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High Country News - January 20, 1986

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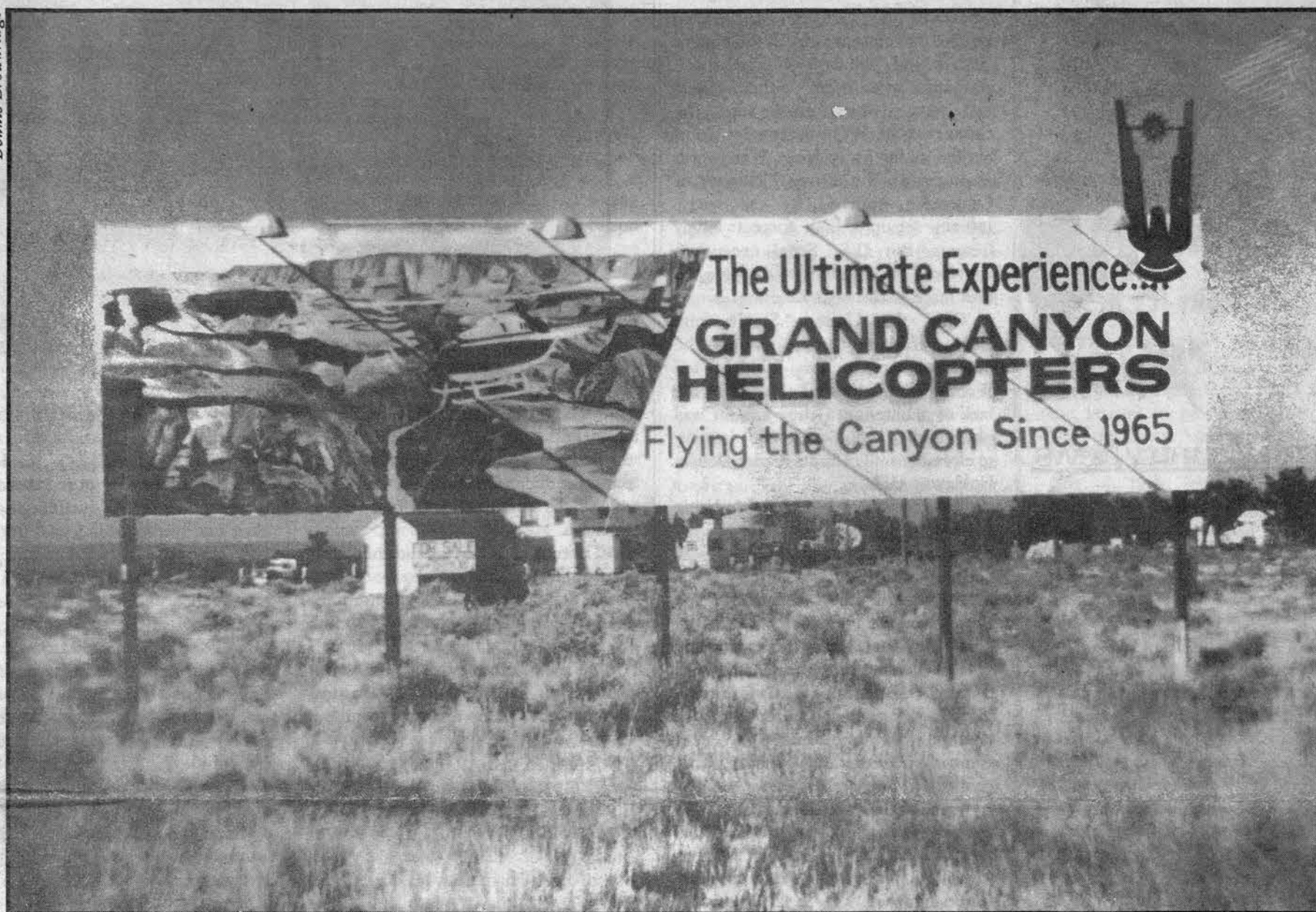
January 20, 1986

Vol. 18 No. 1

A Paper for People who Care about the West

One Dollar

Dennis Brownridge



In the Grand Canyon

The 'eternal silence' is shattered

by Dennis Brownridge

For generations one of the strongest impressions the Grand Canyon made on visitors was a sense of timelessness, solitude, and majestic quiet. "One feature of this ever-changing spectacle never changes," observed novelist Zane Grey in 1906, "its eternal silence."

"People react to this much like they would to a great cathedral, by lowering their voices," wrote Dr. Charles Black in 1971.

But in recent years, peace and quiet have become hard to find in the West's second largest national park, thanks to more than 100,000 tourist planes, helicopters, and military aircraft which fly in and over the canyon each year. Steve Hodapp, the park's Resources and Planning chief, says aircraft are the "number one" environmental problem in the park.

One company started plane rides in the canyon back in 1927 -- over the objections of Park Service Director Horace Albright -- but aircraft didn't become a serious intrusion until the late 1960s, when a jetport and heliport were opened in Tusayan, just outside the park. By 1971, an Environmental

Protection Agency study had concluded that "aircraft noise is clearly degrading the canyon experience for most people." Since then, traffic at Tusayan has increased 10-fold.

In October and November, the Park Service held public hearings in five cities around the West, searching for a solution. The largest was in Phoenix, where 100 people testified in a marathon session lasting until midnight.

First to speak was a long procession of tourist industry executives, employees, and their relatives, many of whom had been brought in by chartered bus earlier in the day, getting their names on the top of the list. Strongly opposing flight restrictions, they pointed out that aircraft and helicopter tours in the canyon have become an important industry, employing 1200 people in several states and contributing millions of dollars to the economy.

George Tolley, vice president of a Phoenix convention bureau, said canyon flights were a major marketing feature in the business.

Randall Thomas said aircraft were "the only manner" in which "busy tourists who want to see the most in a short time" can view the canyon. (Most flights in the canyon are part of package tours of Las Vegas or other attractions.)

Much later, after the press had grown weary and the TV crews had left, people who had visited the canyon on the ground expressed a different view.

Mike Fleming said, "I felt like I was back in Vietnam... Once a chopper came blasting over the rim, and the buddy I was with hit the deck like he'd been mortared."

"You can't get away from them... it's like a police TV show," said Richard Rowe.

A woman who rafts the Colorado

said planes and helicopters roar "just off the river, swooping up just before they hit the boat, making huge waves and a deafening noise."

"Walking down the Grandview Trail, the only time I was able to escape the noise of aircraft was in a cave on Horseshoe Mesa," said another.

Beech Pfister said that when he drove out to Toroweap Point for a "nice quiet weekend... I thought I was camped on the Sky Harbor (Phoenix) airport runway. There were 25 planes in 30 minutes. The serenity is gone."

Folksinger Katie Lee, 66, said she was asked to sing for a group of foreign visitors at Shoshone Point, but "all they heard were planes and helicopters. They asked, 'How could anyone let this happen to such a beautiful place?'"

Many were concerned about

(Continued on page 6)

1985

A look back, and ahead, at oil shale, forest roading, ferrets... ✓ Pages 11-13

WESTERN ROUNDUP



High Country News

HIGH COUNTRY NEWS (ISSN 0191/5657) is published biweekly, except for one issue during August and one issue during January, by the High Country News Foundation, 124 Grand Avenue, Paonia, Colorado 81428. Second-class postage paid at Paonia, Colorado.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to HIGH COUNTRY NEWS, Box 1090, Paonia, CO 81428.

Tom Bell
Editor Emeritus

Ed Marston
Publisher

Betsy Marston
Editor

Judy Moffatt
Development

Marjane Ambler
Glenn Oakley
Geoffrey O'Gara
C.L. Rawlins
Pat Ford
Contributing Editors

Mary Moran
Dianne Weaver
Editorial/Graphics

Michael Kustudia
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Typesetting

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Articles appearing in *High Country News* are indexed in *Environmental Periodicals Bibliography*, Environmental Studies Institute, 2074 Alameda Padre Serra, Santa Barbara, California 93103.

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Advertising information is available upon request. To have a sample copy sent to a friend, send us his or her address. Write to Box 1090, Paonia, Colorado 81428. Call *High Country News* in Colorado at 303/527-4898.

Subscriptions are \$20 per year for individuals, \$28 per year for institutions. Single copies \$1.00 plus \$1.25 postage and handling.

U.S. Steel continues desteeling the West

Fourteen months ago, Brigham Young University Professor Warner Woodworth predicted the imminent closure of U.S. Steel's large Geneva steel mill in Provo, Utah, with the loss of the surviving 2,400 jobs (*HCN*, 3/18/85).

At that time, U.S. Steel spokesmen refused to comment on Woodworth's "Desteeling" study except to say it was sprung on them without notice and wasn't worth answering. The conservative BYU administration backed as far away from Woodworth as it could. The Provo Chamber of Commerce, spurred by the study, initially set up a task force to study Geneva. But U.S. Steel executives convinced the chamber to dissolve the task force at the next meeting.

Only the United Steelworkers Union, which represents most of the 2,400 workers at the mill, backed Woodworth. They said that, from the lack of maintenance they saw, it was obvious that U.S. Steel was planning to close the mill. Union leader Dennis Holdaway said:

"It's in a terrible state. It's being patchworked together. Money is not being put back in here... it's all pouring into U.S. Steel coffers."

In mid-December, U.S. Steel made Professor Woodworth a prophet in Utah when it announced that, starting in 1989, it would begin importing steel from Korea to supply a California plant now supplied by Geneva. That announcement wiped out 70 percent of Geneva's market and almost certainly dooms the mill.

Some in Utah -- such as Gov. Norm Bangerter and the *Deseret News*, said they understood the need to join forces with the foreign steel importers. Others attacked U.S. Steel. The union and Republican Rep. Howard Nielson said U.S. Steel had lied to its workers and to the community.

While Utah County and Provo were giving thanks that they have four years to prepare for the loss of 2,400 jobs and millions of dollars in taxes, Prof. Woodworth made another prediction. The management specialist said the mill could close in a year, rather than in 1989.

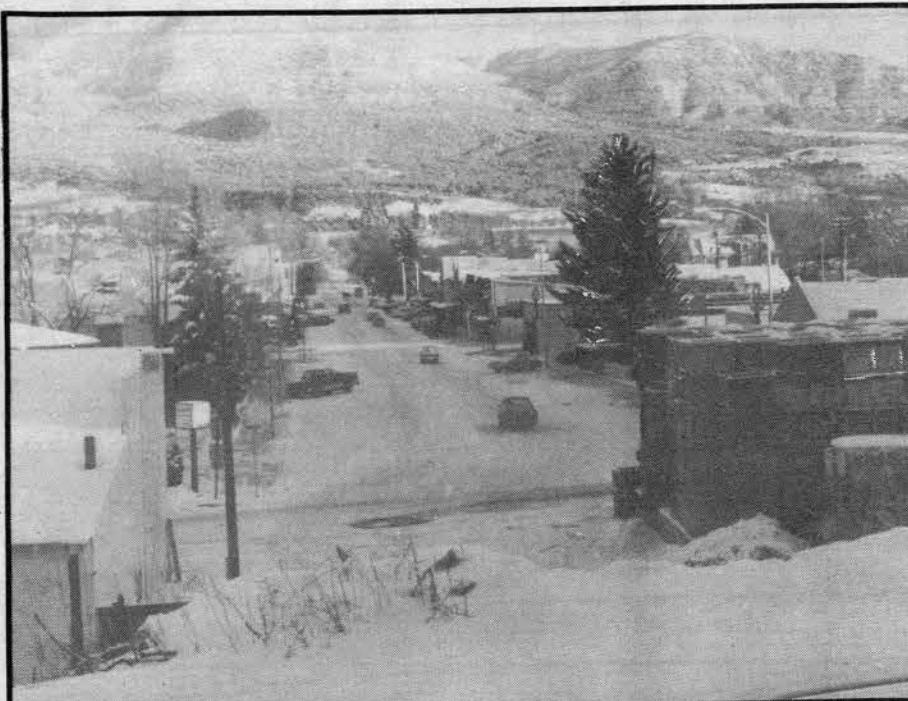
Dear friends,

The first issue of the year for conventional newspapers is a wrapup of the major stories of the preceding year. But *HCN*, as readers will quickly see, begins 1986 with a "guilt issue," named because it is intended to clean up all the stories left dangling from the year before. So, if you have been wondering about U.S. Steel's Geneva Mill, the Jersey-Jack case, the fate of the Forest Service's "plain English" gypsy moth EIS, synfuels, the Burr Trail, ferrets and Little Granite Creek, they are all here.

A farmer we know says he generally gets everything he broke the day before fixed by noon. "Then, if I'm smart, I stop working. But generally I spend the afternoon breaking a lot of things I'll have to fix the next morning."

If *HCN* were smart, we'd stop with the wrapup of the loose 1985 ends. Instead, we cover here some issues likely to keep ravelling into 1987. The big one will be noise in the Grand Canyon -- an environmentalist com-

Dianne Weaver



Downtown Paonia, Colorado

"They (U.S. Steel) will ask for the arms and legs of the workers. When the union says 'no' to either the first or the fiftieth concession," the company will close the mill and blame the workers.

