTS

Workshops on integrated pest management are being offered at no cost by the Technical Assistance Center of the John Muir Institute. The Center, with funds from the Environmental Protection Agency, will visit your area to help you analyze current pest management practices, alternative tactics, ways to cut operating and reduce pesticide use. Contact: TAC, P.O. Box 7162, Berkeley, Calif. 94706.

SOLAR FOR CITIES

Using solar and other renewable energy systems in urban areas is the theme of a Sept. 3-5 conference in Seattle, Wash. Sponsored in part by the Solar Energy Research Institute in Golden, Colo., the conference topics include: funding local projects, land use planning, ordinances, the rental market, and impact analysis. Contact the Conference Group at SERI, 1617 Cole Blvd., Golden, Colo. 80401.

GOING BANANAS

How multi-national corporations have affected the agricultural economy and the lives of the Filipino people is the subject of a new slideshow by Earthwork. **Agribusiness Goes Bananas**, with 140 slides, an 18-minute narration and a complete printed script is based on the work of two Filipino organizers working to help local citizens regain control over their land. The show costs \$65 and is available from Earthwork, 3410 19th St., San Francisco 94110.

OFF THE GRID

John Lorenzen has run his Woodward, Iowa, farm since the 1920s without utility energy by using wind generators. This and some 149 other success stories are chronicled in **Shining Examples**, a new resource book on renewable energy projects. Contact: SUNDRIES, Center for Renewable Resources, 1001 Connecticut Ave., NW, 5th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20006. The cost is \$6.95 plus 15 percent for handling.



NEW WAVE AGRICULTURE

Permaculture Two, a book featuring agricultural systems designed for arid climates, is now available for purchase. The author, Bill Mollison, says the book is based on a philosophy of working with, rather than against nature, and of looking at plants and animals in "all their functions, rather than treating any area as a single-product system." There are chapters on soil improvement, difficult climates, structures, poultry design and waterworks. The book costs \$10.95 and is available from the International Tree Crops Institute U.S.A., P.O. Box 888-A, Winters, Calif. 95694.

MORE SOLAR READING

The Peoples' Solar Sourcebook has over 350 pages of ads for solar equipment, conservation devices and alternate energy hardware. All for \$5.00, the 1980 edition is now available from Solar Usage Now, Inc., Department H-1, 450 Triffin Street, Bascom, Ohio 44809.

BLASTING SAFELY

The Bureau of Mines has new recommendations for improving blasting practices at surface mines to better protect workers. The report is available for viewing at agency offices in Denver, Reno, Nev., Salt Lake City, and Spokane, Wash. Or it may be purchased for \$11 from: National Technical Information Service, 5285 Port Royal Rd., Springfield, Va. 22161. The report is called, "Evaluation of Surface Mining Blasting Procedures."

UTAH GOV TALKS LANDS

To hear Utah Governor Scott Matheson's views on management of federal lands in the West, attend the BLM's National Public Lands Advisory Council's meeting June 26 and 27 in Salt Lake City. Open to the public, the meeting will also include discussions of the MX missile system, BLM wilderness review, storage of hazardous wastes, protection of cultural and historic values, and the agency's budget. Contact: Jack Reed, BLM, 136 East South Temple St., Salt Lake City 84111; call (801) 524-4227.

WANTED: CONCESSIONAIRE

Want to run a hotel in Yellowstone National Park? The park service is looking for a single operator to manage all lodging, food service and related visitor facilities in the park. To size up the proposition, visits can be arranged by contacting John Burchill, Chief of Concessions Management, P.O. Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, Wyo. 82190; (307) 344-7381.

