

High Country News - April 27, 1987

# High Country News

April 27, 1987

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A Paper for People who Care about the West

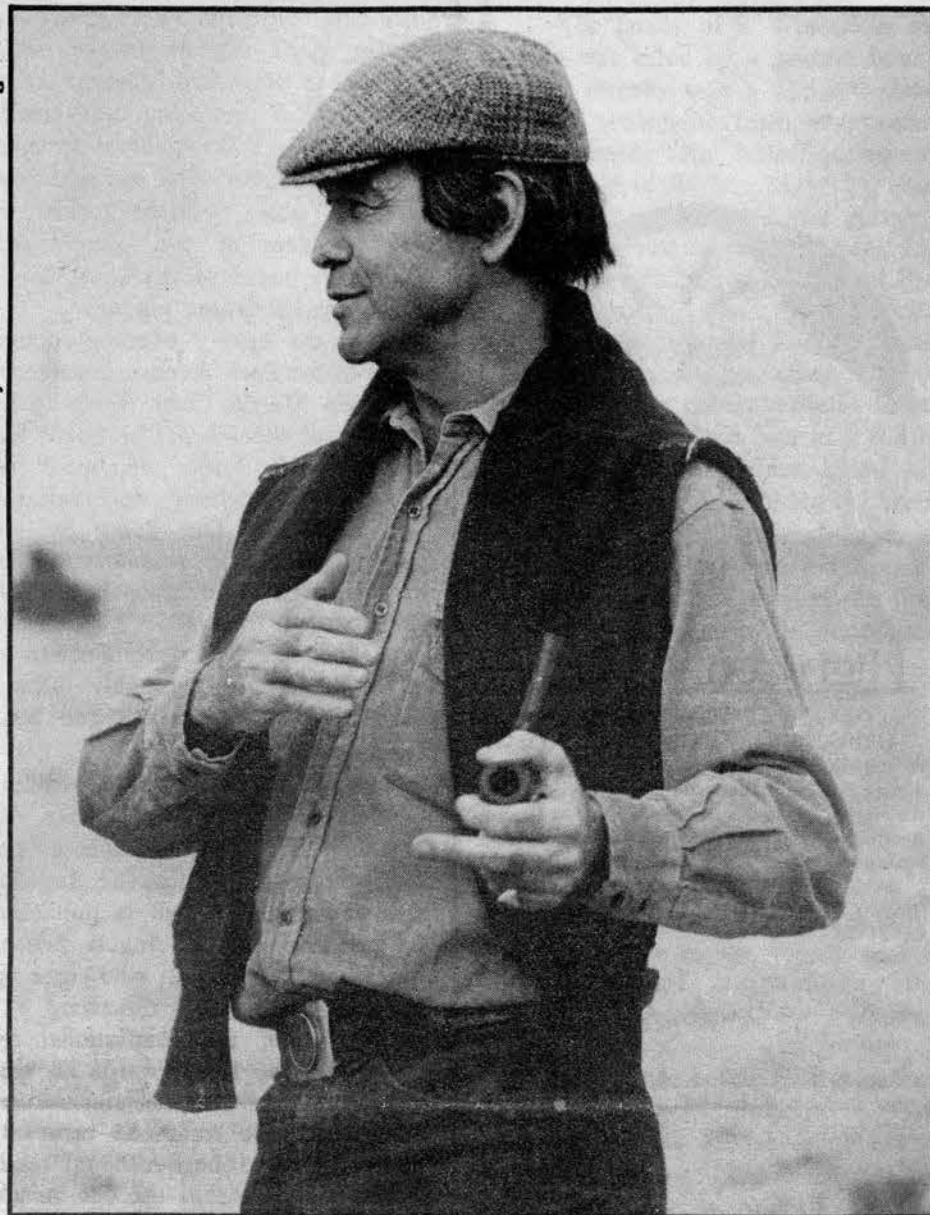
One Dollar

The grazing guru:

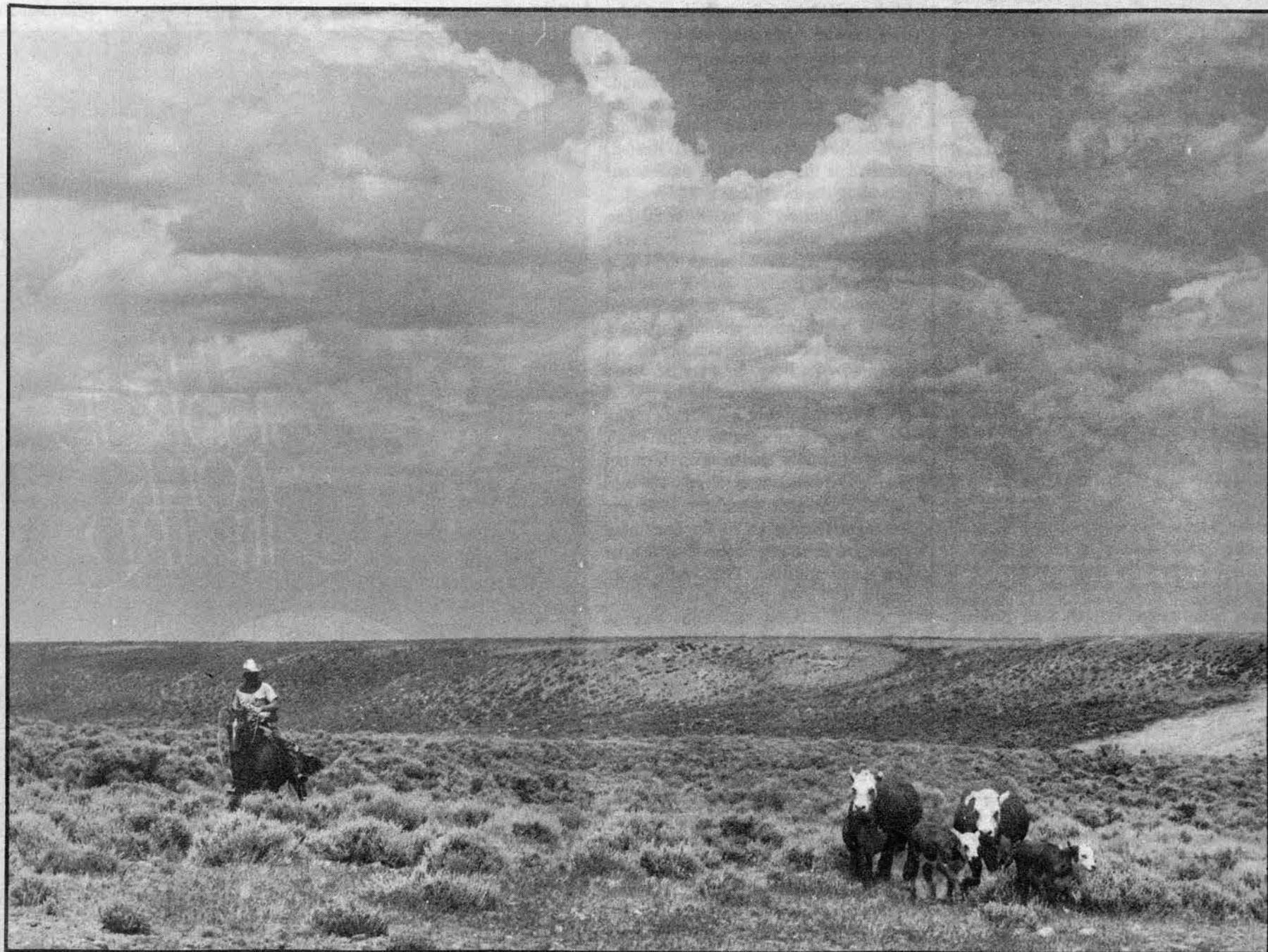
## Two views of Allan Savory

✓ See pages 10 and 11

Center for Holistic Resource Management



Allan Savory



## Dear friends,



### High Country News

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Because they are so very small, it would not be hard for *High Country News* to become too big for its britches. If anything were to cause such inflation, it would be the George Polk Awards Luncheon on April 8 in New York City's Roosevelt Hotel.