There is certainly precedent for an abrupt closure. It is the approach U.S. Steel has taken to Geneva's support facilities. In fall 1983, it shut down its iron mine near Lander, Wyo., laying off 550 workers after asking for labor concessions (*HCN*, 3/18/85). The firm now imports Geneva's ore from the Midwest.

Then, on Dec. 31, 1985, U.S. Steel fired 220 coal miners at its metallurgical coal mine near Paonia, Colo., and sold the property to Kaiser Steel. Kaiser will sell coal to U.S. Steel out of its Utah mines and has closed the Paonia mine indefinitely. The mine, which is one of the oldest in the Paonia area, had given a living to several generations of North Fork Valley families. In many cases, several members of the same extended family worked at the mine, and the layoffs hit grandparents, parents and children.

Back in Utah, the threatened closure of Geneva again casts a spotlight on that state's economic strategy. The state had been moving

away from a dependence on natural resources. For example, in spring 1985, Utah officials expressed complacency in the face of the threatened Geneva closure. The number of jobs in Utah had been growing at 6 percent a year -- the third highest rate in the nation -- with many of those jobs in the high tech area.

But a story in the Dec. 19, 1985, *New York Times* indicated that the Salt Lake City area is no longer complacent about its future. The high tech firms it had banked on, such as Sperry and National Semiconductor, recently laid off large chunks of their workforce, and the industry faces a shake-out.

Unexpectedly, however, the Wasatch Front has gotten a boost from an extractive industry given up for dead. Kennecott, which closed its huge Bingham Pit this summer, announced in November that it would modernize the copper mining and smelting operation and employ 2,100 workers. Although the firm will demand, and probably get, hefty concessions from its unions, the jobs will still pay much better than the generally minimum wages paid by the high tech firms.

--Ed Marston

plaint which we expect will spread to other national parks and wilderness areas.

We're glad to start 1986 with a more or less clean journalistic slate because *HCN* has recently taken on several hundred new readers -- some from the gift subscription campaign and others from a 20,000-piece direct mail campaign. It puts us at 4,350 subscribers. That's modest for most publications, but for *High Country News*, it is a dizzying height.

We are also about to grow by another chunk, thanks to a grant to add 100 two-year subscriptions to Western libraries, schools and institutions. If you have suggestions for recipients who would make good use of the paper and give it maximum exposure, please let us know. Suggestions should be sent to the attention of Development Director Judy Moffatt.

Belated congratulations to former *HCN* editor and present contributor Marjane Ambler on her marriage to

Terry Wehrman, in Cody, Wyoming. The pair, formerly of Atlantic City, Wyoming, now live in the Lake District of Yellowstone National Park, where Wehrman is a year-round heavy equipment operator and Marjane continues with her freelance writing.

We also heard from another *HCN* alumnus, former intern Jeff Marti, who decided that the Research Fund needed him: "Here's my beer money for this week. I thought you could put it to a more noble use." Jeff also said he is living in Washington -- "a fine state, a little soggy at times" -- canvassing for a Washington public service group "while keeping an eye out for job opportunities where contact with the American public isn't quite so intensive. I'm the last person I ever expected to see going door-to-door for a living."

He also tells us that his first freelance piece will be published this spring in the *Iowa Conservationist*. Congratulations.

--the staff

David Brower battles for control of FOE

The 17-year-old environmental organization Friends of the Earth appears on the brink of fissioning or dying. One FOE director played down the likelihood of death: "You are watching some of the world's great brinksmen at work." But it is possible that this time the organization's protagonists will send it over the edge.

FOE has taken hard blows recently: There have been five chief executive officers (CEO) since 1979; membership has dropped from 32,000 (39,000 if you count spouses) to 17,000; it is \$550,000 in debt; its field staff is gone; and such 'names' as soft energy path expert Amory Lovins have quit or been fired.

Finally, one of FOE's major links to its members and the thing that distinguishes it from other national groups, its *Not Man Apart* monthly newspaper, has lost its long-time editor, Tom Turner, and may be on its way to house organ status.

At the center of the dispute is FOE founder David Brower, 73, who is famous for his work on behalf of the Grand Canyon, California's redwoods and coastline, and as author John McPhee's "archdruid." A majority of the FOE board believes the organization cannot live with Brower. They have decided that so long as Brower is on the board and the 25-person San Francisco staff remains loyal to him, FOE cannot be managed.

As they did in the summer 1984 battle (*HCN*, 7/23/84), they attribute the organization's debt and inability to retain CEOs to Brower. They believe Brower is a liability even in fundraising, and that foundations will support FOE once Brower is gone. The majority appears both more determined and better organized than it was in 1984, when it first kicked Brower off the board and then discovered it had acted illegally and had to reinstate him.

The argument between the two sides is ideological and practical. Ideologically, Brower, his five allies on the board and his many staff allies claim that the board majority and CEO Karl Wendelowski are destroying FOE by turning it into another centralized lobbying group in Washington, D.C. Under the plan being implemented by the majority, the San Francisco office is being closed with almost all of the staff there choosing severance pay rather than a transfer to Washington. A new, smaller staff is being hired in Washington, D.C.

Gordon Anderson, a board member and former FOE staffer in Utah, argues that instead of centralizing, FOE should restructure itself along the lines of the Sierra Club, with staff members in the field working with chapters on various issues. Anderson suggests, "We should be somewhere between the Sierra Club and Earth First!"

Board members such as Mark Terry of Seattle, Wes Jackson of

Salina, Kansas, and Dan Luten of Berkeley say they don't want to centralize FOE or make it a lobbying organization. But, they say, interim retrenchment is necessary to dig FOE out of debt.

Brower argues that FOE must maintain its staff and its grip on the issues. He says retrenchment is suicide, and criticizes his opponents for having abandoned membership building direct mail campaigns over the past year or so. Brower says that FOE, like the Sierra Club, loses about 30 percent of its members every year, and must replace them or disappear. He also says FOE has not had a budget since July 1985, and that the CEO and majority have no direction other than getting the organization out of San Francisco and "away from me."

Wendelowski, in an interview from San Francisco, where he was closing down the Sansome Street office, said Brower was wrong on each count. He said the organization had sent out a 150,000-piece membership solicitation mailing in May and would send out more if it could afford to. He also said that he had done a complete management and program audit of FOE in August, and that was the basis for his recommendations to the board in September. FOE lacks a formal budget, he said, only because its unsettled state made any budget unrealistic until it was reorganized.

Brower does not see the debt or lack of money as insurmountable barriers. He says FOE should borrow from members to keep staff, create programs and seek new members. He rejects responsibility for FOE's problems. "For years they refused to follow my advice and now they say the problems are my fault." He also disclaims responsibility for the turnover of CEOs: "It is as if a person got drunk on scotch and soda, and then bourbon and soda, and then rye and soda. So he blames the soda."

FOE board member Wes Jackson, who heads the Land Institute in Salina, Kansas, where he searches for ways to counter soil erosion through development of perennial plants, is part of the board majority.

He calls Brower an "ecostar," and says he has led FOE astray by leading members to believe that it is Brower who gets things done. What is needed, Jackson says, is for members to see that they themselves must act. Jackson also compares Brower to Ronald Reagan. Both, he says, get away with irresponsible fiscal actions through charm and charisma.

On management, Jackson disagrees with Brower's spend-and-build approach. "I hope the organization will shrink so that we can get our debt under control," and then expand. Jackson, who is grass-roots with a vengeance, rejects the charge that FOE is becoming a lobbying organization. The move to Washington, D.C., he says, is temporary.

Jackson says that if FOE can break Brower's grip, money will follow. Jackson says that when he came on the FOE Board, he assumed Brower was vital to fund-raising efforts. "I found out that if we don't get hold of the organization, the funding community won't help us." Jackson also says that the majority doesn't fear a membership meeting even though it is in court to stop one. "But I want enough time to get our message out."

The current phase of the FOE fight

was ignited by Wendelowski, who in his Sept. 1985, report to his board suggested lopping off San Francisco and reducing staff and programs. The board voted 8-6 to accept the recommendations. Then, on Nov. 4, Wendelowski wrote a bitter, emotional letter of resignation.

The board majority would not accept the resignation. It had already concluded that it was better to fight Brower to the death than lose yet another CEO. Board member Dan Luten of Berkeley told *HCN*:

"The impression is widespread that (our CEOs) can't run things with Dave reaching over their shoulders." Luten, who is retired, said the San Francisco staff's loyalty to Brower is so strong that they ignore orders from management when they disagree with it.

When the board accepted Wendelowski's reorganization plan, they anticipated a Brower counter-attack, and hired a law firm to sue Brower.

The suit, to be heard Jan. 16, along with a Brower countersuit, asks the court to deny the minority's request for a membership meeting and to bar Brower from appealing directly to members through use of the mailing list.

Brower sees the suit as an attempt to disenfranchise the membership and gag him. His countersuit asks for a membership meeting and an injunction to save the San Francisco office. He also seeks recall of the board majority and has proposed five candidates for the board. The attempt to stop Brower from using the mailing list has failed. He sent a letter to members asking support for a member meeting and soliciting contributions to his Earth Island Institute.

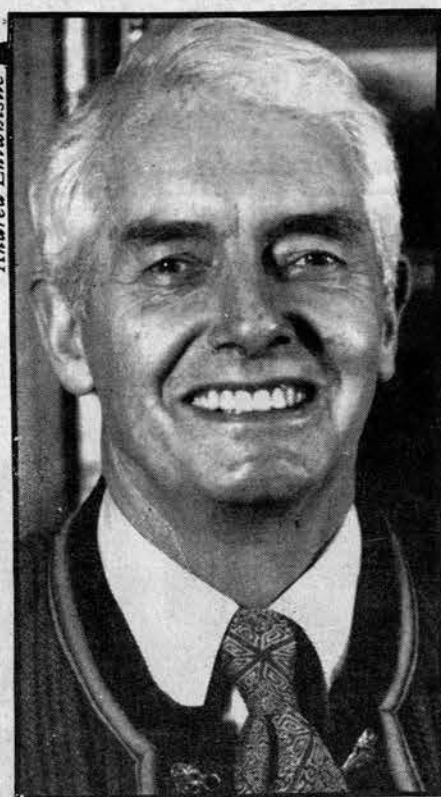
Despite the vigor with which the battle has been joined, the two sides appear to be fighting for a corpse. If Brower gets a board majority, he will face a lack of money. Much of FOE's support comes from the Friends of the Earth Foundation (FEF), which is FOE's tax exempt arm, and which solicits tax-deductible donations from FOE members. FEF's board is not subject to election by FOE members and is controlled by anti-Brower people. It has pledged to withhold its funds from FOE until Brower is gone.

If Brower loses, FOE is also likely to be mortally wounded. Wes Jackson says he welcomes the opportunity to point out the dangers of a charismatic leader. But if Jackson does convince FOE members that Brower has feet of clay, there is no guarantee they would then support a Brower-less FOE.

Because of the lose-lose situation, a compromise may be in the works. According to Brower and a majority board member who spoke off the record about "great brinksmen," the two sides are considering splitting FOE's turf and pot of FEF money. Brower would use the issues FOE lets go of (energy, nuclear war, et. al.) and the start-up funds to hire FOE's terminated staffers for his Earth Island Institute.

It would not be the first time Brower and the environmental movement fissioned. When Brower was forced out of the Sierra Club 17 years ago, he formed FOE. Later, a group of FOE staffers left it to form the lobbying group Environmental Policy Institute.

--Ed Marston



David Brower

The legal pleadings

The anger and bitterness surrounding the Friends of the Earth struggle is revealed in briefs filed in the lawsuit to be heard Jan. 16 in Superior Court. Among the documents is FOE head Karl Wendelowski's Nov. 4, 1985, letter of resignation, which the board chose not to accept. He wrote:

"I further believe that to do this (survive as an organization) the 'people of FOE' must let their organization mature and must let themselves mature with it. This means the introduction of discipline and judgment to what has been an immature and instinctive pursuit of ends... Thus, I wish to see FOE survive, but not simply for survival alone, or to merely provide a place for some people to hide or find shelter."

He ended the letter with: "Finally, I regret having to do this, especially at this critical point. There is no way I can describe the events and circumstances which led to this. They defy description."

"To many of you I am honored to have met and worked with you and I hope to expand this brief encounter into a rich relationship; to some, you have my deepest thanks; to some, you have my sympathy."

In addition to releasing the resignation letter as part of his submission to the court, Brower also included his own three-page "evaluation" of Wendelowski. It portrays Wendelowski as a person who failed to get grants, who failed to give FOE a sense of direction, and who ignored Brower's attempts at communication. "Karl responded to none of my memos, in writing or orally."

The Brower submission contains an analysis of the financial implications of the move, and concludes that the move will be very costly, will lose FOE many of its remaining members, and has been launched without any planning.

In the legal brief itself, Wendelowski is quoted as describing his own work as "shoddy." The Brower brief also says: "The majority acted to ratify a clearly illegal and potentially criminal act of former Chief Executive Officer (Bob) Chlopek and administrative executive (Jeff) Knight." The reference is to almost \$30,000 in severance pay Chlopek and Knight paid to themselves, by signing their own checks, several days after they left FOE in 1984, and which the full board ratified after the fact, in January 1985.

--E.M.