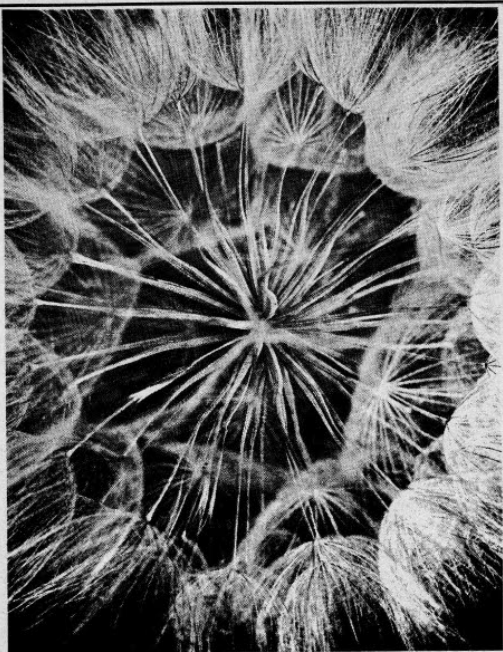


Photo by David Sumner

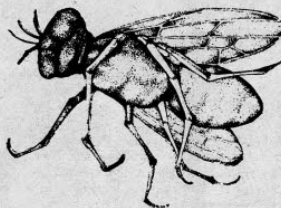
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...along with game, fish, timber, coal, oil, gas, hot springs, minerals, wind and sun. Should we develop these gifts? If so, how can we preserve the natural character of the West? These are questions that the HCN Research Fund pursues.

The fund pays the travel and phone bills for such staff-written investigations as the Bear Lake development story. The fund also makes possible articles by freelancers. This issue, it's provided you with stories on selling Western coal to foreign markets and the resettlement of peregrines in Utah.

Make an investment in the future of the West's natural resources. Send your tax-deductible contribution to the HCN Research Fund.

Make checks payable to the Wyoming Environmental Institute—HCNRF, and mail to WEI, Box 2497, Jackson WY 83001.



PASSIVE COMPETITION

A passive solar design competition is being sponsored by the International Solar Energy Society and will be held during the Fifth National Passive Solar Conference at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Oct. 19-26. The registration deadline for the contest is July 31. Contact: Awards Competition, Box 778, Brattleboro, Vermont 05301.

In situ operation leaks chemicals; 'politics' pollutes the situation

For most of us energy from uranium is a little like steak — we eat it, but we'd rather not watch the steer being killed.

That attitude may make in situ uranium mining more palatable to a public afraid of big, dusty open pit mines: in situ involves no digging, few workers, and no radioactive dust around the site. You inject a chemical solution into one well, it leaches the uranium, and you retrieve it through another well.

No mess, no fuss.

But in the southern Powder River Basin, Wyoming's first commercial-scale in situ uranium mine has made a mess. Its toxic leaching agent, along with traces of uranium, has leaked into underground aquifers above the uranium ore bodies. And it may cause a fuss among finger-pointing regulators.

After a brief shutdown in April, the operation is going again, using a less toxic leaching agent. The federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission let Wyoming Minerals Corp. start up again without first cleaning up the aquifers it dirtied.

Meanwhile, the state Department of Environmental Quality sits on its hands and bites its tongue. Sources within the department say there are serious technical questions about the environmental dangers of the project. They say those questions have been shoved aside for a "political-type decision."

An aide to Gov. Ed Herschler (D) denies any political tampering. At most, he says, the governor has simply done some "agenda-setting" to avoid regulatory delays.

Maybe so. But the state's handling of the Wyoming Minerals operation is pumping up a lot of questions.

Why, for instance, did the state take the risk of approving a toxic leaching agent on its first commercial in situ project, when less dangerous chemicals are also available?

Why hasn't the state insisted that the "excursions" of toxics into the water table be completely cleaned up before Wyoming Minerals goes back to work?

Why hasn't the state stepped in and set its own standards for protecting its environment, instead of letting the feds take the lead? And what can we expect

from the state in regulating two more commercial in situ uranium projects this summer?

Anonymous voices from DEQ say that the Wyoming Minerals project has been rushed before vital technical questions are answered. "Politics," they say. "Agenda-setting," says the governor's office. In this case, it's hard to see the distinction.

— GOG

Opinion



Bomb the Bob if necessary

The current debate over allowing oil and gas exploration activities in wilderness areas (see "Bombing the Bob," page 10) seems unnecessarily complicated. A Utah rancher and former Montana named Cecil Garland put it in perspective for us.