There an audience of about 400 -- including physicist I.I. Rabi and writer Kurt Vonnegut -- came together to watch Bill Moyers, James Reston, *HCN* and nine other recipients receive Polk Awards. Douglas Edwards of CBS News read the citations, while William Zeckendorf Jr., president of the Long Island University board of directors, handed out the handsome plaques.

Both the April 7 evening cocktail party in the Park Avenue boardroom of Philip Morris Corp. (judging by the size of the room, the board has approximately 1,500 members) and the April 8 luncheon were relaxing and enjoyable. The hosts for the university, which administers the awards, were, we guessed, a bit disappointed that *HCN's* publisher and editor weren't more Western in appearance. We probably should have worn cowboy boots and Stetsons.

We were, LIU said, the smallest paper to receive a Polk since the *Angolite* in Angola, Louisiana, got one several years ago. The *Angolite* was and probably still is published by prisoners at the Angola prison, but it was the warden who came up to New York to accept the award.

This time, the institutional recipients of the 1986 awards all sent inmates rather than administrators; as a result the luncheon ceremony was a moving one. Although each winner stayed within the one-minute time limit, a picture emerged of a tough-minded but idealistic trade made up of people who know who they are and what their job is.

By design or accident, the ceremony had the shape of a pyramid. Those of us doing local reporting served as the broad base of the pyramid, with Moyers and Reston, perched at the top of the profession, providing the overview.

*HCN* shared a table with Lee Coppola, a Buffalo, New York, television reporter who did four reports on a Buffalo business school that educated its poor but ambitious clients by cheating them. Coppola's reports shut down the school. He, in turn, was told by his station soon after the expose aired that he should concentrate on stories about "Why Mrs. Murphy's fire hydrant won't work." Coppola told them, "I'm not your boy," and was fired. He told the Polk Awards luncheon, "If you let them force you to do one thing you know is wrong, soon they'll have you doing another. There will be no end to it."

Coppola was at the awards ceremony with his new employer -- the head of the No. 2 television station in the Buffalo area. They expressed confidence that with the help of serious reporting, they would soon overtake his former station and become No. 1.

Lest that sounds too storybook, author Richard Kluger was there to remind the audience that "artistic excellence and commercial success are rarely related." Kluger received a Polk for his biography of the defunct *New York Herald Tribune*, titled *The Paper*. Its death, Kluger

said, meant history had lost an "irreplaceable witness."

The most vivid account of dusty, grunt reporting came from Alex Beasley and Rosemary Goudreau of the *Orlando Sentinel* in Florida. They spent months compiling their "Medicine on Trial" series. It showed the bunco game the medical and insurance industries are perpetrating on the public. The reporters found that 3 percent of doctors are responsible for 50 percent of all malpractice awards. One doctor was successfully sued 34 times. They found few frivolous cases.

Nevertheless, they said, the insurance industry continues to pretend it is being ripped off, and the medical establishment looks the other way while incompetents maim and kill patients. They concluded that the public is victimized twice: first by the bungling doctor or sloppy hospital and then by the legal system.

Institutional callousness was also revealed by Andrew Wolfson and Daniel Rubin of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*. They received a Polk for their investigation of the causes of a military-charter air crash that killed 246 American soldiers on their way to Kentucky from the Middle East.

Most local papers would have published tearjerk stories about the tragedy. The *Courier* looked deeper. It found that while the Pentagon splurges on coffeepots and wrenches, it cuts corners on air charters, choosing the low bidder without regard to safety records. The story came complete with an Air Force coverup. Officers told the reporters that its file on charters was too large to give them. It turned out there was no file.

Moyers, whose award was for his *CBS Report* on black families in Newark, spoke generally about journalism: "Great reporters," he said, "are our conscience."

*New York Times* columnist James Reston, a vigorous and white-haired 77, gave the five-minute "keynote" talk. "American journalism has never been better, and therefore never less popular." The role of newspapers has changed during his decades in the business, Reston said. Back when newsboys shouted, "Extra! Extra!" newspapers were the means by which people first learned of events. When that function was taken over by radio, newspapers carved out a new role -- the clothing of events with details and color. That role too has been taken, this time by television, whose pictures are far more vivid than words.

That has pushed many newspapers out of business. The survivors, Reston said, have a new niche -- investigations, analysis and interpretation.

The surprise for the *HCN* staff was how enjoyable, how unstiff, how uplifting the ceremony was. Working out of Paonia, we are much more in touch with environmentalists than with other media people. The Polk ceremony revealed a world of comrades in arms.

We also discovered our nominator for the award -- independent television producer Al Levin, a member of Polk's nominating committee, and the person who put up the four water issues for the award. Levin, a long-time reader of *HCN*, worked with editor Betsy Marston in the early 1970s, when both were producers at New York City's PBS TV station, WNET (Channel 13). We thank him for the nomination and the Polk board for the award. One result is that *HCN* is now a nominator, and we will be sending in outstanding stories clipped from the many Western newspapers we read.

There are scores of other people to thank. Travelling first in New York

(Continued on page 16)

LONG ISLAND UNIVERSITY

THE GEORGE POLK AWARD

Environmental Reporting  
High Country News  
1986

# WESTERN ROUNDUP



Teton Dam shortly after it failed

## BuRec looks anew at the Teton Dam site

Ten years after the collapse of the Teton Dam, irrigators and city officials in eastern Idaho are beginning a campaign to rebuild it. They face much sterner politics and economics than the original project.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation completed the original earth-filled dam on the Teton River in 1975, for flood control and irrigation storage. Fishermen and conservationists had bitterly fought the dam, which flooded 17 miles of blue-ribbon cutthroat trout stream and critical game winter range. After losing a long political battle, conservationists sued in 1972, claiming the project's 14-page environmental impact statement was inadequate. A federal district judge ruled otherwise.

On June 5, 1976, the 305-foot dam failed and sent 80 billion gallons of water careening down the Snake River. Eleven people died, several towns were virtually destroyed, thousands lost their homes. Roads, bridges, farms, and livestock were swept away. Damage totalled \$500 million. The people of eastern Idaho will never forget it.

The official inquiry that followed revealed a major political, management and engineering fiasco (told well in Chapter 11 of Marc Reisner's *Cadillac Desert*). The federal government eventually paid some \$250 million in damage claims.

Though local irrigators asked BuRec to rebuild the dam in 1977, the political trauma and changing economics have kept the agency, Idaho politicians and the public from seriously considering it. But now the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District and towns of Idaho Falls, Rexburg, and St. Anthony have formed an alliance to urge it anew. In addition to the original purposes, the cities are interested in the hydroelectric potential.

This March those parties met with BuRec, an engineering firm and staff from Idaho's congressional delegation. "We told them that if there is local support to rebuild it, we'd like to be the ones to do it," says BuRec Regional Director John Keys. "The need is still there, and we know a safe structure can be built. But it would cost much more today, and there would have to be significant cost-sharing." The first dam cost \$104 million; Keys guesses a new concrete dam would cost \$200-250 million.

The dam's backers aren't looking that far ahead; their first obstacle is finding funds for a feasibility study. Idaho Sen. Jim McClure, R, says he will support a study appropriation if there is public support, but by law half the study's cost must come from state and/or local sources. (Cost-sharing percentages for reconstruction would be set by Congress.) Keys says BuRec has no feasibility work underway or planned: "We will wait on the eastern Idaho people to generate support."

They will face some hurdles. "Rebuilding poses serious fishery concerns," says Virgil Moore of the Idaho Fish and Game Department. "The dam failure destroyed 60 to 80 percent of habitat potential in the Teton below the dam, essentially forever. But there's still an excellent wild cutthroat fishery in the drainage and a reservoir would threaten all of that for various reasons."

Ten years afterwards, Fish and Game is just a few months from beginning a major fishery restoration project in the Teton Basin, financed by damage claims paid by BuRec. Moore said Fish and Game has not been included so far in discussions about rebuilding.

"You bet we'd be involved again," says Russ Brown of the

Idaho Environmental Council, which fought the first dam. "There'd be no 14-page impact statement this time." After running through the numbers as if the battle had been yesterday, Brown summarizes: "The flood control benefits are phony. The benefits of giving farmers who already have water more, are phony." Brown says they'd have to use a "halfway realistic discount rate, and this time they'd have to figure the risk of failure into their benefit-cost ratio. And this time the agricultural community would have to pay for a good chunk of it. In eastern Idaho, that's like being vulgar in church."