HOTLINE

Burford denies conflict



Robert F. Burford

BLM Director Robert Burford found himself on the hot seat last month. Rep. Mike Synar, D-Okla., held a hearing to ask Burford why he had never removed himself from decisions affecting grazing permits on BLM land. When Burford was confirmed by the Senate in 1981, he transferred his grazing permits and base land in Colorado to a family partnership. The Office of Government Ethics, however, said this wasn't sufficient to avoid conflict of interest, and Burford then signed a waiver issued by Interior Secretary James Watt. In that waiver, Synar quoted, Burford promised to excuse himself from "any decisions which directly affect Bureau of Land Management grazing permits which I now own." In answer to Synar's detailed questions, Burford testified that he had never excused himself from any grazing permit decision and had never developed a system for doing so. Synar was particularly critical of Burford's approval of "cooperative management agreements" that allowed ranchers to share title with the government for range improvements. Burford told Synar's Government Operations Subcommittee that he believed his 1981 waiver was very specific, applying only to his own permits.

Sodbusting busted

In theory, at least, the sodbusting which has ripped up millions of acres of grassland for planting in the high plains of Montana and Colorado is coming under control. The new 1985 Farm Bill passed in December 1985 is designed to discourage sodbusting by making sodbusters ineligible for federal farm aid. A companion anti-swampbuster provision is designed to discourage the filling in of wetlands. These provisions were part of a comprehensive conservation package which includes a Conservation Reserve Program that will pay farmers to put up to 75 million acres into grass or trees. The conservation program was supported by the Reagan administration, which saw it as cheaper than conventional measures, and by a coalition of groups, including the Natural Resources Defense Council, National Audubon, the National Wildlife Federation, the Sierra Club and the American Farmland Trust.

Idaho forms a rod, reel and gun PAC

A group of Idaho's leading sportsmen have formed a political action committee to lend hunters and fishermen more clout.

SportPAC's formation was announced Dec. 7 in Boise by Jack Trueblood, a writer who helped found the Idaho Sportsmans Coalition in 1983. The Sportsmans Coalition had a large role in conservationists' successful block of Sen. James McClure's 1983 Idaho Wilderness Bill, and also helped to organize involvement and comments from sportsmen on the nine Idaho National Forest Plans released so far.

"The future of outdoor sports rests... in politics," said Trueblood. "The upcoming political year will be either a watershed or a washout for public lands issues, and it is imperative that we organize for political strength." Wilderness, water quality, salmon and steelhead restoration, grazing and the fate of north Idaho's Priest Lake will all be issues in the 1986 campaign.

Other incorporators of SportPAC are Dennis Gratton, a leader of the Idaho Wildlife Federation, Jack Hemmingway, former Idaho Fish and Game commissioner, a renowned fly fisherman and son of the novelist, and Mike Frome, an outdoor writer who is



Diane Ronayne, IDFG

Ron Mitchell, Mitch Sonchotena, Jack Trueblood, Jack Hemmingway

currently teaching at the University of Idaho.

"I invite any candidate who is proud of his or her record on fish and game related issues to bring it forward for scrutiny, and the others I promise to chase down," Trueblood said. "Those that are good I think should be supported, and those that are bad should be run out of the business." The PAC will endorse candidates,

contribute funds to those endorsed, and bring information on wildlife issues directly to the voters. Trueblood has raised about \$1,000 in Idaho so far, and plans to raise money out of state as well. He hopes to raise funds from recreation and outdoor businesses as well as individuals. SportPAC's address is P.O. Box 2276, Boise, ID 83701-2276.

--Pat Ford

Laramie tie plant's poisons go to bedrock

A Laramie, Wyoming, group says a new revised plan for cleaning up a Superfund site near its town is scarcely different from an earlier plan deemed unsatisfactory by local, state and federal officials (HCN, 6/10/85). The new plan has drawn the attention of national environmental groups, and Environmental Protection Agency hearings in Laramie later this month are expected to pack a full house.

Union Pacific Railroad, owner of a closed railroad tie plant south of Laramie, finished cleaning up four hazardous waste ponds there last spring. Most of the contamination, which extends nearly 100 feet into the soil, alluvium and bedrock beneath the plant area, came from pollutants leaking from these unlined ponds. The railroad company also removed most of the buildings at the plant last summer and rerouted the Laramie River away from the contaminated area in October.

A consulting company for UP revised their various reports concerning the cleanup after the EPA, Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality and the Laramie River Cleanup Council, an ad-hoc citizens'

group, claimed earlier reports were inconsistent and contained data gaps.

UP's new proposed cleanup method, in a revised report released in December, is almost the same as the method proposed in an earlier report. It involves building a bentonite slurry wall to surround the site and pumping water from beneath the site to create a groundwater flow inward toward the contaminated area. Contaminants moving with the groundwater would thus be prevented from further spreading. Bern Hinckley, chairman of the Laramie River Cleanup Council, says a major problem with this reverse-flow cleanup method is that some contaminants do not move in the same direction as groundwater flow, so would still spread outward from the contaminated area.

After complaints from local citizens, the city's environmental commission, the EPA and the state DEQ last August, UP agreed that containment was only a first step toward cleanup. But the new plan makes no commitment to the groups' hopes for removal or on-site treatment of the contaminated materials. John Bromley, spokesman for Union Pacific, says the revised plan came

from UP's consultant's belief that containment is the most feasible way to fulfill Superfund's requirements of securing the site to protect human health and the environment, and that on-site cleanup methods would be evaluated once the wastes are contained.

But the Cleanup Council's Hinckley says that Superfund requirements for cleanup may be superseded by the more strict requirements of the Resource and Conservation Recovery Act. That act says that the aquifer must be restored to its original condition.

The EPA is currently taking public comments on UP's revised cleanup proposal and will hold a public hearing in Laramie's city hall on Jan. 23, the last day of the comment period. Vera Moritz of the EPA says persons or groups wanting to comment can sign up the day of the hearing. The Laramie River Cleanup Council and League of Women Voters are expected to testify, and the Washington-based Environmental Defense Fund and Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Wastes are currently reviewing the revised cleanup plan.

--Mary Moran

Idaho regains 1200 Potlatch mill jobs

The Potlatch Corporation and its unionized workers in north Idaho have reached an agreement that will reopen two of three Potlatch sawmills closed there this past summer. In exchange for wage concessions, Potlatch says it will reopen its Lewiston sawmill and Jaye plywood mill, restoring some 1200 jobs. The St. Maries sawmill will not reopen.

The International Woodworkers Union locals agreed to reduce wages by \$1.75 an hour. A typical Lewiston sawmill worker made \$11.50 an hour before the agreement. The workers will also lose five paid holidays and one week of paid vacation, and wages

will be frozen until January 1988, when a 4 percent increase will occur. Potlatch says the package will save some \$12 million yearly.

In return, Potlatch has committed to build a new sawmill in Lewiston "when the capital becomes available." The existing Lewiston sawmill is 50 years old and inefficiency has been one of its problems. Rebuilding will cost \$30-35 million. Nothing was said about how a new sawmill would affect present employment. Typically a new mill can cut labor need by 40 percent.

--Pat Ford



Ranchers win a predator control battle

In an unexpected legislative sleight of hand, the Reagan Administration and Idaho's senators transferred the program charged with controlling predators to protect livestock and crops from the Department of Interior to the Department of Agriculture. Conservationists had been resisting pressures from ranchers to make this transfer since the Animal Damage Control program was established within Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service more than 47 years ago.

Some conservationists fear that Agriculture's Animal and Plant Inspection Service, which inherits the program April 1, will conduct an aggressive predator poisoning and trapping campaign.

Historically, the Interior Department played a large role in pushing grizzly bears and wolves to the brink of extinction within their former ranges throughout the West. Since the early 1970s, however, Interior's USFWS has tempered its control program with some concern for threatened and endangered species.

In the Rocky Mountain states, agents from the ADC program have helped ranchers kill coyotes and bears preying on their herds of sheep and cattle, particularly on public land grazing-leases. The program has also helped farmers control blackbirds, starlings, egrets, herons and migratory birds such as the Aleutian crane, which forage crops.

Syd Moore of the Department of Agriculture said that transferring the control program will mean few changes. An advisory group will include representatives of humane organizations, he said, and the

Brad Justad, The Herald Journal



Agriculture Research Service, which has been looking into non-lethal predator control programs such as guard dogs, will also be represented.

Some conservationists, however, were more disturbed by the way the agency transfer was achieved. Republican Sens. James McClure and Steve Symms attached the language as an amendment to part of the government's Continuing Resolution, which maintains funding for agencies whose budgets were not complete before Congress recessed. By slipping the amendment into the Agriculture appropriations bill at the last minute, the senators from Idaho caught

conservation lobbyists and House committees by surprise. The reaction of Susan Haygood, program specialist for Defenders of Wildlife, wasn't unique. "We're upset with the way this transfer was done," she said.

But Teddy Roe, an aide to Rep. John Seiberling, D-Ohio, concluded that the maneuver may backfire. Given the push for a balanced budget, he said, Congress might eliminate the damage control program completely. "The manner in which the transfer was accomplished" didn't win any friends in Congress, he said.

--Tom Ribe

Montana Power finally gets its \$80 million

Montana's Supreme Court recently ruled that Attorney General Mike Greely cannot appeal a lower-court decision permitting Montana Power Co. to pass the cost of Colstrip 3 on to its customers.

Warning of the dangers of creating a "super-officer," the court ruled 5-2 that Greely had no standing to appeal the case because he was not involved when the issue was heard initially before the Public Service Commission and in district court.

"There is nothing now for an appellate court to determine," said

Supreme Court Justice John Sheehy. "The horse is out of the barn, and it is too late to lock the stable door."

The ruling means that Montana Power's investment in the coal-fired electric plant will be paid for by an \$80 million rate increase phased in over a period of eight years.

Legal maneuverings began in 1984, after the Public Service Commission denied most of Montana Power's initial request of \$96 million in rate increases. The company appealed to district court and Judge Mark Sullivan of Butte overturned the

commission last summer. The court held that the commission had used improper methods in determining that Colstrip 3 power was unnecessary.

After Montana Power agreed that Sullivan's order applied only to the Colstrip 3 case and not to future requests, the commission decided not to file an appeal. The attorney general then intervened and filed his own appeal over the objections of the commission and Montana Power.

--John Holt

Congress does dirt to Utah's Burr Trail

Thanks to pressure from a dozen national and local conservation groups, the chairman of the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee refused to immediately approve spending \$8.1 million for paving 12 miles of the Burr Trail. The 66-mile dirt road meanders through spectacular canyon country in southeastern Utah (HCN, 11/25/85).

Despite efforts by Sen. Jake Garn, D-Utah, chairman Sidney Yates, D-Ill., insisted that no Burr Trail money be spent without specific authorizing legislation by the House and Senate Interior committees. The delaying action is a victory, said Terri Martin of the National Parks and Conservation Association, who added that in any case the road should not be paved before the preparation of an environmental impact statement.

Martin said that Yates' decision was crucial because when Park Service

Director William Penn Mott finally clarified his position on paving he advocated 12 miles, including Long Canyon near Capitol Reef National Park. Martin said the canyon and other areas singled out for paving rather than gravel were so vulnerable "you might as well pave it all." She said Mott was very influenced by the Utah delegation -- to our disappointment. They put a lot of pressure on him."

BARBS

Did the bison enjoy themselves, also?

A Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks official said the state's first bison hunt was a success: "It was done tastefully. They were clean kills, and the hunters seemed to have fun," Ron Aasheim said.

But why is the garbage glowing?
A newsletter from Nevada's anti-nuclear group, Citizen Alert, tells us why state legislator Virgil Getto, an assemblyman, doesn't want Nevada to make any hasty moves against a federal high-level nuclear waste dump coming to the state. Getto said science may soon make nuclear waste "as safe as having a garbage pail in the back of your yard."

HOTLINE

Dog-packs attack

Dick Randall, Defenders of Wildlife



Dog-pack attacks on a herd of 1,600 antelope that sought shelter near Rawlins, Wyoming, because of harsh weather seem to have tapered off, reports Game Warden Dennis Smith. Confrontations between dogs, some of which were egged on by their owners, and antelope were frequent last month, Smith said. He said he hoped that court-ordered punishment will influence dog owners to keep their pets under control. One dog owner was recently fined \$297 in municipal court while another was sentenced to spend the night in jail. City Attorney Steve Noecker said a Jan. 7 amendment to the city dog ordinance now sets a minimum fine of \$200 if a dog is caught chasing wildlife or livestock.

Priest Lake issue goes federal

Ann and Myron Sutton



Woodland Caribou

The Priest Lake Coalition will file a third lawsuit against the Idaho Land Board's trade of state lands at Priest Lake to English millionaire Sir James Goldsmith (HCN, 4/29/85). But while the first two were in state court, this one will be in federal court under the Endangered Species Act. The Coalition says a herd of some 30 endangered woodland caribou are found in the southern Selkirk Mountains, which jut into north Idaho from British Columbia. Priest Lake lies along the Selkirks' west flank, and some of the land traded to Goldsmith is identified caribou habitat. These are the only woodland caribou found in the lower 48 states. A small number of reclusive grizzly bears -- perhaps some 15-20 animals -- also inhabit the southern Selkirks, and again their identified habitat includes state lands involved in the Goldsmith deal. The grizzly is a threatened species. The Idaho Land Board did not consider the effects of the land swap on either caribou or grizzly bears, and that, Coalition attorney Scott Reed says, is a violation of the Endangered Species Act.