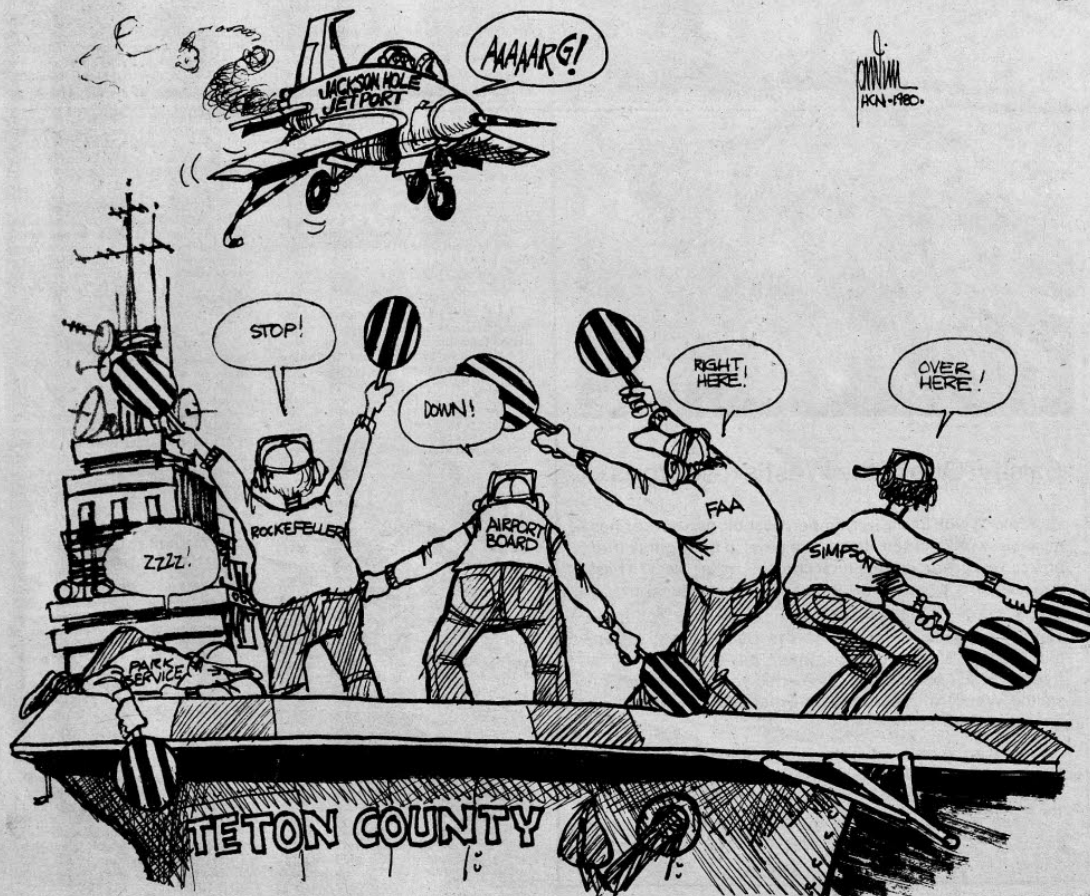
If getting the oil and gas out of prime wild lands "were the last shot for man, I guess I'd let 'em do it," he told a recent gathering of the Utah Wilderness Association.

"But will I tear up the String of Pearls (a cluster of several Montana wilderness areas) for some kids to go driving up and down State Street waving at one another? No, I won't.

"Will I tear up the String of Pearls so a family can go over to Hawaii and have leis put around their necks and sit in the sun and drink pineapple juice? No I won't.

"Will I tear up the String of Pearls to fuel that vast war machine of the world? Not only no, but hell no!"

— JN





Letters

ELECTION STAKES

Dear HCN:

Brava, Kathy Fletcher, for your strong endorsement of President Carter's re-election (HCN, 5-30-80).

When environmentalists speak of "horsetrading" for our Presidential support, what do we realistically mean? Support for Reagan?

We only delude ourselves if we think we can gain greater support from the Carter administration by holding back and pretending we have another choice. They know better, and so do we. Like it or not...and I like it... Jimmy Carter's re-election is vital to the environment.

Our best hope for better positions from the next Carter term lies in having been strong, early supporters, making a visible contribution to his reelection, despite our dismay over some policies.

Much more than the Presidency is at stake: a Reagan victory will set an anti-environment and anti-regulation atmosphere in Congress and state legislatures which will take a decade to dispel. We can't afford to bet the ranch on this toss of the dice.

Philip M. Hocker
Jackson, Wyo.

DEGRADING DOWNHILL

Dear HCN,

Regarding Hannah Hinchman's Spring Skiing article (HCN 4-4-80), it is obvious Ms. Hinchman has not de-

veloped an appreciation for the value of undeveloped, unspoiled mountain areas in our West.