Congressional politics would add to the economic obstacles. Idaho's delegation is less powerful now and water project critics more powerful. And a Teton Dam rebuild would be an easy, evocative target for budget-cutting and conservationist legislators of both parties intent not just on stopping it but using it as a symbol to stop other projects as well.

Given politics, the new economics of federal water projects, the current dismal economics of Idaho agriculture and a regional energy surplus, Teton Dam reconstruction looks like a long shot.

But the state of Idaho and the Shoshone-Bannock tribes are now negotiating a quantification of the tribes' reserved water rights in the Snake River Basin. If those talks, or litigation if the talks fail, lead to a tribal water right large enough to take water away from existing users, political pressure for new Snake River storage would increase. Rebuilding the Teton Dam would then become much more attractive to many in Idaho and politically much harder to stop.

--Pat Ford

## HOTLINE



### Negligence caused death

The family of a Wisconsin man who was killed by a grizzly bear in 1983 recently won a \$36,000 out-of-court settlement from the federal government. An investigation into the death of William May, 23, found that garbage attracted the grizzly to the campsite near Hebgen Lake outside of Yellowstone National Park. The garbage was there because Beaverhead National Forest workers failed to clean up after previous campers. The grizzly pulled May out of his tent, dragged him at a full run for 30 yards and then killed him, says the Forest Service. May's family sought a \$3 million settlement and charged that wildlife researchers and bear-managers had incited the grizzly by injecting it with sernylan, a tranquilizer used on bears.

### Glen Canyon studies

Federal and state agencies are conducting 42 studies of the effects of the Glen Canyon Dam on the environment of the Grand Canyon. The Department of the Interior initiated the environmental studies in 1982 because of the dam's vast influences on the canyon's vegetation, wildlife, recreation and hydrology. The Glen Canyon Dam on the Colorado River is one of the nation's largest hydroelectric projects. Completed in 1964, it has a generating capacity of 1,150,000 kilowatts and provides power to Arizona, Colorado and Utah. A committee chaired by G. Richard Marzolf of Kansas State University will coordinate a final report after all studies are finished this summer says *News Report*, a publication of the National Research Council, an independent scientific advisor to the federal government.



### A fish story

A mid-air collision between a jetliner and a fish delayed an Alaska Airlines flight while the plane was inspected for damage. "They found a greasy spot with some scales, but no damage," said Paul Bowers, Juneau airport manager. How can a jet hit a fish? It's easy if the fish is dropped by a bald eagle, reports *AP* in the *Spokane Spokesman-Review*. The incident occurred as the Boeing 737 took off from the Juneau airport, the plane's pilot told Bowers. About 400 feet past the runway's end, the jet crossed the flight path of a bald eagle, fish in talons. "The law of the jungle prevailed," Bowers said. "As the larger bird approached, the smaller bird dropped its prey." The fish hit a small "eyebrow window" at the top of the cockpit, Bowers said. The eagle apparently escaped injury. The fish, species unknown, is presumed dead.

Bureau of Reclamation, Glade Walker

Tom Saubert

Bill Orr

## HOTLINE



The Heber Creeper

## A rail-blazing idea

Three Utah counties hoping for increased tourist dollars are facing the reality of multi-million dollar grant applications. Utah, Summit, and Wasatch counties on the Wasatch Front hope to buy out a soon-to-be-abandoned Union Pacific rail spur that goes from the railroad's main line to Park City, a ski resort in Summit County. From there, the counties hope to connect with the "Heber Creeper" scenic railroad that winds down Provo Canyon to Utah Lake. The result would be a 75-mile line carrying tourists and freight into all three mountain counties. But the project is on hold while the counties conduct economic and engineering feasibility studies. Costs of purchasing the Union Pacific line alone are \$3.7 million, and Park City Chamber of Commerce director Bill Clinger says it is anybody's guess how much building the extension will cost. Meanwhile, the counties are still applying for government grants to cover the costs of preliminary studies.

## Navajo summit

An economic summit will be held on the Navajo Reservation this July. The goal is to find solutions to the severe unemployment problems among the 170,000 Navajo. The summit is sponsored by the New Mexico and Arizona congressional delegations and Navajo Chairman Peter MacDonald, who say it will be a first-of-a-kind meeting between government policy-makers and industry representatives. Unemployment among the Navajo, the largest U.S. Indian nation, is estimated at 35-50 percent and the tribe's median age is 18.5 years old. The summit will be held in Window Rock, Ariz., or Shiprock, N.M.

## Park fees may rise

It will cost more to visit Yellowstone, Grand Canyon and Teton national parks if a bill sponsored by Rep. Dick Cheney, R-Wyo., and approved April 1 in the House, is passed by the Senate. The bill would increase admission fees from \$5 to \$10 while other park fees would remain at \$5. The bill also sends entry fees back to the national parks rather than to the U.S. Treasury, with up to 50 percent of the income collected in each park designated for that park's use. The advantage for Yellowstone would be a potential funding increase of over \$600,000, say park officials.

## Caribou are opposed as threat to logging

Two dozen woodland caribou captured in British Columbia were released in north Idaho's Selkirk Mountains in March. The transplant caps a five-year recovery effort for the endangered animal but will probably not end the accompanying local controversy that earned the Boundary County School Board's December meeting a spot on the NBC Nightly News.

The woodland caribou, related to the better-known barren-ground caribou of the northern tundra, is widely distributed across Canada, but was listed as an endangered species in the United States in 1983. Before the transplant, the only caribou found in the 48 states were from a small band just north of the border that occasionally wandered into the Idaho Panhandle and northeast Washington.

The transplant has generated continuous controversy in Idaho's Boundary County since it was first proposed. Logging and sawmills are major employers, and first estimates were that caribou habitat guidelines could reduce National Forest timber harvests 5 percent or more. Further study has reduced that estimate to 1 percent, but many local people don't believe it.

For some, the transplant has become a symbol of federal timber-harvest restrictions in general. In 1985, Idaho Sen. Jim McClure held up the necessary federal funds for the transplant, only releasing the money after the Panhandle National Forest increased the proposed annual



harvest on its Bonners Ferry District from 28 to 32 million board feet.

In mid-1986, Idaho Fish and Game education coordinator John Gahl enlisted 21 grade schools in an "Adopt-a-Caribou" program. Third, fourth, and fifth graders painted the radiocollars each transplanted animal now wears. Each school named its caribou: Alpine, Tickletoes, Snowshoe, Radar, Selkirk Sal, and CoCo the Cocolalla Caribou, among others.

"It is basically a science and mapping project," Gahl says. "Each week we'll give the schools the radio-tracking data for their animal, and they will follow its travels on maps for a year or two."

But Boundary County School Superintendent Mike Friend banned the program in his district after calls from the Chamber of Commerce president and others asked that he ban the program.

"We weighed the educational value with the potential for controversy," Friend said. School District attorney Pete Wilson, who as a private citizen has been the transplant's most vocal opponent, called the project "brainwashing."

Friend's decision sparked objections from district teachers, and a blistering attack in the Spokane *Spokesman-Review* by popular columnist Doug Clark. "Because these educators suffer from a severe shortage in the spine department, Bonners Ferry grade school kids will lose out on a scientific chance of a lifetime," was one of Clark's milder sentences.

Clark's column was read in California by NBC reporter Don Oliver, who made his own inquiries. As a result, the Boundary County School Board was greeted by a polarized audience and an NBC News crew at its Nov. 29 meeting in Bonners Ferry. After intense debate, the board voted 4-1 to reverse Friend's decision. Oliver's report followed Iran/Contra coverage on Tom Brokaw's newscast a few days later.

The gentle caribou are unlikely animals to generate such acrimony. Whether the fight continues depends mainly on the condition of the local timber economy. Caribou supporters hope controversy will abate, lest the animals themselves become a target of it. Caribou are unwary; in warm weather, they are easy to approach -- and poach.

--Pat Ford

## Earth First! is becoming mainstream

Attorneys, activists and students converged on the University of Oregon Law School March 13-15 to wrestle with new definitions of the environmental law profession. This fifth annual Western Public Interest Law Conference featured workshops on initiating and winning suits against projects that would despoil the land and its resources.