--Betsy Marston

Noise...

(Continued from page 1)

wildlife. Chuck Ramsey told of watching bighorn sheep scattered by a tourist helicopter. "One lamb stumbled and fell, trying to get back to its mother," he recalled.

Bob Weitzman said he'd seen peregrine falcons, an endangered species, "knocked off their nests" by the noise blast of low-flying aircraft.

Arizona Gov. Bruce Babbitt earlier raised the ire of air operators with an impassioned plea for flight restrictions. Babbitt, who has explored the canyon since childhood, wrote a book about it, and regularly hikes and skis there with his family, said aircraft in the canyon "create as much decibel noise as downtown rush hour in Phoenix. And that's not what national parks are about."

A 1978 Park Service survey found that aircraft were audible up to 95 percent of the time in some places, and an average of 50 percent of the time in all the locations monitored. Traffic has since doubled. In the canyon or along the rims, it's not unusual to hear three or four machines at once. The canyon's unique acoustics amplify and focus the sound, and noise at hearing-damaging levels has sometimes been recorded. One can hear small craft and helicopters as much as five or six miles away, when they're well out of sight of the naked eye.

According to a 1984 Park Service visitor study, almost all of the environmental complaints received by the Superintendent since 1978 have been about aircraft. Park officials say they aren't sure how many written complaints they've received, since many were apparently discarded without being recorded. Surveys in 1976 and 1984 indicated that the great majority of visitors to the park's "backcountry" -- which is about 95 percent of the park -- were disturbed by aircraft and wanted them restricted or eliminated.

Depending on where and when they've been in the park, visitors complain variously about fixed-wing planes, tourist or Park Service helicopters, military aircraft, or jetliners overhead.

High-speed fighter jets often fly through the canyon depths on unauthorized "joyrides," but park officials say they've had little cooperation from military commanders in catching violators. A former Air Force officer says pilots have an unofficial "Below the Rim Club," complete with flight bag emblems.

Several heavily used transcontinental jet routes run down the length of the canyon, and visitors complain both about the noise and the contrails crisscrossing the sky.

However, tourist craft are by far the most numerous, and elicit the strongest complaints. Air tour operators say restricting flights would deny access to the very young, elderly, handicapped, and those with limited time. Sedona, Arizona, tour operator Jack Seeley said he thought there were places on the rims and in the canyon "accessible only by air, that even backpackers can't get to."

Bob Bogam of Avco Services Corp., which operates the Tusayan airport facilities, said he favored "access to the canyon by all methods currently in use, including... mules,

bicycles, aircraft, and feet." (Bicycles are not permitted in the canyon. Mules are normally restricted to the narrow developed corridor which connects the two rim towns.)

Critics of flights respond that almost all of the canyon can be seen by automobile from more than 100 rim viewpoints scattered along its 270-mile length, that river tours take visitors through the heart of the canyon with little effort, and that all of the canyon can be reached on foot.

Gov. Babbitt said he and his wife packed their nine-month-old son across the canyon, and a number of older people at the hearings said they were "offended" by the allegation that they could only enjoy the canyon in an aircraft. A mule wrangler said he takes people "in their 70s and 80s" into the canyon.

Almost everyone supporting the flights voiced a strong concern for the handicapped. Elling Halvorson, president of Grand Canyon Helicopters and a vice president of Grand Canyon Airlines, said that "14.6 percent of the U.S. population is disabled" and would be unable to see the canyon except by air. He cited a long list of impairments, including "the deaf and blind, diabetics, and those suffering from bronchitis, mental and emotional disorders, and high blood pressure."

At the Flagstaff hearing, the president of a national association for the handicapped, who is blind, testified that if park visitors don't like the noise "they can wear earplugs."

However, river rafters say they often take along handicapped people, including quadraplegics. The only visibly disabled speaker at the Phoenix hearing was 76-year-old Roger Irvin, a former electrician at the park, who is crippled with arthritis, walks haltingly with a cane, and wears a heart pacemaker and hearing aid.

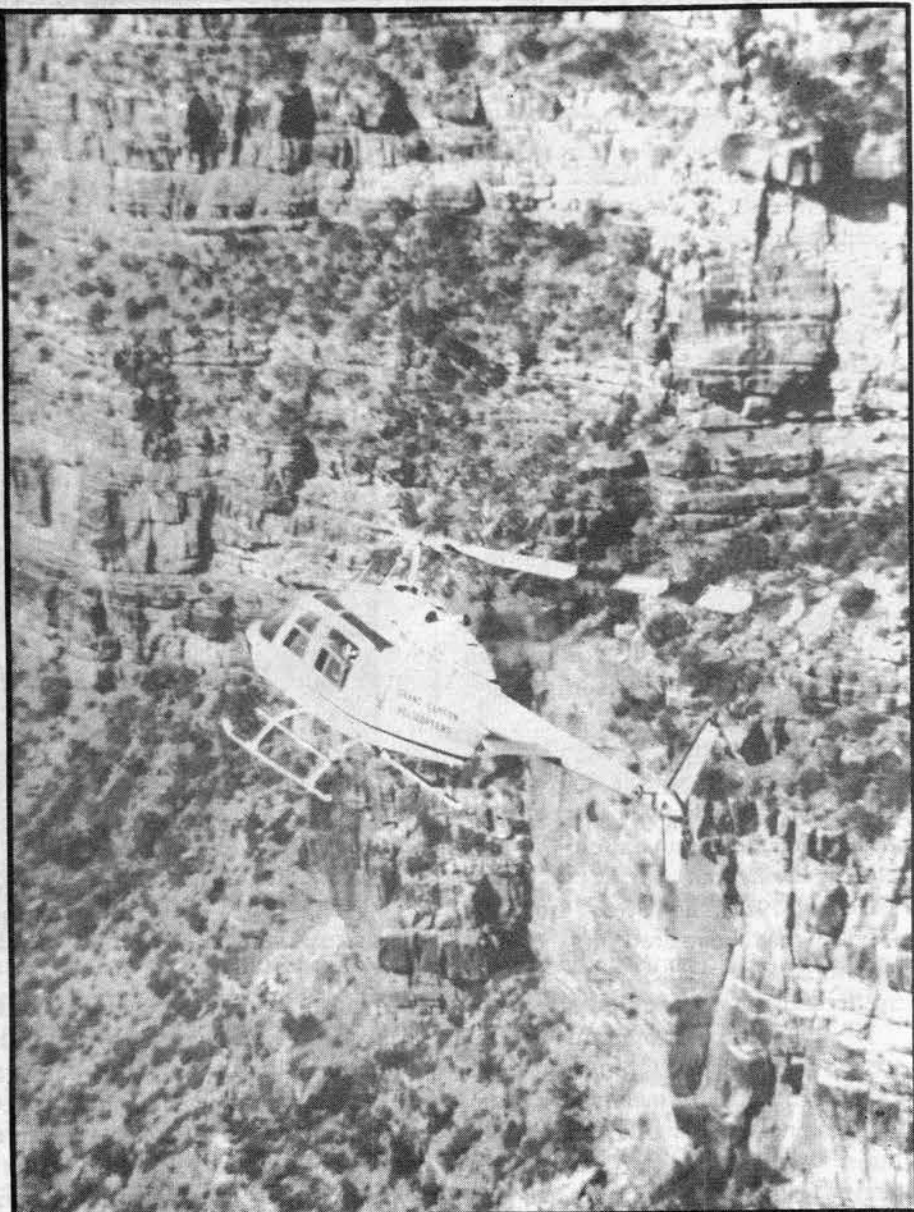
"I favor a return to the quiet -- except for the birds," he said. "It isn't only the hikers who are disturbed by the noise. People driving along the rim are also denied the quiet that is so much a part of 'seeing' the canyon." He said he'd often helicoptered into the canyon as part of his work, but that "no one can 'see' the canyon in an hour... All you'll remember are a lot of colored walls."

The Park Service visitor study found that most backcountry users don't object to flights for the handicapped, but it concluded that operators were unwilling to run air tours solely for the physically impaired because they wouldn't make a profit. Industry sources say 80 percent of the air tourists are foreign visitors. Woody Hensley, president of a Las Vegas convention management company, said he thinks of them as "culturally handicapped," and unable to see the canyon in other ways.

A decade ago, when limits were placed on the number of river tourists, mule riders, and backpackers, to protect the delicate canyon environment, below-the-rim visitors outnumbered air tourists 5 to 1. Since then the internationally advertised air tours, which have no limitations, have grown tremendously and air passengers now equal below-the-rim visitors in number, though not in visitor-days.

Most of the park's 2.7 million annual visitors neither fly nor go into the canyon by other means, but are content with a brief look from the rim. Most say they don't notice the aircraft, which generally stay two to three

Dennis Brownridge



Tour helicopter in the Grand Canyon

miles away from the rim towns, nearby lookout points, and the heavily travelled cross-canyon corridor, under a 1972 "gentlemen's agreement" with the park.

Critics of flights say it's difficult to imagine how disturbing aircraft are unless you've experienced them first-hand, since "noise doesn't show in the pictures." Most have flown the canyon themselves, and some are pilots.

"If tourists knew they were spoiling the canyon for others, they'd probably have second thoughts about taking flights," said Rudy Danforth, who has walked in the canyon for 20 years.

Conservationists agree that aircraft rides are exciting and that many people enjoy them, though they contend the tours are "canned," expensive "Disneyland" experiences that deny visitors direct contact with the canyon, its sounds and smells, wildlife, vegetation, water, and intimate beauties. River-runner and song-writer Katie Lee said: "Nobody needs to see the Grand Canyon at the expense of someone else... If you're doing something that disturbs other people it ought to be stopped."

Aircraft flight is the only activity in national parks which is not regulated or limited in some way. Away from settled areas, there are, for practical purposes, no mandatory restrictions or minimum altitudes. Tour operators are not concessionaires and have no permits from the Park Service.

The 1975 law which established Grand Canyon's present boundaries requires the Park Service to take action against aircraft whenever they "cause a significant adverse effect on the natural quiet and experience of the park," making recommendations for rules and regulations to the Federal Aviation Agency, Environmental Protection Agency and "any other responsible agency or agencies." The law has never been invoked. Park staff can't say why, and some add privately

that the Park Service "should have done something years ago."

Superintendent Richard Marks has been noncommittal. He told NBC News that "the question basically has to be answered by the public who see it (the canyon)... The issue really is in the ears of the beholder."

The FAA requests all aircraft to stay 2000 feet above the canyon rims, but the request isn't binding and all sides agree that it's almost universally ignored.

So far, no one has come up with a solution to the problem which is acceptable to all sides, but park officials hope to have a plan sometime in 1986. They remain open to suggestions from the public. (Write the superintendent, GCNP, Box 129, Grand Canyon, AZ 86023).

Halvorson, a leading spokesman for the operators, advised visitors to go elsewhere "... if you want a quiet experience. There's Zion or Bryce... One would not pick Coney Island to have a pristine beach experience." (Bryce now has helicopter tours.) Halvorson also suggested that visitors be banned from places like the Point Sublime Anasazi ruins, which "should be exclusive areas for aerial tourists."

Air operators and conservationists generally agree that establishing minimum altitudes such as the rim, or 2000 feet above the rim, is not the answer. Operators say their customers want to fly below the rim, and both sides point out that slightly higher flights would spread sound over a much wider area, increase noise levels on the rims, and not appreciably reduce it inside the canyon, except perhaps along the river and in some of the deep side canyons. Most of the fixed wing tours already fly at or just below the rim.

Limiting aircraft to certain sections of the park would be difficult because they con-

sume so much airspace. "It's possible for a single aircraft flying for two hours to impact every visitor in the park," said Joel Rash of Grand Canyon Helicopters.

Another proposal is to limit aircraft to certain periods of time. River rafter W.G. Winell delighted the Phoenix audience when he suggested that the park designate the first week of every month "Internal Combustion Engine Week."

"Now visualize this, if you will," he went on drolly, "The baloney boats all lined up one behind another with their motors just a-chuggin' away, racin' down the canyon. And above them the helicopters, nose to nose. And above them, wave after wave of aircraft. Y'all heard aircraft people say how much they enjoy seein' aircraft and listenin' to 'em, so what the heck, a few hundred more won't make any difference. Then, when the clock strikes 12 on the last day of that first week, I say get those darn motors out of the canyon."

There's little chance air operators would agree to such a plan, however, because they'd lose too much business in the peak tourist season. Ron Warren, a vice president of Grand Canyon Airlines, said he's willing to stop flying in January and February, when he doesn't make a profit, but critics say those are among the least pleasant months of the year, when much of the canyon is cut off from the sun by its high rock walls.

Most conservationists have little hope of stemming the aircraft onslaught. "Money talks, and political clout talks," said Winell. "We found out about that when we talked about motorboats." He referred to the furor a few years ago, when political pressure from tour companies forced the Park Service to allow motorized rafts in the canyon.

However, William Penn Mott, the bold new Park Service director, has given some a cautious optimism. "We're going to have to limit them (aircraft), because the noise and disturbances they create are taking away from the beauty and quiet we are preserving..." Mott recently told *Parade* magazine, "They are making money, but at the price of everybody else's enjoyment."