There are a number of us in northern California who do appreciate this, and we have been fighting big-money commercial ski interests to keep visually degrading downhill ski facilities off of Mt. Shasta. Anyone who goes backpacking recognizes the disruption caused by these facilities. Scenery is permanently scarred and disfigured by ski lifts, pseudo-alpine villages, props, and all the related paraphernalia of downhill ski development.

I realize Ms. Hinchman was, in a way, trying to draw contrasts. However, by misrepresenting downhill skiing, by extolling all of its "exhilarating" and so-called glorious virtues, she fails to describe the profound and lingering detriments of this nouveauriche diversion.

May I suggest Nordic skiing to all for a soft path on our Mother, the Earth.

Robert L. Walker
Redding, Cal.

TWO BEARS, 20 EWES

Dear HCN,

Regarding the grizzly photo and its caption: "... rancher gunned down two bears he says were threatening his sheep" (HCN 5-30-80):

Let's give this man, Mr. Cable, who didn't choose to have marauding grizzlies in his corrals, the courtesy of presenting the facts instead of the biased caption you printed. I would say that if the bears killed 20 ewes and more lambs that they were more than "threatening."

Even considering what he was up against, Mr. Cable tried contacting U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Lake County Sheriff and the state Game Warden (whose salaries we sheepmen pay) before he shot the bears. His calls were not returned.

Wise wildlife protectors and environmentalists should realize the im-



portance of sheep for food and fiber to their own futures. There will have to be a fair legal compromise for all to survive together.

Otherwise, you have a highly enjoyable and informative paper.

Richard and Susan Ostlund Lohmuller
Bozeman, Mont.

MYTHOLOGICAL ROSE GARDENS

(In HCN 10-5-79 free-lance writer Phil Primack wrote about the impact of growth on the Chicano community in Rawlins, Wyo. His efforts on this and other energy-related growth stories were supported by a year-long Ford Foundation grant.)

Dear Mr. Primack,

Your concern about a few mythological local rose gardens being torn up by trailers is too small. Your perspective should be national.

We need the adventure, the excitement, something to do. I have my youth and I want to work like hell awhile to make a bundle. There is no war going on where I might prove myself, we aren't out in space yet and here in Denver where I've been stuck the last couple of months between real jobs I'm being driven up the wall by degenerate winos and their stagnation.

Your concern seems to be local communities. You aren't, apparently, from the West but you should know the West has always been a history of boom towns. They come and go.

These small western towns you're concerned about are complacent and need to be shaken up. Tell me, why can't two societies, the "old lifestyle" and the energy transient, co-exist? Why can't these old towns insist that environmental safeguards be taken and build housing reserved for the salesclerks and the old people who are being hardest hit by inflation? They can't because those old communities don't exist. They have no community. They're too busy selling out.

The energy exploiters, on the other hand, have to be checked, of course. Many are environmentally insensitive. Unfortunately the environmentalists tend in their paranoia to be anti-everything, and everybody seems to be affected by the cardinal sin of greed.

What I'm saying is that you've ignored things like vitality and human energy that the new workers bring. These are the things the American dream is made of. Without that dream this country's finished.

Name withheld
Denver, Colo.

High Country News

The independent natural resources biweekly of the Rockies

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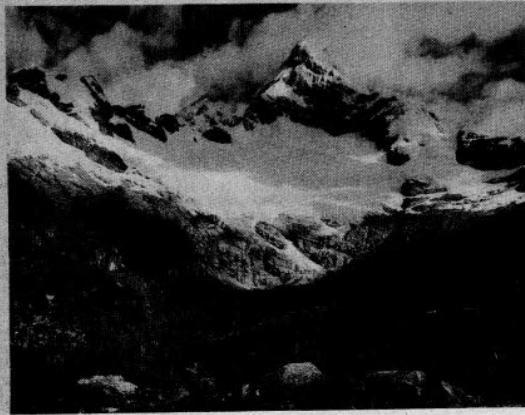
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Stepping Into Wilderness



Quabaug Rubber Company, Box 276 North Brookfield, Mass., 01535, 1978. \$1, paper, 48 pages. Illustrations.