Subjects ranged from nuclear power to old-growth trees, pesticides to fisheries, forest planning to Native American issues. But the conference, titled "Citizen Enforcement of Environmental and Natural Resource Laws in the Western United States, Alaska and Canada," had another dimension -- one that bordered on the spiritual, and that revealed the environmental movement in search of clarity.

University of Oregon law professor Charles Wilkinson set the tone. He called on his profession to follow "a far higher law" than those that may allow corporate interests to degrade the environment.

"We will not stand by as officers of any court for laws that put poison into our rivers, or that indecently cloud or warm those rivers... We stand for eternity."

Wilderness Society attorney Peter Coppelman remarked after Wilkinson's speech: "Anyone who wonders where the spirit of Aldo Leopold resides should read this speech."

Perhaps as a result of the talk, the walls between establishment environmentalists on the one hand and groups such as Earth First! on the other appeared to crumble. Brock Evans, a National Audubon Society vice president, expressed admiration for those who put their bodies on the

line for environmental causes. "I may have to join them soon."

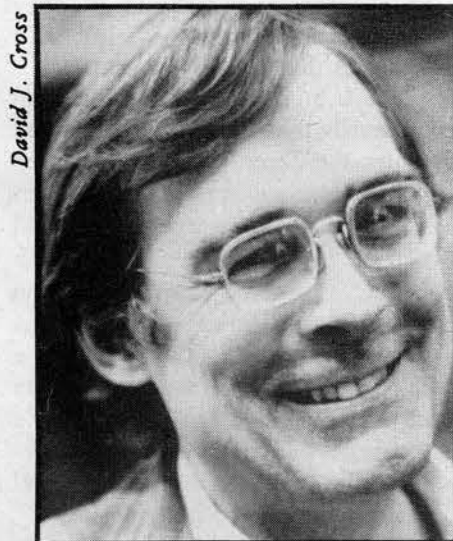
Wilkinson, speaking of those who look to a far higher law, said, "Some of us lie in front of rapacious Caterpillar tractors and drive spikes deep into old-growth heartwood, praying all the while that those spikes will shut off only a chainsaw, not the life of the innocent person behind it."

The differences between the two approaches, he said, were more apparent than real. "Yes, some of us wear stiff, anonymous business suits and, yes, some of us walk marbled hallways and talk the talk of the high and powerful, and, yes, we make some deals. For there may be times for driving both spikes and deals."

Earth First! founder Dave Foreman praised both Wilkinson and Evans for their presentations.

The conference also had its strategic aspects. Recent federal and state laws have opened up new ways for citizens to challenge polluters and the government for failure to enforce environmental regulations. Known as "citizen suit" provisions, some of these statutes have been widely used, particularly under the Clean Water Act.

But activists learned that more than 150 laws now contain such provisions. According to attorney Rick Parrish, opportunities to challenge the operation of municipal and industrial solid waste facilities -- where safety laws are frequently violated -- have gone virtually unnoticed. Located in towns throughout America, these facilities are subject to citizen suit provisions under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act.



David J. Gross

Charles Wilkinson

Attorneys said they relish the possibility to recover fees for environmental litigation, long a contributed, or *pro bono*, activity. In a recent article in the University of Oregon School of Law's *Journal of Environmental Law and Litigation*, John Bonine described how attorneys in private practice now handle environmental cases in the public interest and even make a living at it.

Under the 1980 Equal Access to Justice Act and its 1985 amendments, winning plaintiffs may recover attorney fees and litigation costs, including charges for paralegal work and expert witnesses.

The system remains far from perfect. It does not cover the cost of administrative appeals along the rocky road to litigation. It also does not compensate citizens for their time and effort in the public interest. But it does help tip the balance toward wily citizens who know they've got a winning case.

--Maggie Coon

## A resort town taps Grand Canyon water

Visitors to Grand Canyon National Park who arrive through the south gate, pass through the little town of Tusayan before they enter the park's slightly less commercialized confines.

Named after an ancient Anasazi pueblo that used to thrive on this same site, Tusayan is a collection of heliports, souvenir shops and carry-outs. The town also sports a couple of theaters that offer the tourist a chance to preview the Grand Canyon. One result is that Tusayan is growing at a slow but steady pace.

Two factors, however, keep it from exploding into the likes of a Jackson, Wyo. One is a shortage of available land since the town is surrounded by the Kaibab National Forest and Grand Canyon National Park. The other is a limited supply of water. Until 1980 Tusayan had to haul all the water for its hotel swimming pools, Jacuzzis and flush toilets more than 60 miles from Williams, Ariz. Since then Grand Canyon National Park has been supplying the town with up to 13 million gallons a year on a trial basis.

In a move to turn that trial into policy, the park administration recently released an environmental assessment "to address a concern of Congress that the sale of water not be detrimental to the resources of the park or its visitor." That assessment found no significant detrimental effects.

The water the park is selling to Tusayan ultimately comes from Roaring Springs, a spectacular underground river that gushes from a cave mouth and cascades 500 feet to Bright Angel Creek deep in the Grand Canyon. The Park Service has constructed an intake at the cave opening that removes up to 25 percent of Roaring Springs' flow (8 to 9 percent of Bright Angel Creek) and pumps it across the Colorado River to a way station at Indian Gardens. There, another pump pushes the water the last 2,500 feet to the south rim. In the summer months the North Rim Village also receives its water from Roaring Springs.

The Park Service admits the practice has had an impact on the Roaring Springs' ecosystem, but according to the park's planning and resources chief Steve Hodapp, there's no way to determine what that effect is. "We just don't have any baseline data," he said. The creek has been the subject of a number of studies, some of which have yet to be completed in an ongoing attempt to assess the effects of removing the water.

Present policy dictates that the water from Roaring Springs is sold to Tusayan only when the park's needs are met and its storage tanks are completely full. That means sales are generally limited to winter months when the park's visitor load is low. That situation will change, however, when the park installs a new pump at Indian Gardens. The new pump will be capable of pushing more of the water from Roaring Springs up the canyon wall to the South Rim Village. At present the water piped to Indian Gardens exceeds the ability of the system to push it to the Canyon's rim. The excess overflows into Garden Creek and eventually the Colorado River. The new pump would stop most of that overflow. It

Courtesy Squire Inn



Town of Tusayan

would also fill the system more efficiently and make more water available to thirsty Tusayan.

"The system creates the illusion that there is an excess of water at the south rim," says Hodapp. "But really there is no surplus anywhere at the canyon."

Some who have expressed alarm at Tusayan's growth worry that this increased excess of water, illusory or not, will fuel an even faster rate of expansion for the only town of any size bordering Grand Canyon National Park. The new system, according to Hodapp, could theoretically make as much as 50 million gallons a year available. That is more than double the total current consumption of the town. But Hodapp is quick to caution that the park also expects its own needs to increase. That would make less available for sale. "I don't think the park is going to put itself in a position where it sacrifices its own needs to supply Tusayan," Hodapp said.

One county employee who asked not to be identified compared supplying water to the park-side village to feeding a stray cat. "The more milk you give it," he said, "The more it wants. And then if you ever try to cut it off, you'll really hear it howl."

Tusayan has already howled once. In 1970, the Park Service refused to sell water to the town because other sources were available. Local businessmen then went directly to Congress and succeeded, in 1980, in getting legislation passed that superseded the law under which the Park

Service could refuse to sell the town water.

That, says Bob Lippman of the southwest office of the conservation group Friends of the River, is the dangerous aspect of this chain of events. According to Lippman, "The problem here is that this new law sets a precedent for the exploitation of park resources to fuel neighboring business developments."

In the meantime, Tusayan and its water needs continue to grow, from 16.7 million gallons in 1977 before having access to park water, to 41.5 million gallons in 1985 after gaining access to supplies from the park.

But its ballooning thirst is beginning to get the town into trouble. Its other supplier, the city of Williams, has served notice that it can no longer continue to increase its water sales to fuel Tusayan's growth. Add to that Hodapp's remark that the park will also have less water for sale in the future and the question arises: Where will the stray cat direct its howls for more then? The nearest water is in the park. One can only wonder if some day soon Tusayan will be back knocking on Congress' door for even greater access to the water of Grand Canyon National Park.

As for now, the matter is in the hands of the Park Service Regional Director in San Francisco, Howard Chapman. According to Hodapp, a decision is expected within the next few weeks.