There's widespread concern that whatever happens to the canyon will set a precedent for other parks and natural areas. "It's an insidious problem, a terrible worry," said Clay Peters of the Wilderness Society, citing growing aircraft problems in Glacier, Yosemite, Sequoia, Death Valley, Alaska, Hawaii, and other parks, wilderness areas, and wildlife refuges.

A generation ago in his classic *Grand Canyon*, naturalist Joseph Wood Krutch extolled it as one of few places "where solitude is easy to find." He also asked, "How long will it be before... there is no quietness anywhere, no escape from the rumble and the crash, the clank and the screech?... Perhaps when the time comes that there is no more silence and no more aloneness, there will also be no longer anyone who wants to be alone."

Dennis Brownridge is a writer and conservationist in Tucson, Arizona. This article was made possible by the High Country News Research Fund.



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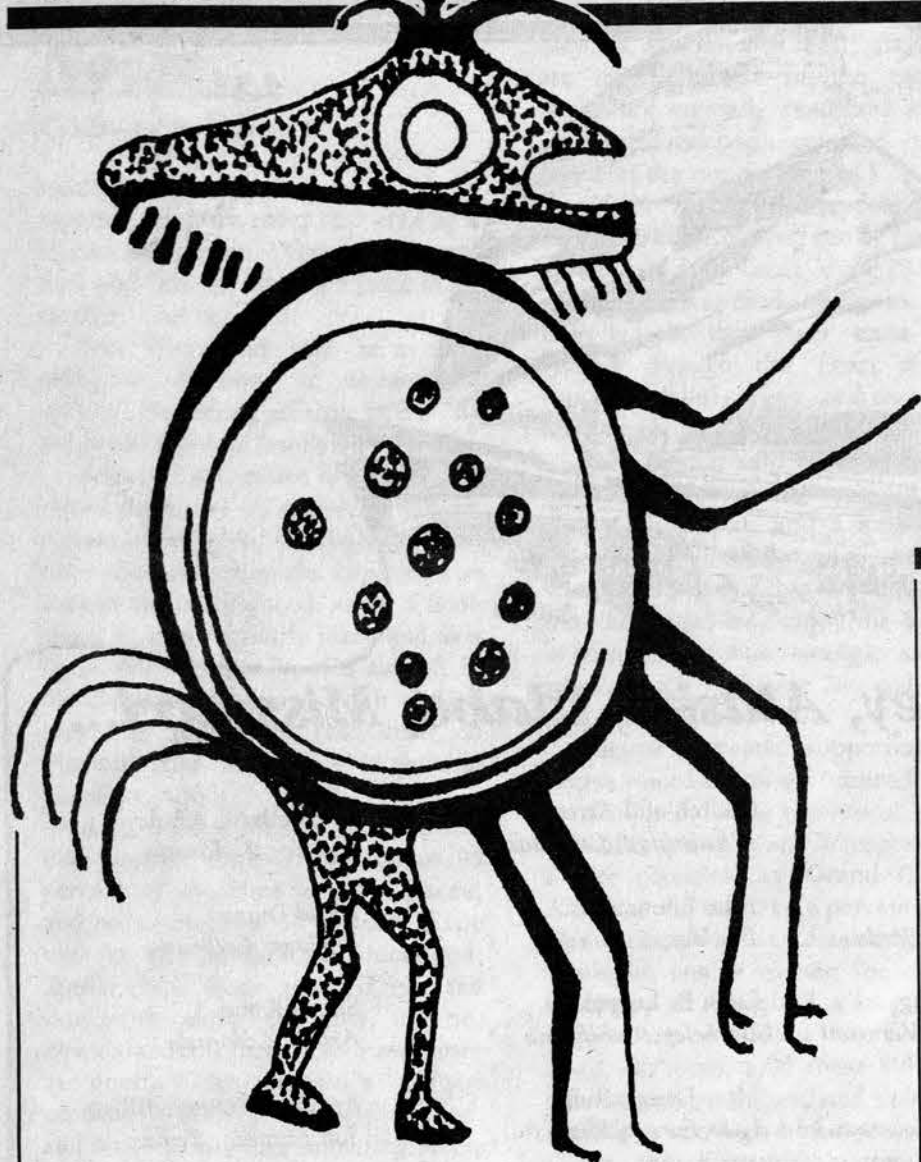
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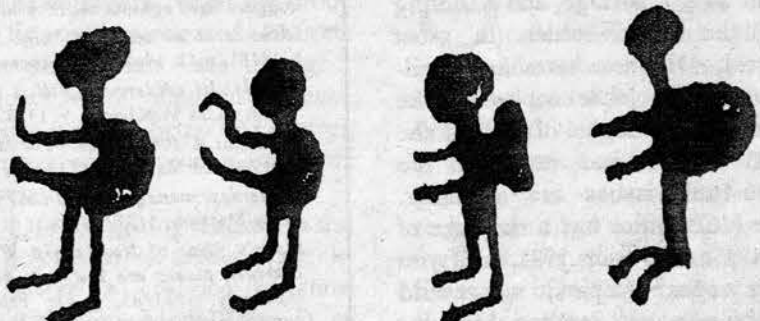
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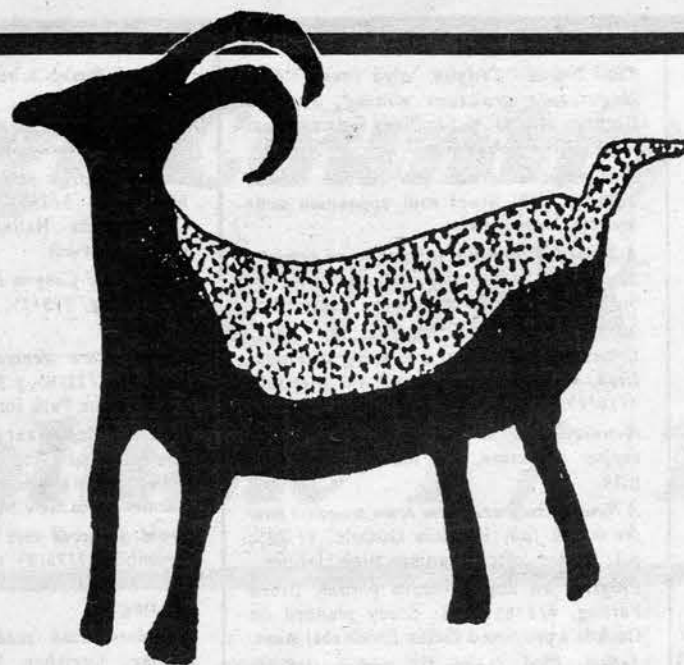
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A January Poem

A January poem suspects it won't get there.

*It has to set out across a page, small
and black as a shrew in a snowy field of
foxtracks,*

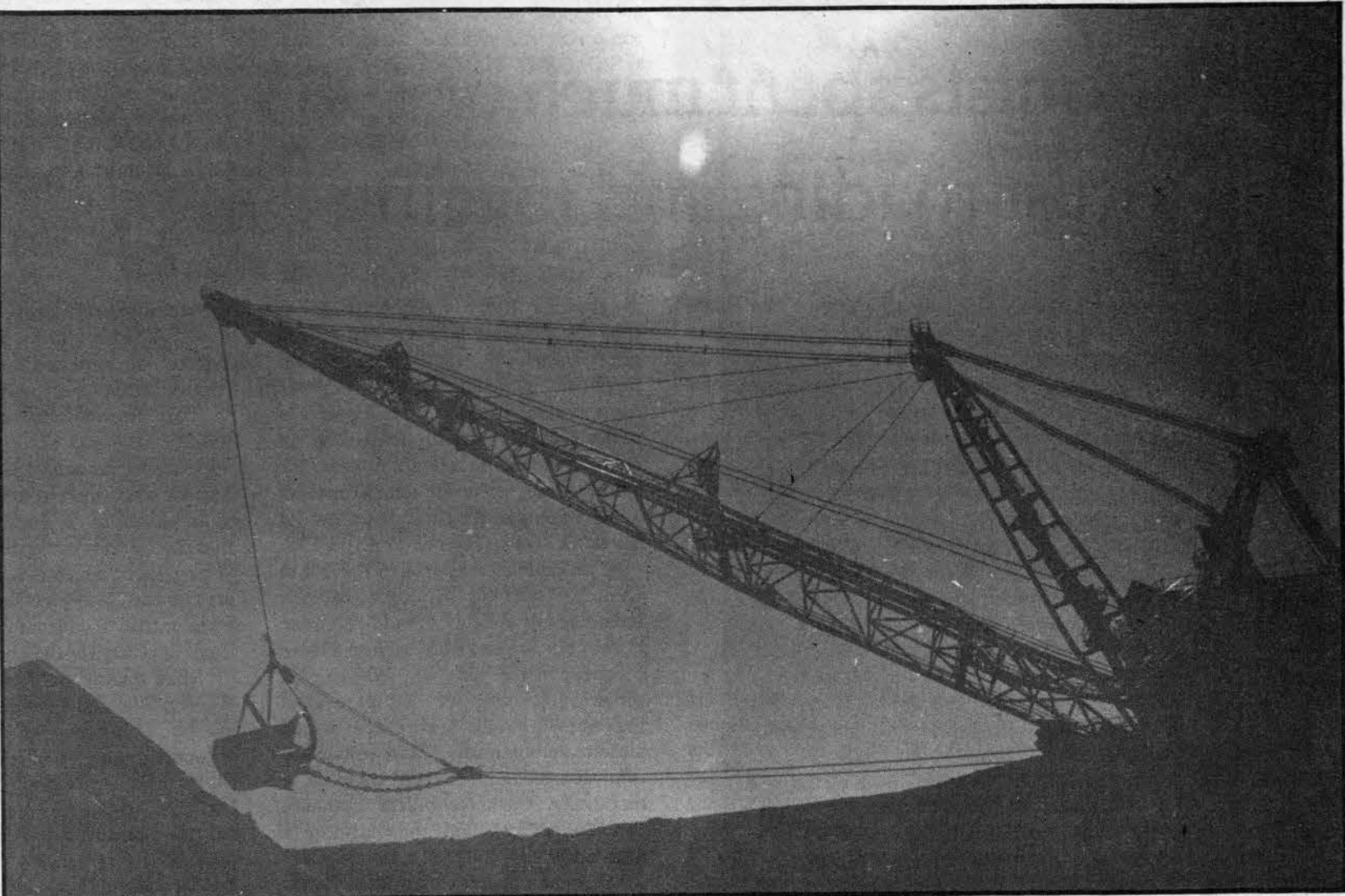
*and move toward a setting winter sun
red on the snow, musky -- a sun*

that snaps small bone bones in a mouth of night.

A January poem can't help feeling bitter.

--Jim Wayne Miller

Mike McClure



The West's energy dominoes came crashing down

1985

The domino theory may or may not have made sense in southeast Asia. But it is definitely true in the Rocky Mountain West when it comes to energy.

The crashing dominoes have been set off by dropping oil prices -- from a high in 1981 of \$41 per barrel to today's \$26 to a projected \$20. The dominoes toppled by the oil price fall are a mixed lot: high-rise office buildings in Denver and Houston stand 25 to 30 percent empty; the Congress just abolished the \$88 billion Synthetic Fuels Corp.; there have been sharp downturns in oil and gas exploration; Texas is attempting to turn its high schools from sports to books; and utilities throughout the West are stuck with new, huge coal-fired power plants they have no customers for.

The stage for the present dislocation, which has hit rural communities especially hard, was set by the 1973 and 1979 oil shocks that turned attention to the Rocky Mountains. The region, called "America's Saudi Arabia" by those who welcomed the boom and a "national energy sacrifice area" by those who feared it, has an enormous array of energy resources.

The rising oil prices led to a variety of actions: conventional oil and gas drilling boomed; utilities planned

power plants; coal companies scrambled for federal coal leases and opened mines to supply the power plants; communities geared up to serve the expanding energy industry. Denver and Houston developers built offices to house the exploration, leasing and other front-office activities of the energy companies. Small towns built water and sewer systems, town halls and community centers, and encouraged subdividers to build homes for the coming workers.

The federal government also got into the act, providing impact mitigation funds on the one hand and creating, in 1980, the new Synthetic Fuels Corporation to finance commercial development of oil shale and coal gasification plants.

The first strong indication that America's Saudi Arabia might be in trouble came on May 2, 1983, when Exxon Corp. abruptly stopped construction on its 50,000 barrel-per-day Colony Oil Shale Project in western Colorado. It cited increased expenses and dropping oil prices.

Exxon's was the first and last major shock. Instead, there have been a welter of smaller events -- a tightening of the economic noose around companies and communities that expanded when they should have been retrenching. Electric utilities, with their long lead times and massive

investments, have been especially hard hit. Montana Power, Utah Power and Light, Basin Electric REA in the Dakotas, Colorado-Ute REA in Colorado, TriState G&T in Colorado and Nebraska, and Deseret REA in Utah all expanded beyond their ability to sell electricity.