Review by Peter Wild

"Paradise Lost?" asks the full-page spread currently appearing in en-

vironmental magazines. Reading on, we discover that in return for a dollar the Quabaug Rubber Company will send instructions on how to "soften our passage through the wilderness."

The need for a widespread "go-light" ethic is obvious. Some 30 million of us annually huff and puff through America's hinterlands. While nature's ac-

reage shrinks, the number of us increases by nearly 10 percent a year. With all those tromping boots, even footprints are too much. We should travel through the wilderness like ghosts.

Rest assured, **Stepping into Wilderness** is no commercial come-on. With its textured papers, full-color photos, lavish use of space, quotes by Joseph Wood Krutch, Henry David Thoreau and William Wordsworth, the pamphlet is a thoroughly sensitive production. I doubt that Quabaug does much more than cover its own costs.

True, the booklet can't compare in detail to a volume such as John Hart's **Walking Softly in the Wilderness**. But for what it is, benign propaganda for beginners, **Stepping into Wilderness** offers the basics. It denounces wood fires and camps near streams, for example, while encouraging habits that result in nonaggressive enjoyment and reduced impact on nature.

Quabaug, of course, is the U.S. licensee for Vibram, a name often and mistakenly equated with "waffle-stomper" soles. Some wilderness lovers condemn the lugged design. They claim it tears up trails and causes erosion. Quabaug hastens to point out that not all its Vibram soles come with lugs—and in fact the company urges hikers to consider its gentler models.

So much for that issue, a touchy one for Quabaug. I do, however, have one complaint and a suggestion. **Stepping into Wilderness** would lead readers to

believe that salvation of wildness lies with the goodwill and good deeds of backpackers. The pamphlet goes so far as to reproduce Selby Kelly's famous cartoon in which Pogo lectures: "We have met the enemy and he is us." It is an appealing but fractional truth. The bad habits of some backpackers can't hold a candle to destructive government policies promoting clear cuts, dams, channelization and strip mines. Those sins against nature devastate millions of acres. Only in the last few pages does Quabaug make a gesture toward the necessity of activism.

In any event, if **Stepping into Wilderness** might be classed as enlightened self-interest, let's not scoff at it. Any enlightenment, regardless of motives, is better than the total darkness on the part of many manufacturers of outdoor equipment. They take their profits while returning nothing to the wilderness. Quabaug should be encouraged to do more. For instance, the company might include a copy of its pamphlet with each pair of new boots using its soles. That way Quabaug would be spreading needed information to beginning hikers while nudging other entrepreneurs to do their part for the nation's natural heritage.



by Hannah Hinchman

The waysides and thickets are burgeoning. Each lupine stalk is bent on getting the summer's task completed, standing there in its finest: fresh, attractive and fertile. In the case of flowers that are insect pollinated, all of their fanfare seems to be directed towards those little hairy creatures that are the machinery of their perpetuation.

Up to my knees in salsify and alfalfa. Out of the corner of my eye a finger appears ready to tap me on the shoulder. It is the tendril of a climbing vine that has ascended the fence and is now reaching a step farther, into mid-air.

The gesture that it makes looks for all the world like intention or volition. As I've seen in speeded-up movie footage, the tendril will swing itself in a circle, growing longer at the same time, until something to grab falls within its radius, or it sags under its own weight.

It's not exactly volition. The plant is not deciding what to do or why. Its gesture into space is the result of amazingly complex chemical and hormonal balances, relying mostly on growth hormones called auxins, which substitute for a nervous system in plants. Some researchers would let it rest there, thinking a mechanical flow chart should suffice for an explanation.

But if the plant doesn't intend to look for something to grab, if the lupine isn't devising an offer the bee can't refuse, they are still acting with purpose. The intention is somewhere. In the species? There is a huge reservoir of fierce intention directed towards species survival. But a species is made up of individuals, and no individual knows that it is working towards species survival. Is the intention in God? That's too easy, the lazy way to avoid the enormity of what's before us, in most cases.

The point here is that so far our explanations have been too anthropomorphic, too mechanical, or else we've avoided the whole issue of understanding by saying "it's out of our hands." Sometimes the questions that hang in the air around the bee and the lupine are all-consuming, I want to unravel them backwards (or forwards) to sources. Other times the questions are drowned out by the music of this all occurring, no matter what the source or where the intention.

Keep the channels open.
Dodge dogma.
Stay awake.