--Dan Dagget

## Congress looks at grazing

The battle over grazing fees on public lands has reached Congress this year and the lines drawn pit East against West.

Georgia Democrat Rep. George Buddy Darden and 10 co-sponsors have introduced a bill to raise public grazing fees by as much as 300 percent over the next three years. The increase would bring fees to graze cattle or sheep on public lands to just below current market costs. In succeeding years, fees would be determined by fair market value, says Darden spokesman Brent Gilroy.

In response, Colorado Rep. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, D, and Wyoming Rep. Dick Cheney, R, have sponsored a bill to freeze grazing fees at the current price of \$1.35 per

animal-unit-month. Campbell says they have 22 co-sponsors and the support of most Western congressional delegations. A rancher himself, Campbell says the issue is crucial to hard-hit Western ranchers.

Darden says the fee increase would not ruin the Western rancher, but only remove an unfair government subsidy. Darden points out that only 7 percent of Western ranchers graze cows and sheep on public lands and that the issue should be a question of a free market in the West. Darden also says that with the current debt crisis, the federal government should not be underwriting subsidies that amount to as much as \$52 million a year to a handful of people.

--Steve Hinchman

## HOTLINE

### A toxic blaze

Toxic chemicals burst into flames in Minot, N.D., April 4, injuring 20 and forcing 10,000 people to leave their homes. The fire started inside a warehouse containing up to 80 types of farm chemicals, including the pesticides parathion and malathion, says a state coordinator for hazardous materials. Wind blew black smoke over the town of 32,800, and then across the Canadian border 50 miles to the north.

### Utah is de-steeled

USX Corp. will permanently close its Geneva Steelworks in Orem, Utah, July 1. The announcement came two months after a company decision to place the plant and its 2,200 workers on "indefinite idle" status. A USX official told the *Deseret News* the closing was the result of a long labor dispute that shut down a marginal plant in a weak market for steel. Before the dispute was settled in January, USX announced it would begin importing Korean steel to replace 70 percent of Geneva's market. Production at the plant never resumed. Despite USX's departure from the scene, the steel factory may stay open with reduced capacity. A coalition of Utah businesses calling themselves Boise Manufacturing and Technologies of Utah Inc. formed in February to negotiate with USX to buy the 44-year-old plant. However, the group will find itself in a precarious position if negotiations are successful. A recently completed study by a Wall Street steel consultant says prospects are dim for operating the plant at a profit. The best hope for re-opening the Geneva works is a scaled-down operation employing one-third to one-half of the original employees, the report says.



Walt Disney's Bambi

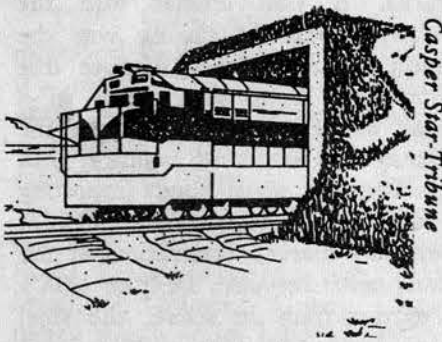
### Hearts as big as...

American children may be sadly misinformed about wildlife, according to a U.S. Fish and Wildlife survey done in conjunction with two grade-school publications, *Weekly Reader Eye* and *Senior Weekly Reader*. The survey found that the young people expressed sentimental affection rather than naturalistic interest in wildlife and knew little about animals. More than 40 percent of respondents were certain that wild animals get "lonely in the wilderness." Visiting zoos was the only wildlife-oriented activity reported by mostly urban residents. The survey also found that 79 percent of fifth and sixth graders polled disapproved of sport hunting; and 42 percent of all children polled disapproved of hunting for food.

## HOTLINE

### An Olympic decision

Colorado has another shot at hosting the Olympics. This time it's the 1996 summer games, but chances may not be good if old sentiments prevail. In 1972 Colorado voters rejected a referendum to finance the 1976 winter Olympics and elected into office Gov. Richard Lamm, a leader of the Olympics opposition. A recent poll by the *Rocky Mountain News* found that 38 percent of 663 readers responding don't want the summer or winter games, but that 70 percent of those readers who have moved to Colorado since 1972 do want to host the games. The poll was conducted after Denver business leaders confirmed they would attend a meeting on bidding for the 1996 games.



Casper Star-Tribune

### Movable MX -- again

Plans for a mobil MX missile have resurfaced, this time for missiles mounted on railroad cars that travel the nation's commercial rail network, much of which is in the West. The Reagan administration's strategy calls for 50 MX missiles, each carrying 10 nuclear bombs, to be stored at seven existing Air Force bases. In times of crisis, the missiles on their movable launchers would be shuttled around America's 18,000 miles of railroads, making them hard to detect and attack, says the Reagan administration. Wyoming's F.E. Warren Air Force Base, which is already home to 50 MX missiles in Minuteman silos, is the designated MX headquarters in the rail plan. The project has a \$23 billion price tag, but would replace a \$50 billion plan to deploy 500 single-warhead Midgetman missiles. The rail plan is strikingly similar to the Carter administration's racetrack deployment proposal for Nevada and Utah that Reagan killed six years ago. The same problems that axed that proposal -- cost, political opposition and doubts if the missiles could survive and thus deter an attack -- may derail this new plan.

### Casks-car collision

A train carrying two casks of highly radioactive waste from the damaged Three Mile Island reactor rammed into a car in St. Louis, Mo., in March. There was apparently no damage to the cargo and no release of radioactivity, but the train was held up for one hour for radiological inspection by the St. Louis Police Department. Police officers were unaware of the train's contents until they arrived on the scene, although Union Pacific says it had informed city officials the train would be passing through that day. The cargo was carried in specially designed casks, and were the ninth and tenth casks to make the 10-state trip from Pennsylvania to the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory near Idaho Falls.

## A Forest Service timber study draws fire

Timber supplies in Montana won't decrease for at least 20 years, assuring the state's lumber and pulp industry a flow of harvestable trees into the next century, says a new Forest Service-sponsored study.

According to the study's "plausible harvest" scenario, Montana's mills will be able to process logs at least at current levels or higher. The conclusion assumes preferred alternatives in forest plans for the state's 10 national forests will be adopted and that current timber-cutting levels on industry, private and state lands statewide will continue at current rates.

But timber on private land is being cut faster than it is growing back, which means that mills in the state's northwest corner -- an area with large acreages of industry timber lands -- might suffer from timber shortages after 20 years. The study's research team, comprised of Forest Service, state and academic timber economists, concludes that impacts on that region's mills will be gradual.

The two-year study analyzed 31 timber-related scenarios for the future of Montana's timber industry. Combining levels of harvests and mill production with Forest Service management alternatives, the study says wood processors will be using smaller diameter trees by 2030, moving from 18-inch to eight-inch trees.

Both conservationists and timbermen were skeptical of the study's conclusions.

John Gatchell, program director for the Montana Wilderness Association, said "the study is of limited use to us" because it doesn't consider the "two biggest influences on timber in Montana: interest rates and Canadian competition."

The study's analysts say the complexities of trade and interest rates were hard to plug into their research, but that those items could drastically change their conclusions.



Musing over the study's optimistic picture of the immediate future, Gatchell added that the research indicates "there is no impending timber shortage" even with additional wilderness set-asides.

Rem Kohrt, manager of the Stoltze-Conner lumber mill, south of Darby, Mont., disagrees. He says the study has been "grossly misinterpreted by the media" as being optimistic.

Kohrt says the study includes only "wood on the stump" and

doesn't address the problem of getting to the timber. Wilderness legislation, court decisions and changes forced on the Forest Service "because of things out of its power" will ensure there is not as much timber available as assumed, he adds.

Copies of the study can be obtained from the Forest Service's Intermountain Research Station, 324 25th St., Ogden, UT 84401.

--Bruce Farling

## Groups challenge a Colorado ski proposal

The San Juan National Forest's approval of the Wolf Creek Valley ski area in western Colorado is meeting resistance. Six appeals have been filed: five from the combined effort of the National Wildlife Federation, Heart of the Rockies Chapter of the Audubon Society, the Weminuche group of the Sierra Club and Save Our San Juans group from Pagosa Springs.