Oil and gas exploration in the Rockies stayed steady even after prices fell from \$41, but now that activity too is decreasing. The *Denver Post* reported Jan. 3, 1986, that oil and gas well completions in 1985 dropped by 8 percent. That average hides bigger changes. In Colorado, well completions rose a bit, but they dropped by almost 20 percent in Wyoming.

The effects of the bust are also seen every three months in the region's newspapers, when the office vacancy figures are released. At first, it was assumed that "see through" office floors were temporary phenomena. Now it is predicted that Denver and Houston will be years working off their inventory.

The most intriguing reaction to the energy downturn is taking place in Texas, where a coalition of state leaders, with Gov. Mark White, D, at their head, is attempting to change the very character of the state. At White's urging, the state Legislature passed a law barring students who get less than

70 in any subject from participating in sports and other activities.

White told *The New York Times* for Nov. 25, 1985, "The oil and gas of the Texas future is the well-educated mind. But we are still worried about whether Midland can beat Odessa at football."

The law has cost coaches 15 percent of their varsity players and up to 50 percent of junior varsity and freshmen teams. Parents and coaches are not taking the situation lying down. Parents have filed a class action suit and the 10,000-member Texas High School Coaches Association is threatening White with political retribution.

One exception to the general energy downturn is in so-called Enhanced Oilfield Recovery. In southern Colorado, Shell Oil has developed a large carbon dioxide field. The CO₂ is being piped to Texas to flush out an oilfield which wasn't yielding to conventional recovery techniques. And in southwest Wyoming, Exxon is close to completing the first stage of its huge LaBarge Project. Exxon's network of wells will yield a mixture of natural gas and CO₂. The CO₂ will be piped to the exhausted Bairoil field in eastern Wyoming.

(Continued on page 12)

12-High Country News -- January 20, 1986

Conservationists spent much of 1985 fighting forest roading and logging

1984 was a wilderness year, as the 98th Congress created 8.3 million acres of new wilderness in 20 bills.

But the success in 1984 led to a crisis in 1985. Wilderness legislation protected millions of acres of land from the dominant form of management practised by the Forest Service -- roading and logging. But it also "released" many millions of acres of roadless RARE II land to roading and logging.

As a result, the major national forest story in 1985 was the conservation movement's struggle to control roading and logging. There are still some wilderness bills left to pass -- in Montana, Nevada, Colorado and Idaho -- but most attention in 1985 centered on efforts in Congress, in the courts and in the Forest Service's offices to protect released land.

The battle in the Congress and within the Forest Service has centered on economics. Conservationists have charged that all logging in the Rockies is subsidized. The Forest Service, conservationists say, subsidizes these deficit timber sales by building roads into unroaded areas to gain access to the timber. The agency argues in turn that, overall, its timber sales make a profit and that roading and logging, by aiding wildlife and recreation, have benefits critics don't take into account.

The latest battle over logging took place in December. Conservation

lobbyists helped convince the House of Representatives, led by Rep. Sidney Yates, R-Ill., to cut \$50 million from the agency's \$190 million request for road construction. But the Senate, led by Sen. James McClure, R-Idaho, restored the \$50 million and threw in a few million more. In the "compromise" on the Continuing Resolution for Fiscal Year 1986 (Oct. 1985 to Sept. 1986), the agency got its \$190 million.

The money will be used to add roads to the largest road system in the world (the agency manages 340,000 miles of road -- seven times the Interstate system). Despite the defeat, Peter Kirby of The Wilderness Society is optimistic. "This is the first time anyone took a run at the roading budget. It was a good start. If you look at similar battles, like coal leasing, the Clinch River Breeder Reactor and synfuels, you'll see that it takes awhile to change things."

Kirby says there is a bright spot in the Forest Service budget. The administration attempted to cut trail construction in half from its \$7 to \$8 million level. But that cut was successfully resisted in the House after the Senate made the cut.

In the courts, the environmental movement won several big cases and lost a couple. Tom France of the National Wildlife Federation in Missoula, Montana, convinced Feder-

al District Judge Paul Hatfield to throw out thousands of acres of oil and gas leases on the Gallatin and Flathead national forests. France argued that issuance of a lease is a major federal action, requiring an environmental impact statement. He said the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management can't wait until a major field is discovered to do an EIS.

The case is on appeal to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco. If upheld, it could force the Forest Service and BLM to take a more comprehensive look at leasing. At present, leasing is a piecemeal practice, in which leases are issued almost automatically. Close examination comes only in the case of a discovery. Conservationists compare the random leasing to the planting of time bombs on the public lands. They want the suitability of the land for oil and gas development to be determined before exploration is allowed. Pressure is building in Congress for change on both economic and environmental grounds, but there is still no consensus on a bill.

An example of a time bomb lease is found on Little Granite Creek in the newly created Gros Ventre Wilderness Area, on the Bridger-Teton National Forest near Jackson, Wyoming. Getty, now owned by Texaco, wants to build a road up Little Granite to a drill site. That lease has been successfully challenged at

the district court level by the Jackson Hole Alliance and other groups. Texaco has appealed the ruling to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

The Jersey-Jack case in Idaho (HCN, 4/14/85) also illustrates the legal trend that could lead the Forest Service to be more complete and open in its planning. A district judge ruled that the agency could not road part of Jersey-Jack, which is a large roadless area on the Nez Perce National Forest, without fully laying out its roading and logging plans for the entire unit.

Mike Axline, an attorney with the Western Natural Resources Law Clinic at the University of Oregon who argued the case, said it could counter the Forest Service practice of drawing small circles around proposed actions and then refusing to consider effects beyond those circles. The Forest Service, which has said that the case sets no precedent, has not challenged the court decision. Instead, it cancelled road building within Jersey-Jack and will consider the issue in the Nez Perce's 50-year plan.

In a related case, the National Wildlife Federation's Tom France tried to force the Forest Service to lay out its total roading plans for the future in the Northern Region, headquartered in Missoula, Montana. On appeal, a Ninth Circuit panel ruled against NWF, saying the long-range plan was only a budget, and that a comprehensive EIS was not needed.

One of the most interesting conservation cases had nothing to do with the scope and timing of EISs.

Energy...

(Continued from page 11)

Exxon hopes to add a phase II to the project to supply the Williston field in South Dakota. But Prof. Richard Ewing of the University of Wyoming in Laramie told the *Casper Star-Tribune* that CO₂ flushing may not make sense if oil prices fall to \$22 a barrel. The question is particularly important in Wyoming, where 40 percent of oil production comes from fields that have been developed for at least 60 years.

When the Rockies were bursting with energy development, the federal government amplified the boom by creating the Synthetic Fuels Corp. and giving it an initial stake of about \$20 billion. Over the last several years, it has taken back billions from the quasi-independent agency. And this December, the Congress, by massive majorities, abolished the SFC and took back its last \$7 billion.

The abolition came at the hands of a coalition of environmentalists and fiscal conservatives. The coalition did not include such western congressmen as Sens. Orrin Hatch and Jack Garn from Utah, Sens. Gary Hart and Bill Armstrong from Colorado, and Sens. Malcolm Wallop and Allan Simpson of Wyoming.

The Western senators argued, with varying degrees of passion, that the nation needed the security of

synfuels even at government-subsidized prices approaching \$80 per barrel. So strong was the feeling in the House against the SFC that at the end, the pro-SFC forces were reduced to attempting to save a \$500 million subsidy for Union Oil in western Colorado and a \$186 million subsidy for Geokinetics in eastern Utah.

The House appeared just as intent on shutting the door in the face of those last minute attempts, and much of Congress' last few days were spent shuttling messages back and forth to the SFC and the White House.

The flavor of those days is best expressed by Utah's Garn, who told the *Deseret News* of his attempt to find SFC opponent Silvio Conte, R-Mass. "I told his receptionist, 'You put me through to your boss or there will never be another HUD project in western Massachusetts.'"

The pro-SFC forces were also furious at "certain bureaucrats" who, they said, thwarted President Ronald Reagan's desire to fund Union and Geokinetics. But the Reagan White House apparently played a key role in dispatching the agency by promising pro-SFC forces in the House several hundred million dollars for research into clean coal technology if the SFC were abolished.

The efforts to abolish the SFC were aided by Union Oil's long-playing disaster with its \$800 million, 10,000-barrel-per-day

project. Originally, the western Colorado operation was to start up in fall 1983. The latest intention, a Union spokesman said, is to test the project again this April. Meanwhile, Union has kept 500 employed in the small town of Parachute even though the project has only squeezed a few thousand barrels of oil out of rock.

Ironically, Union may come out of the SFC abolition with an additional \$500 million. It already has \$400 million in price subsidies if it can get its project to produce oil. The extra \$500 million would be used to add a second phase to its project. As Union interprets its contract with the SFC, it can use \$325 million of the \$500 million for loan guarantees to build phase two.

However, Friends of the Earth, which led the environmental charge against synfuels for several years, says: "In all likelihood, Union Oil will have a very difficult time obtaining those loan guarantees under the new congressional resolution."

Jim Evans, who represents Colorado's oil shale counties in the northwest part of the state, said he believes Union has the loan guarantees and will proceed with its second phase. He also said that killing the SFC was a mistake. Evans said the oil shale counties fought Interior Secretary James Watt when he tried to accelerate oil shale leasing, but that they wanted to see the SFC survive so that some oil shale development continues. "What we

fear is boom and bust. We want to see steady development go on."

--Ed Marston



Denver, Colorado

Instead, the challenge brought against a gypsy moth EIS by the Western Natural Resources Law Clinic charged vagueness and unreadability. Attorney John Bonine said this violated the National Environmental Policy Act by concealing information from the public (HCN, 6/24/85).

Federal District Court Judge James A. Redden accepted the argument and threw out the EIS. But he rejected other arguments raised by the Law Clinic as to the honesty and competency of the EIS. The Department of Agriculture has appealed the readability part of the ruling to the Ninth Circuit while the Clinic has appealed the issues it lost. Meanwhile, the Forest Service was stopped from chemical spraying against the gypsy moth, and has amended its EIS to make it more readable.

If the "plain language" ruling takes hold, it could radically affect all EISs, whose organization and language often makes them incomprehensible to even knowledgeable people.

In addition to the battles before Congress and the courts, there are numerous on-the-ground fights, most centering on the Forest Service's 50-Year Plans, which are being prepared for all 155 national forests. According to *Public Land News*, published in Washington, D.C., 62 appeals have been filed against 25 plans, with 35 of them in the Rockies. The Pacific Northwest has as yet released no plans.

One early appeal was filed by the Natural Resources Defense Council against four national forests in western Colorado. The appeal was rejected by Forest Service Chief Max Peterson. But when NRDC appealed to the Secretary of Agriculture, Douglas MacCleery, deputy assistant secretary, in part backed the NRDC (HCN, 8/19/85). The backing came on the benefits the Forest Service claims for roading and logging. According to the agency, these activities enhance wildlife habitat, grazing and other values.

MacCleery said that in the forest plans for the Gunnison, Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and San Juan forests, the agency's planners had not substantiated those benefits, and he sent the plans back for revision. The environmental groups which brought the suit had hoped that the decision would influence other forest plans, but they say no evidence of that is yet apparent.

There are fascinating battles all over the region -- on Montana's Big Hole River, in western Colorado's aspen forests, in potential wolf habitat west of Glacier National Park, on Idaho forests that once served as spawning beds of salmon.

But the most interesting fight is on Wyoming's Bridger-Teton National Forest, for the same reason that Greek tragedies were always about the high-born and beautiful. Bridger-Teton is a spectacular forest in its own right, but it also serves as gateway and buffer for Teton and Yellowstone national parks. In addition to its beauty and proximity to the parks, Bridger-Teton is rich in timber and is partly underlain by the oil and gas-rich Overthrust Belt.

That wealth of resources has led to numerous administrative appeals, jockeying in Congress, and lawsuits such as the Little Granite Creek case cited above.

At the center of the struggle at the moment is the Louisiana-Pacific mill at Dubois (HCN, 12/23/85). L-P is seeking 16 million board-feet a year of timber to keep its mill open. That would roughly double the average cut on the northern part of the Bridger-Teton, according to Lenny Carlman of the Jackson Hole Alliance.

Conservationists say the cut is already much too high, and are seeking a sharp reduction even as L-P seeks a sharp increase. If the conservationists win, the L-P mill will probably close, wiping out one quarter of the jobs in Dubois.

The draft of the Bridger-Teton 50-year plan will be released this April, and rumor has it that it will contain sharp cuts in timbering. Related to the central question of the size of the cuts are numerous side battles, including construction of a road over Union Pass to give L-P access to the Upper Green River Valley, and three timber contracts the Forest Service stopped this summer, to the anger of L-P and satisfaction of conservationists.

What will 1986 bring on the nation's forests? Probably more of 1985. In the Congress, there will be attempts to cut the Forest Service's roading budget for the fiscal year starting in October, attempts to pass wilderness bills in Montana, Nevada and Colorado (Idaho is hopeless), and an attempt to revise the 1920 Mineral Leasing Law to change the way oil and gas leases are issued.



Dianne Weaver

In the courts, efforts will continue to make EISs more useful to the public and more comprehensive. It is also possible that the first challenges to 50-year plans will reach the courts.

On the ground, a galaxy of small,

independent groups of environmentalists, hunters and citizens will continue to try to influence the 50-year plans issued by their local forests.

--Ed Marston

Ferret colony edges closer to extinction

“Canine distemper is probably the worst event that could have occurred in the ferret population,” said Wyoming’s Game and Fish Department, when it announced on Oct. 31 that one of six ferrets taken for captive breeding was dead.

Events moved quickly and disastrously after that; by the end of 1985 four more captured ferrets were dead and another had also caught the very contagious and invariably fatal disease. The sixth ferret died Jan. 6.

What had gone wrong for the world’s only known population of black-footed ferrets? First, a plague epidemic last year wiped out some prairie dogs, the ferrets’ main food source in the colony near Meeteetse, Wyoming, and to kill the plague-carrying fleas, squads of people roamed over the colony spraying Sevin insecticide.

Second, although the Game and Fish Department protested that the numbers were too low, consulting biologists counted only 31 ferrets last year, down from 128 in 1984. The population, which normally fluctuates, seemed in decline.

Since the rare, sinuous animals were discovered on the brink of extinction in 1981, there have been repeated requests from “outside” biologists to breed some of the animals in captivity. Wyoming’s Game and Fish Department, which was entrusted by the federal government to recover the ferret from endangered status, successfully resisted the pressure until this fall. Department Director Harry Harju said the captive breeding program “did not begin under the gun. We’d planned it last year.”

Harju added, “We should have done it in the fall of 1984. Oh, hell,

yes, there’s no question about it; that was the recommendation within this outfit. But we had no facility and we had 128 ferrets (at Meeteetse).”

At least one critic of the department and its director found no comfort in saying, “I told you so.” Joseph Bauman, a reporter for a Salt Lake City daily, the *Deseret News*, wrote Jan. 3 that a major lesson from the events of last year was that “poorly funded state game departments are not to be trusted with the survival of a species of wildlife.” Bauman also quoted from a vitriolic letter that Harju sent to him for publication last summer.

“To say ferrets are on the brink of annihilation is unsubstantiated nonsense and extremely poor reporting,” Harju wrote. Bauman concluded that bureaucratic arrogance has “deprived everyone of part of their natural heritage.”

There is still hope that six other captured ferrets, which have developed some antibodies to distemper from a vaccine, will successfully breed this spring. Harju said it is too late to trap other ferrets to expand this minute



gene pool, since pairing off begins next month.

In terms of timing last fall, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department’s house organ, *Wyoming Wildlife*, helped carry on the ferret turf dispute at an unfortunate turn of events. Just as the distemper epidemic was discovered, the magazine raked reporters for writing about the prairie dog plague with “biased... vague... confusing... and incomplete statements.” No reporter or newspaper was named although the writer, Scott Skinner, accused them of trying “to ride the ferrets’ coattails to fame, fortune and escalated professional status.”

The article concluded by reassuring readers that “the situation is not as bad as the newspapers indicated.” Of course, at that point it was worse.

According to Dick Randall, the Wyoming representative for Defenders of Wildlife, “No one is sure whether or not there are any more ferrets in the wild.” In mid-November only three sets of tracks were seen. Captive breeding, Randall pointed out in a recent *Defenders* magazine article, “is an insurance policy for endangered species -- an egg in two baskets approach. But if there are only the six ferrets left for captive breeding, it’s back to one basket again.”

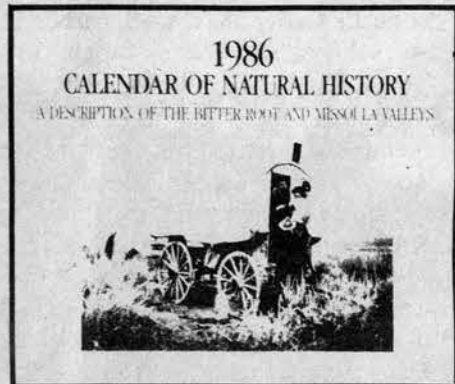
Wyoming’s Harju is more philosophical. Before 1981, he said, everyone thought black-footed ferrets were extinct. Then the Meeteetse colony was found and “They’ve been threatened by imminent disaster every year since then. It finally showed up this year.” But Harju said there was strong evidence that more ferrets may yet be found in Wyoming.

--Betsy Marston

14-High Country News -- January 20, 1986

LETTERS

LONGEVITY



Dear HCN,

I've produced the enclosed calendar (\$5, Mount Lo Lo Natural History Society, Box 692, Lolo, MT 59847) for the past two years to support the Mount Lo Lo Natural History Society, an amateur naturalist organization designed to monitor the environment within a specific geological area -- in this case the Bitterroot and Missoula valleys.

After years of environmental involvement, I've concluded that the movement is missing one major requirement to be successful: the notion of longevity.

The trend to environmental protection seems to be based upon the sequence of neglect, crisis, study, and finally, legislation. Even though such concepts as pollution and energy conservation are now being taught to preschoolers, we as a people still do not seem much closer to the earth.

The Mount Lo Lo Natural History Society is attempting to include longevity as part of developing environmental awareness. Members are asked to observe, record, and finally to submit their data to a centralized focal point, i.e., the Society. The information is then categorized and published in a quarterly newsletter.

Hundreds of people do this already by recording the first robin sighting, or the first frost date. I have found people who have temperature readings and precipitation levels for 30 and more years. There are folks who focus on an individual flower bloom, record the level of the river, or who watch an osprey's nest for years.

This data is available and absolutely critical towards establishing baseline data which is now lacking for environmentalists -- especially in the courtroom.

The idea is also politically ripe. Isn't the current notion to "get the government off our backs" and "the private sector can do a better job?" What could be more in tune with this than to say we will monitor our own environment?

Natural observations are not reserved for one political thought; Republicans, Democrats, and Independents watch birds and measure precipitation. Since grassroots politics seem to be the most effective, one can readily see the political viability of such a group.

The environment is too important to trust it to professors and governments; besides I would rather monitor it myself. The science of ecology needs to become amateurized so that it is a topic at the bar and at afternoon tea. When a science collects community supporters then it becomes effective. Many sciences are now greatly assisted by amateurs, such as ornithology and astronomy, for example.

The calendar is specific to the

Bitterroot and Missoula valleys, but I have sold it throughout western Montana as well as to many parts of the nation. I certainly don't have a monopoly on the idea and I wish others would publish local calendars based upon natural occurrences in their area. Enjoy your copy... I enjoy HCN.

Byron Weber
Lolo, Montana

DEFENDS CRESTED BUTTE

Dear HCN,

I'd like to take issue with the Dec. 9 article by Ed Marston on "The Life and Death of Rocky Mountain Towns." I have been fortunate enough to live in Crested Butte, Colorado, for the last year and contend that Crested Butte exists not only as "a structure" but as more of a community than most places, rural or urban, I've ever seen.

Although here only a year, I've met more people with a caring and dedication to Crested Butte than not. Whether they come or go, stay long or short, the locals, young and old, care

about their community. I've been lucky enough to be befriended by both newcomers like myself, but also some of the longer-timers, those who knew "the good old days" but certainly do not curse "the newcomers." This is not true only of myself but many of my friends in Crested Butte, who know it is a "community" because young and old, new and long-timer, care about their town.

Too many times stereotypes are created; I just wanted to share my perceptions with you, a neighbor, who also is lucky enough to live in Paradise.

Dave Naslund
Crested Butte, Colorado

NOT DISAPPOINTED

Dear HCN,

With regard to the Marv Poulson letter accusing you of character assassination (HCN, 12/23/85):

Let the record show you do not disappoint me. I am one who wants to know the several points of view which are generated from HCN articles.

ACCESS

WORK

ORGANIZER WANTED to work in Wyoming on natural resource and agricultural issues. Applicants should be willing to travel, work long hours, have good verbal and written skills, enjoy working with people and be committed to empowering rural people to enable them to have a voice in decisions affecting their lives. Salary: \$9,000/year with automatic \$1,000 annual raises. Paid medical insurance and 30 days paid vacation per year. Send resume and writing sample to Powder River Basin Resource Council, 48 N. Main, Sheridan, WY 82801. (1x)

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You do a good job. Hope you keep it up. All the best for the holidays and the New Year.

Philip J. LaLena
Grand Junction, Colorado

THANKS

Dear HCN,

Finally got to see a copy of HCN up here in southeast Alaska, and was greatly surprised to see my name on the front page (HCN, 8/5/85).

We had one hell of a fine team back in the good old days of The Wilderness Society. It was great to read about old friends and realize just how many of us are still working hard to protect Mother Earth. Thanks for the coverage. We'll keep doing our very best in our far-flung conservation battles.

Bart Koehler
Executive Director
SE Alaska Conservation Council
Juneau, Alaska

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Write: Ruth Hutchins, 1574 L Road, Fruita, CO 81521.

LETTERS



COWS AND CANCER

Dear HCN,

Heather Smith Thomas in her guest essay Dec. 23, 1985, reasoned that grazing cows on public land is okay because now that the buffalo are gone (they were exterminated), cows take their place in controlling vegetation. That rationale makes about as much sense as saying that we need to hunt deer and elk because the wolves are gone (they were exterminated also).

We need cows about as much as cancer. Overgrazing public lands is only part of the cow problem. Eating them is a risk factor in cancer and heart disease.

Ranchers need to face the reality that it is time to look at alternatives and that is not picking on ranchers necessarily. There are others who are having to change their lives because natural resources are being depleted.

Daryl Anderst
Denver, Colorado

BIASED TOWARD THE PUBLIC

Dear HCN,

Am glad HCN gives page 1 prominence to livestock grazing fees when public forage is the commodity put in the basement of the Federal Resources Store. A good many years ago a savvy Western forester named Earl Sandvig, now an Oregon retiree, proposed a logical cure for low-fee-itis: Sell forage on the basis of sealed bids. That would very quickly demonstrate the real value of the grasses, forbs and other comestibles on the ranges.

Is proof wanted? Check with the U.S. Navy; last year the privilege of running cattle on the open country at Boardman, Oregon, navy base went to ranchers who bid around \$12 per AUM. Yep, \$12, which is a right smart bit more than even the \$6.40 to \$9.50 Phil Taylor and you quoted.

Your grazing fees special section noted correctly that Gifford Pinchot laid on a nickel-a-month fee back in 1906 for a cow plus calf or five ewes plus lambs. It could have told also that when a thoroughgoing study of fees, made for the Forest Service in early 1920s, said market value was the way to go, organized stockmen had one of their boys do a critique that ended with a now familiar surrender to their wishes by the service. That 5 cent fee of 1906 had risen all the way to 13 cents by the middle of the Roaring Twenties, but the stock lobby succeeded. New fees would rise only 1 cent to 14 cents in 1927, but they plunged again: to 12 cents in 1928, to 7 cents in the Depression year of 1932,

and didn't get back up near the 18 cents the 1920s study called for until 1942 when we were in World War II. There have been many times when the Forest Service has acted as though its only "public" consists of livestock permittees, loggers and mining companies.

Am I biased, too, like that fellow who did the fee critique? You bet I am -- all the way in favor of the true owners of those grazing lands: the Public, with a capital P. Often the stockmen of the associations say they are only trying to look after their legitimate interests. So am I. You see, I have an undivided personal interest in those lands: they belong to me, too.

William Voigt, Jr.
Blackshear, Georgia

GRAZING WONDERLAND

Dear HCN,

In the Dec. 23 issue of HCN, one segment of the controversy over grazing fees on public land was not covered. On the Manti-LaSal National Forest here in southeastern Utah, the Forest Service is using a figure of \$13.09/AUM as the value of grazing on the National Forest. This inflated figure bears no resemblance to the \$6.40 to \$9.50/AUM fair market value given in your article, "A Search For Fairness," or the \$1.35/AUM fee actually paid by the grazing permittees. The Forest Service uses this \$13.09/AUM figure to justify uneconomic range improvements so that the permittees can enjoy their version of "The Forest Service in Wonderland" at the taxpayers' expense.

Obviously the Forest Service should use a value of \$1.35/AUM when determining whether a range improvement is economically feasible; however, reality and rational economic analyses have not been allowed to invade the Forest Service's consciousness. This use of an inflated value for Forest Service grazing is probably a widespread practice -- and something they would like to keep the public from knowing about.

Owen Severance
Monticello, Utah

CRITICAL OF WEED

Dear HCN,

After reading Robert Weed's letter (HCN, 11/25/85) concerning Dick Carter and the Utah Wilderness Association's BLM wilderness proposal, I can understand and sympathize with the citizens of Escalante, Utah, who hung him in effigy. I rather suspect he and the Southern Utah Wilderness Association (which he represents) were playing fast and loose with the facts.

His allegations about Carter and UWA are either false or highly distorted versions of the actual events. His account of the Utah BLM wilderness meetings in no way agrees with my experience at the same meetings. UWA has never claimed they knew every acre of BLM land in Utah. In fact, one purpose of the meetings was to obtain information about areas they didn't know and to find advocates for these areas in order to improve their original proposal. As a result, acreage was added to the UWA proposal when it met the criteria of the Wilderness Act and when it

received support from local conservationists whose voices would be heard in the political process.

At the conclusion of these meetings, it was agreed in writing by all participants that no one would publicly attack the proposal of another group, and that all groups would cooperate to further BLM wilderness in Utah. Hardly was the ink dry on this agreement, however, when Weed (SUWA) sent a mailer to some 1,100 Utah Sierra Club members which included a distorted account of the agreements. This was followed by other public attacks on the UWA proposal, the most recent of which is the HCN letter. So much for the word of Weed and SUWA.