Conservationists say their primary concern is the way in which the Forest Service defined the no-action alternative, says Wildlife Federation attorney Tom Luspig. He says the agency "loaded the dice," by assuming substantial growth in Mineral County and on private lands in the valley regardless of whether development on forest land was allowed.

As a result, the EIS shows little difference between the Wolf Creek Valley full-build and no-action alternatives.

Luspig also says Forest Supervisor John Kirkpatrick's decision was "arbitrary in light of the lack of demand." Luspig points to the agency's recent decision to recommend full build of the East Fork ski proposal only five miles away.

"Look at East Fork," he says. "They're going to allow the building of two of the state's largest ski areas within spitting distance of each other in an otherwise pristine valley. There will never be demand for that kind of capacity in our lifetimes," Luspig says.

Dennis Neill of the San Juan National Forest disagrees. He says that based on projections for southwestern Colorado, the final environmental impact statement found both long- and short-term demand. Ski areas are good business for public lands says Neill, since the developer pays long-term lease fees and is required to set up a security agreement for restoration of the land whether or not the project goes

forward. "It allows the private sector to exercise entrepreneurship without risk to the public or its lands."

Luspig calls that approach marketing the public lands and irresponsible stewardship. He says the appeal also charges that the Forest Service failed to consider cumulative effects of all ski development in the region on wildlife. The agency has not developed baseline data on wildlife, he adds, and can't make accurate predictions until they know basic facts.

Regional Forester Gary Cargill will make a decision on the appeals, Neill says, but probably not until June or July.

--Becky Rumsey

## HOTLINE

*An easy way out for the president.*

A former telephone operator from Cincinnati, Ohio, has started a telephone apology service. At \$6 per apology, she will call the wronged party to make apologies for people who cannot bring themselves to do it, AP reports.

*What you get is one machine talking to another machine.*

That's what Colorado Democrat Rep. Ben Nighthorse Campbell says happens when 1,000 form letters pour into a Washington, D.C., office. Legislators then crank up their computers and fire back 1,000 replies -- all identical.

# BULLETIN BOARD



## FLOWERS AT 9000 FEET

The town of Crested Butte in western Colorado will hold a wildflower festival July 10-12, during the peak of the blossoming season at 9,000 feet. Begun by a group of local wildflower lovers, and augmented by researchers with the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory in nearby Gothic, the festival features short workshops, guided hikes, horseback rides and slide shows. Workshops in wildflower natural history, photography and native landscaping will be taught by Paul Buck of RMBL, John Fielder and James Borland. Actress Helen Hayes will kick off festival events that also include garden tours, arts and crafts displays and a golf tournament. The festival is sponsored by the lab and Crested Butte Chamber of Commerce. Contact Nadine Israel, Crested Butte Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 1288, Crested Butte, CO 81224 (303/349-6438).

## PAINLESS AND ATTRACTIVE INFORMATION

Every other month, the Northwest Power Planning Council publishes a magazine, which it modestly calls a newsletter, that is impressive both for content and appearance. It is a quick, painless way to keep up with fish and energy developments in the Northwest, an area that pioneered disaster with the WPPSS nuclear power plants and, in reaction, is now pioneering salmon restoration and energy conservation. The February/March issue contains news of appointments to the Northwest Power Planning Council (Gov. Cecil Andrus, Idaho, appointed Sen. James McClure's top aide to one seat; Gov. Neil Goldschmidt, Ore., appointed his gubernatorial opponent to another seat), word on the lawsuit the Seattle Master Homebuilders has brought against the constitutionality of the council (the U.S. Supreme Court has refused to hear the Homebuilders' appeal, so the group has lost its fight against the existence of the council and its conservation-oriented building codes), a survey of the radon problem as it affects homes, and an interview with Tim Wapato, the former Los Angeles cop who heads the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. In the interview, Wapato reminds the power interests that the biggest harvester of salmon in the Columbia Basin is the dams. To get on the newsletter mailing list, or to obtain a list of other publications, write: Northwest Power Planning Council, 850 SW Broadway, Ste 1100, Portland, OR 97205, or call Judy Allender at 503/222-5161.



## GROWN IN WYOMING

Wyoming has published a wholesale catalog of made-in-Wyoming products, offering everything from art and auto parts to food, furniture, gifts, games and livestock. Most of the catalog items were presented at the September 1986 Wyoming Business Rendezvous in Casper, which was attended by purchasing agents, wholesalers and the public. For a copy of the catalog write to the Economic Development and Stabilization Board, Herschler Building, Cheyenne, WY 82002 (307/777-7285).

## A FLOATING BENEFIT

Western Colorado Congress will launch three benefit whitewater raft trips this summer. Two three-day trips May 22-24 will float the Dolores River; one taking the upper stretch known for its whitewater runs and archaeological sites; the other taking the lower stretch through one of the southwest's most scenic desert canyons. The third trip, on June 27, offers a full day on the Gunnison River through its spectacular Black Canyon, with the potential for viewing river otters and peregrine falcons. Gunnison River Expeditions, based in Hotchkiss, Colo., will lead all trips and participants can choose between paddle- and oar-powered rafts. Three-day trips cost \$225, one day on the Gunnison costs \$70 and each price includes shuttle, equipment, boatmen and food. For information contact Western Colorado Congress, P.O. Box 472, Montrose, CO 81402 (303/249-1978).

## KEEPING THE HOME ON THE RANGE

A 30-page booklet has been issued by the Western Organization of Resource Councils summarizing the results of the group's study, *Who Owns the West*, and suggesting various ways in which control of the West can be kept or transferred into the hands of those who live here. The suggestions include requiring railroads to give up land grant mineral rights along abandoned rights-of-way, restricting preferential tax assessments on agricultural land to owner-operators, establishing agricultural districts that allow farmers and ranchers to discourage non-agricultural land uses, and to more heavily tax undeveloped mineral rights. The booklet says that the suggestions have not been endorsed by the Western Organization of Resource Councils or its four member groups (Dakota Resource Council, Northern Plains Resource Council, Powder River Basin Resource Council, and Western Colorado Congress). It is available from WORC, 412 Stapleton Bldg., Billings, MT 59101 (406/252-9672).

## FIGHTING WEEDS IN MONTANA

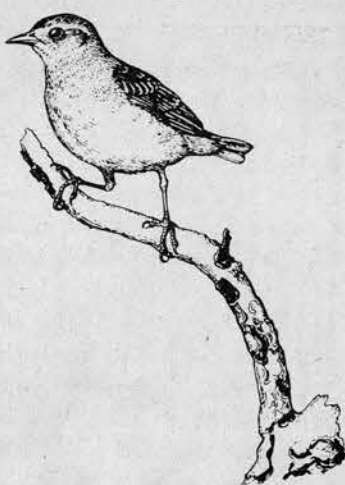
The Helena National Forest in Montana is accepting public comments on a 10-year plan to control weeds. Of the Forest's 976,074 acres, 3,641 are infested with nine different weed species including thistles, leafy spurge, knapweed and dalmatian toadflax. The weeds are mostly concentrated along roads, trails and in other disturbed areas, and since they are not native to North America, natural control agents such as predators and pathogens are absent. The draft environmental impact statement prefers the alternative of integrated pest-management, which uses biological techniques, as well as mowing and burning, re-vegetation of disturbed sites, predatory insects, pathogens and livestock grazing. Comments should be sent by April 30 to the Forest Supervisor, Helena National Forest, 301 South Park, Drawer 10014, Helena, MT 59626. For more information, contact W John Padden at 406/449-5201.

## GREEN REPORT CARD

"Green grades" given by the League of Conservation Voters to members of the 99th Congress are out in a booklet that includes charts and a summary of how legislators voted on energy and environmental issues. Sens. Barry Goldwater, R-Ariz., Steven Symms, R-Idaho, James McClure, R-Idaho, and Jake Garn, R-Utah, earned the poorest grades, while representatives from Colorado, California and Massachusetts were among the top environmental voters. The league computed scores by dividing the number of pro-environmental votes by the total number actually cast, minus absences. The booklet charts those votes taken on Senate and House floors in 1985-1986 considered most important by environmental activists and lobbyists. The League is a national, non-partisan political committee formed in 1970 to help elect conservation-minded candidates. For a copy of *How the 99th Congress Voted on Energy and the Environment*, write League of Conservation Voters, 320 4th St. NE, Washington, D.C. 20002 (202/547-7200).