While I cannot speak for most Utah conservationists, as Weed so glibly claims to do, I can assure you Dick Carter's judgment is not in question, nor is the 5-million-acre BLM proposal of the Utah Wilderness Coalition regarded as necessarily more realistic and reasonable than the UWA proposal, in this area of Utah. Most unfortunately, the divisive, and I believe unethical, actions of Weed and SUWA have resulted in irreparable harm to the environmental cause in Utah.

Jack T. Spence
Cache Valley Group
The Sierra Club
Logan, Utah

MORE ON UTAH

Dear HCN,

Environmentalists certainly should not air laundry before the public, but "where there's smoke there's usually some genuine fire." The subject is Utah's BLM wilderness lands, brought to our attention by Ray Wheeler's excellent two-part article on the "Last Stand for the Colorado Plateau" (Oct. 14 and 28 issues). The smoke is Robert Weed's letter to you "attacking the Utah Wilderness Association" (Nov. 25), and the possible fire is Dick Carter and his UWA itself.

Since Ray Wheeler's articles and Robert Weed's letter, three letters have appeared defending the UWA (Carter, Warnick, Poulson), all three UWA people, it should be pointed out. To balance the record, I would like your readers to realize the "philosophy" of the UWA.

Normally, such local in-fighting would be of little regional interest were it not for the first-class national (and world) significance of the Colorado Plateau. Utah's BLM lands are some of the most spectacular of the Plateau, yet Utah's political climate is among the most hostile to preserving wilderness as it is truly dominated by far-right Reaganite/Watt "Sagebrush Rebel" politicians and Mormon-pioneer development attitudes. One spinoff of this incredibly hostile atmosphere is that Utah politicians and the media refer to the Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society as outside "interest groups" (less polite would be "agitating lib-leftists"), yet consider the UWA to represent the "moderate genuine concerns of local Utah conservationists." The UWA may not have deliberately sought this situation, but they must glory in it as they have the favor of the Utah press and the begrudging favor of the politicians. An example of personalities complicating the Utah conservation community is Dick Carter, who was an apparently

effective and well-liked staffer for The Wilderness Society in Utah, but along with numerous other illustrious staffers was perhaps harshly "fired." As such, Carter may well harbor at least subconscious resentment toward "national" environmental groups and be quite proud of his growing effectiveness in the sad Utah "atmosphere." Carter is certainly talented and skillful, and has probably raised more money for his UWA than all other Utah environmental groups combined.

My personal criticism of UWA philosophy concerns their rather cavalier attitude towards the "sea of hostility" that surrounds the wilderness issue in Utah, specifically as regards to the significance of the current round of federal agency wilderness reviews, the importance of the loss of interim management protection to areas dropped by "premature" Reaganite wilderness legislation, livestock grazing within intended-natural areas (i.e., current faulty designated wilderness), and full willingness to work with Utah politicians now instead of "going national" and also to wait at least to 1988 for a possibly more favorable federal administration.

Utah's national forest wilderness legislation of 1984 already established the UWA as the more "reasonable and moderate" conservation group that Utah's politicians can work with. (Note: of 3.2 million acres of national forest RARE in Utah, Sierra Club advocated 2.6 million, UWA advocated 1.6 million, agency proposed 800,000, Utah's congressional delegation initially drew up 700,000, and final legislation was 750,000 acres.)

Utah's BLM wilderness is already following the same pattern. Here, the Utah Wilderness Coalition (Sierra Club, TWS, SUWA, et al) advocates 5.0 million acres, UWA 3.8 million and the agency probably 2.0 million. It pains me to even contemplate what the Utah congressional delegation will initially draw up, and it pains me even further to contemplate what likely legislation will end up designating. For, like Ed Abbey, I really support the Earth First! proposal for Utah's BLM wilderness: let's seriously look at 16 million acres (30 percent of spectacular Utah) preserved for all time for all the American people. (Would a full third of incredible Utah preserved for nature really be too much; is two-thirds of Utah for man and his developments not enough for our industrial life style?)

The possibility of an Earth First! future for Utah's wild lands is a certain impossibility as long as a very significant segment of the Utah conservation community (the UWA) makes questionable efforts to be "reasonable, moderate and realistic" within the existing Utah political climate. This letter is my own personal effort, and does not necessarily reflect the views of any groups in Utah.

Elliott Bernshaw
Salt Lake City, Utah

SMALL TOWN VITALITY

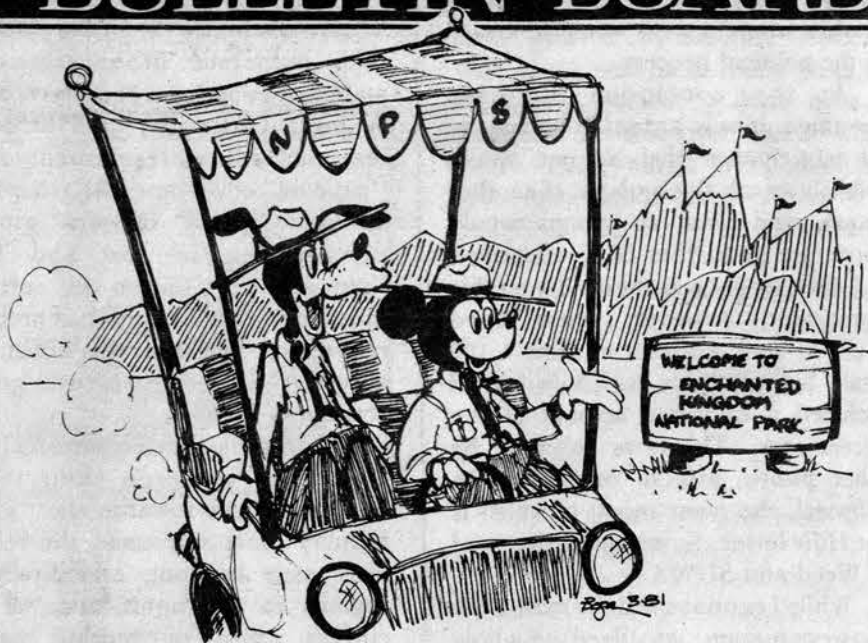
Dear HCN,

I thought your two pieces (by Ed Marston, Geoff O'Gara) on the vitality of small towns were handsomely done and contained many volumes in compact space. Happy New Year.

John McPhee
Princeton, New Jersey

BULLETIN BOARD

16-High Country News -- January 20, 1986



YELLOWSTONE CAMERA SAFARIS

Winter camera safaris through the northern portion of Yellowstone National Park will be offered every Sunday at 9 a.m. until March 23. The free, 50-mile tour begins at the north entrance at Gardiner, Montana, and the caravan of cars will be led by a park naturalist. Although the road is plowed in the winter, snow tires or chains are recommended. In addition, visitors should bring a CB radio, though some are available from the Gardiner Chamber of Commerce, a co-sponsor of the trip. Reservations are required and can be made by calling 307/344-7381, ext. 2357, or by writing Yellowstone National Park, North District Naturalist, P.O. Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190.

BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Barry R. Flamm, the chief forester for The Wilderness Society, has set out that group's argument for a limit to the kind and amount of roading and logging that takes place on the national forests. In a nine-page paper adapted from a talk, Flamm discusses biological diversity, island biogeography ("habitat islands" which support diverse species), and the effects of timber harvests. The paper, complete with references, is available from TWS, 1400 Eye St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005, 202/842-3400.

COAL AND WATER

To aid coal mine operators and state officials in determining the potential impact of new coal mines on water resources, Interior Department's Office of Surface Mining has developed a set of draft guidelines, and is now seeking public reaction. The 1977 Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act requires that mine operators submit a statement that predicts possible impacts on surrounding water resources before receiving a coal mine permit. The act also calls on the state to study the cumulative effects of coal mining on water supplies on and near the mine. For a copy, write to the OSM, South Interior Bldg., 1951 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20240. Written comments on the guidelines should be sent to the same address not later than April 17, 1986.

BELOW-COST TIMBER SALES

A three-day conference will be held Feb. 17-19 in Spokane, Washington, on below-cost timber sales. The conference is sponsored by The Wilderness Society, the University of Idaho and Washington State University, and will focus on the controversial Forest Service practice of selling trees to logging companies at prices which do not recover the direct administration and road-building costs the sale incurs. Most of the speakers are from academe, but also on the program are George T. Frampton, the new head of The Wilderness Society; Peter C. Myers, Assistant Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment in the Dept. of Agriculture; J. Lamar Beasley, Deputy Chief of the Forest Service; and Alice M. Rivlin, founding director of the Congressional Budget Office, who is now with the Brookings Institution. For information, call the University of Idaho at 208/885-6441 or The Wilderness Society at 202/842-3400. Or write to: College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences, Office of Continuing Education, University of Idaho, Moscow, ID 83843.

REWARD A WHISTLE-BLOWER

Who is a stalwart defender of America's natural heritage? Is he or she committed to principles rather than personal gain, and has a career been risked for those principles? If a name springs to mind, consider a nomination for the third annual Stephen T. Mather Award, to be presented in mid-May by the National Parks and Conservation Association. The award is named for the first director of the National Park Service, who in 1919 helped establish the NPCA. The winner will receive a \$1,000 prize and must meet the following eligibility criteria: any seasonal or full-time public servant employed during 1985 at the federal, state, county or local level in natural resource management and protection who has put his or her job on the line in commitment to principles. Nominations (self-nominations are not accepted) should consist of a letter, not to exceed three single-spaced typed pages. Write to Mather Award Coordinator, NPCA, 1701 18th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009. The deadline is March 1.

KEEP COMMENTING ON GRIZZLIES

Public comment on the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's grizzly bear management plan has been extended from Jan. 1 to April 1, in response to what the Department has called "extreme public interest." The goal of the plan is recovery of the grizzly bear population and its removal from the endangered species list. The plan details methods to be used to achieve that goal and also presents a management plan to be followed once the population has stabilized. The present grizzly bear population estimate of about 250 needs to reach 300 before the state would take back grizzly management from the federal government. Failure to reach the 300 mark will ultimately result in further restrictions on the use of Yellowstone National Park, says Assistant Game Warden Dale Strickland. Copies of the proposed plan can be obtained by contacting the Communications Division at the Game and Fish Headquarters in Cheyenne, 307/777-7735.

TIMBER SALES UP; HARVESTS DOWN

Despite a decrease in the amount of timber harvested in the Forest Service's Northern Region, timber sales in the area increased in fiscal year 1985, which ended in September. The region saw a 2 percent decrease in timber harvests, largely due to competing Canadian imports, says John Hughes, the region's director of timber management. An improved housing market boosted timber sales 2 percent, he says. Forest Service contracts give the buyers of the timber three to five years to harvest it. Whether the timber is harvested depends on the health of the housing market in coming years, he adds. In the last fiscal year, the region's trees produced more than 944 million board feet -- down 24 mbf from the previous year. Twenty-four mbf is enough timber to build more than 2,000 houses. Timber sales, however, increased from 917 mbf in 1984 to nearly 938 mbf in 1985. The Northern Region includes Montana, northern Idaho, North Dakota and northwestern South Dakota.

CARDS ON THE TABLE

Those wishing to understand exactly what land management agencies are planning have a number of new legal weapons: the Jersey-Jack case, the Mapleton case and *Conner vs. Burford*. Together, they require the Forest Service and by implication, the Bureau of Land Management, to take a comprehensive approach to roading, logging, drilling and other management and resource development measures. The cases require that the agencies lay out their long-term plans as well as the details of each specific action. A criticism often brought against the land management agencies is that they make decisions piecemeal, thus denying citizens the chance to understand the overall implications of action taken on individual oil and gas leases, timber sales and roads. An article describing the new world created by these cases appeared in the September 1985 *Environmental Law Reporter*, pages 10289-10297, by Peter Hapke. The writer is with the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture but the article is his personal viewpoint. Those not near a law library can probably obtain a copy through Interlibrary Loan.

COLORADO WATER PROJECTS

Jeanne Englert will talk about Colorado water projects at the Jan. 21 meeting of the Arkansas Valley Audubon Society. Englert is the Front Range coordinator for the Taxpayers for Responsible Water Projects, a group that has worked for elected, rather than appointed, water conservancy boards. The Arkansas Valley Audubon Society chapter will also discuss joining the Taxpayers as a member group. The meeting, tomorrow at 7:30 p.m., is at Columbia Savings and Loan, 101 W. 5th St. in Pueblo.

UTAH BLM VOLUNTEERS

Public spirit manifested itself in Utah where 412 volunteers spent a combined total of 28,902 hours working for the Bureau of Land Management last year. The volunteers, whose labor was worth more than \$200,000, worked a variety of jobs from trail maintenance to stream surveys. Some offered their services as individuals while others volunteered as part of a group, among them the Boy Scouts, the Future Farmers of America, Association of Retired Persons, and the Student Conservation Association. People interested in donating their time and energy should contact BLM offices in Cedar City, Escalante, Fillmore, Hanksville, Kanab, Moab, Monticello, Price, Richfield, Salt Lake City or Vernal.

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