## BARBEE IS THE SPEAKER

Park managers, rangers and interpreters to the public for federal, state and local agencies will meet in Florissant, Colo., May 7-10 to talk about resource management, market study, publicity and "branching out of traditional interpretive molds." Speakers at the "Uniting Our Forces" workshop include Robert Barbee, superintendent of Yellowstone National Park, Steve Antonuccio, program director for Colorado Springs Cable Vision, and Tim Merriman of the Greenway Nature Center in Pueblo, Colo. Participants may join field trips to the Ute Pass Museum, Dome Rock State Wildlife Area and the Garden of the Gods, among others. The Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument is hosting the event along with the El Paso County Parks Department, and special prices are available for members of the sponsoring organizations: Region I of the Association of Interpretive Naturalists and the Centennial Chapter of the Western Interpreters Association. For more information contact Debbie Tewell, Bear Creek Nature Centre, 245 Bear Creek Road, Colorado Springs, CO 80906 (303/520-6387).



## FOR COLORADO BIRDERS

Colorado Field Ornithologists meet for their 25th annual convention May 9-10 at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder. Co-hosted by the Boulder Audubon Society and the Boulder Bird Club, the convention includes a presentation on raptors by wildlife artist Brian Wheeler and a banquet and field trips to view warblers, bitterns, herons, egrets, buntings and woodpeckers. Registration is \$5, not including the banquet, and will be at the national center May 8 from 7 to 8 p.m., and May 9 from 6-6:30 a.m. For more information call Tina Jones at 303/759-9701.

## TETON SCIENCE SCHOOL CELEBRATES

If you're an alumnus of the Teton Science School in Kelly, Wyo., reunion organizers want to hear from you. The school celebrates its 20th anniversary June 5-7 with a weekend symposium and banquet featuring geologist David Love as guest speaker. Tours and discussions are planned for Saturday followed by a barbecue. Field trips on Sunday with past and present seminar instructors conclude the weekend. For more information, write Dimmie Zeigler, Teton Science School, P.O. Box 68, Kelly, WY 83011 (307/733-4765).

## \$100,000 IS THE PRIZE

The first-prize purse is \$100,000 in an art contest benefitting the National Park System. Called Arts for Parks, the contest is co-sponsored by the National Park Foundation, whose chairman is Interior Secretary Donald Hodel, and the newly formed National Park Academy for the Arts, whose chairman is former Interior Secretary James Watt. Judges will choose the 100 artists who best portray the landscapes, wildlife or history of the national parks, and in addition to the first prize there will be three regional awards of \$3,000 each. The Academy is donating the prize money and a portion of each \$50 entry fee goes to the non-profit foundation to help it finance special park projects. The Jackson Lake Lodge in Grand Teton National Park will hold the awards ceremony Sept. 12, and the Jackson Hole Fall Arts Festival will display the 100 finalist paintings soon after. The contest began as the brainchild of two Jackson Hole artists who are also on the Academy's board. For more information write Arts for Parks, P.O. Box 1, Jackson, WY 83001 (1-800/553-ARTS or locally 733-ARTS).

## VOLUNTEER, VOLUNTEER!

Would you like to work with summer visitors at a remote campground on the Missouri River? Would you want to be a naturalist near Flathead Lake? The Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management are looking for volunteers this summer and offer a wide variety of jobs. They include • An archaeologist's assistant on the shore of Jackson Lake in Wyoming; write Mary Risser, Grand Teton National Park, P.O. Drawer 170, Moose, WY 83012. • Conservation Corps member, ages 15-18, for projects such as trail improvement in Yellowstone National Park, in Wyoming; write Youth Conservation Corps, Visitor Services Office, P.O. Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190. • Trail crew member, naturalist, campground host or forestry aide near Flathead Lake in Montana; write USDA F.S., Flathead National Forest, P.O. Box 147, Kalispell, MT 59901. • Campground host on Missouri River in Montana; write Lewistown BLM District Office, Airport Road, Lewistown, MT 59457. • Lookout, landscaper or wilderness patroller in Utah, Nevada and Idaho; write National Forest Volunteers, 324 25th St., Ogden, UT 84401.

## PITANCE FOR WILDERNESS

Although the Forest Service's Region I in northern Idaho and Montana spent \$224 million in 1985, the agency delegated only .3 percent of the money to wilderness and only .07 percent to its wilderness workforce, says the Backcountry Workers Association. The group of rangers, packers and foresters suggests that the Forest Service alter its budget so that more money reaches on-the-ground management. They also propose a reduction in administrative costs rather than cutting wildland programs, trail building and jobs for seasonal workers. For more information, write the Backcountry Workers Association, P.O. Box 5856, Missoula, MT 59806.



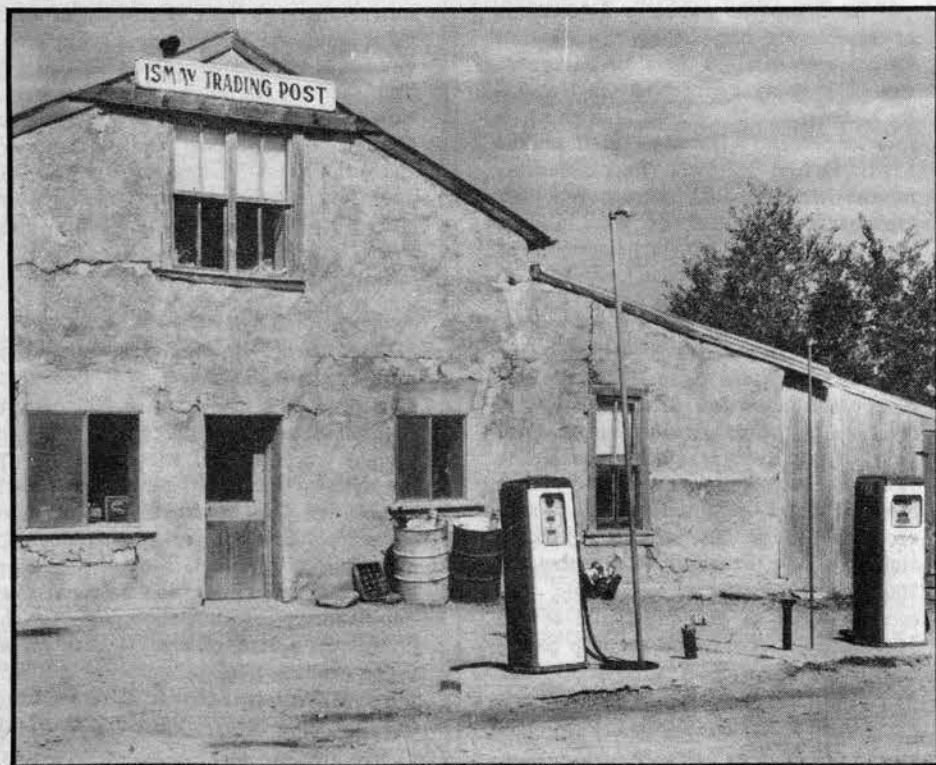
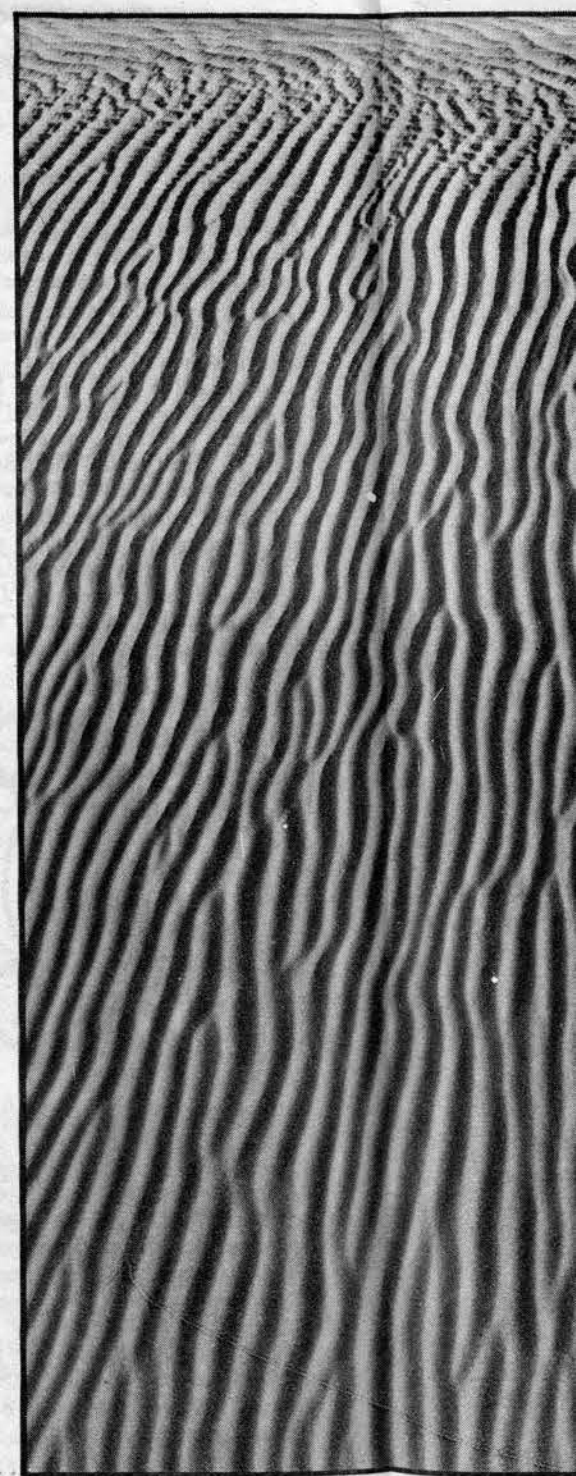
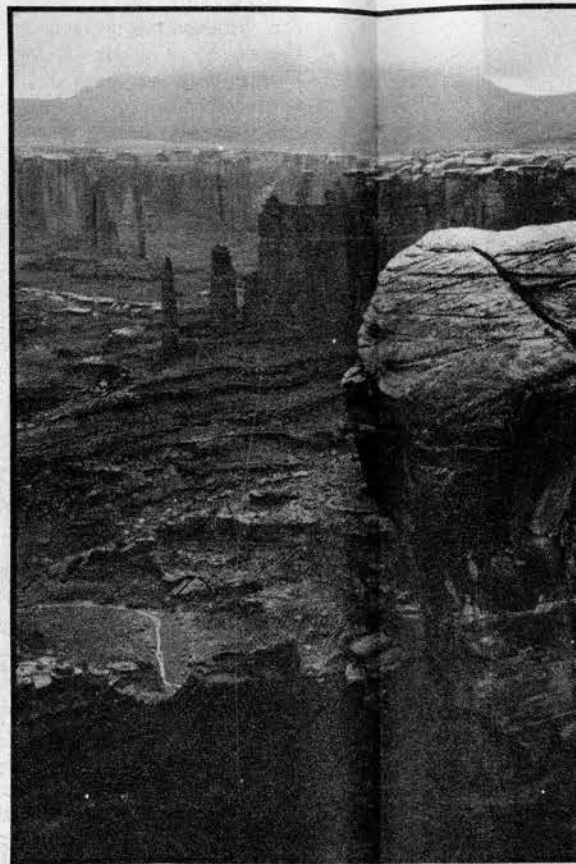
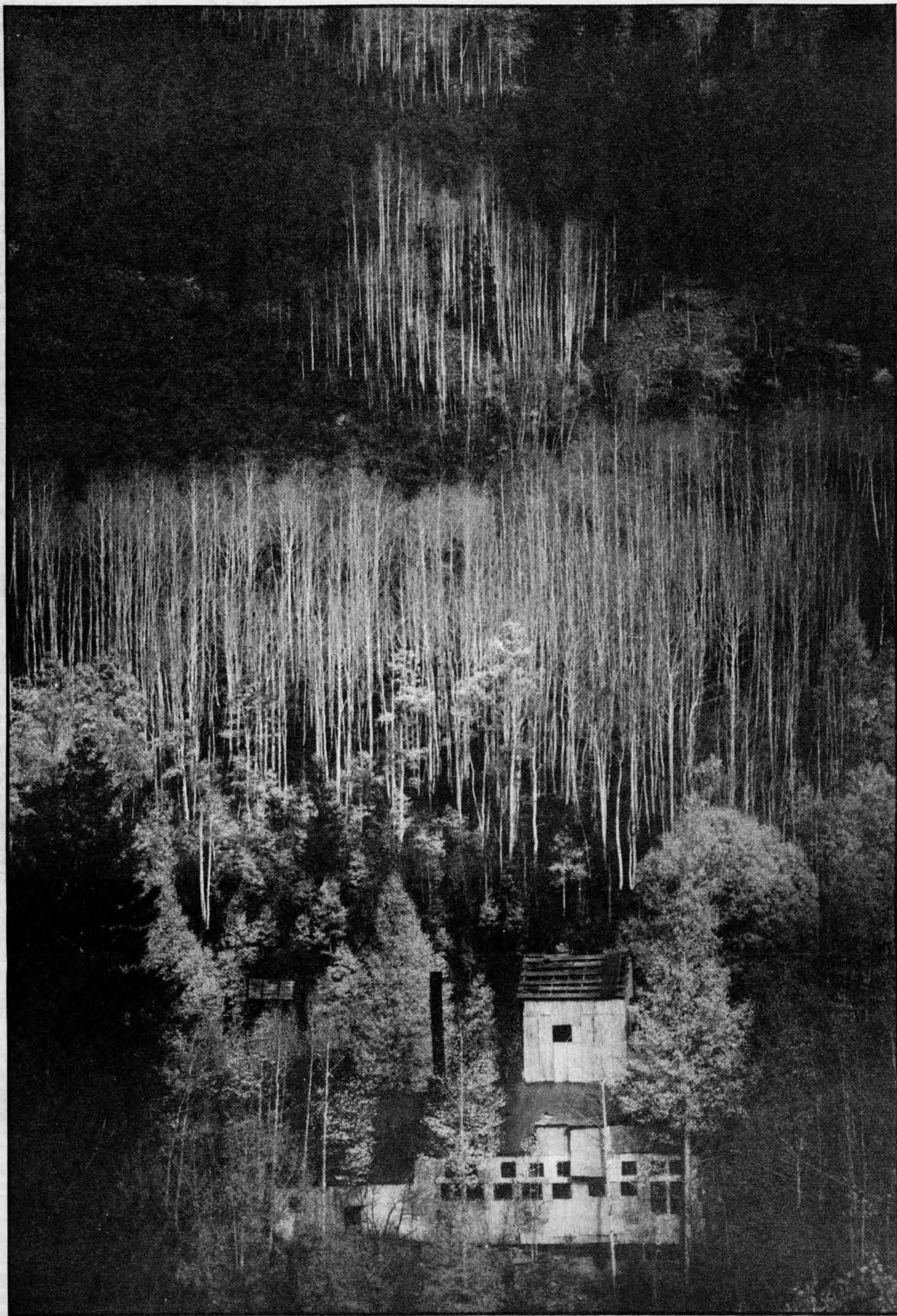
## NATIVE PLANT SYMPOSIUM

"Roadside Wildflowers, the Final Touch" is just one of many lectures to be given at the Southwestern Native Plant Symposium in Albuquerque, N.M., June 18-19. Participants can choose from a variety of tours including native-plant gardens, Petroglyph State Park along the Rio Grande River, and a subalpine meadow near 10,000 ft. Sponsors are the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, the Agricultural Science Center at Los Lunas, and Cooperative Extension Service. Register by May 15 with the Native Plant Symposium, NPS-NM, P.O. Box 934, Los Lunas, NM 87031.

## MOUNTAINFILM FESTIVAL

Dr. Charles Houston, an authority on high-altitude medicine who 30 years ago predicted climbs of 8,000 meters without oxygen, will be guest of honor at the ninth annual Mountainfilm '87 Festival in Telluride, Colo., May 22-25. There will also be movies about snow leopards; cowgirls of the West; a chronicle of the first foreign ascent of Russia's Victory Peak and an Australian documentary about ballooning in the Himalaya, among others. Tickets for all three evening performances are \$70 and reservations are advised. Write Mountainfilm, Box 1088, Telluride, CO 81435, or call 800/525-3455.

# Four C



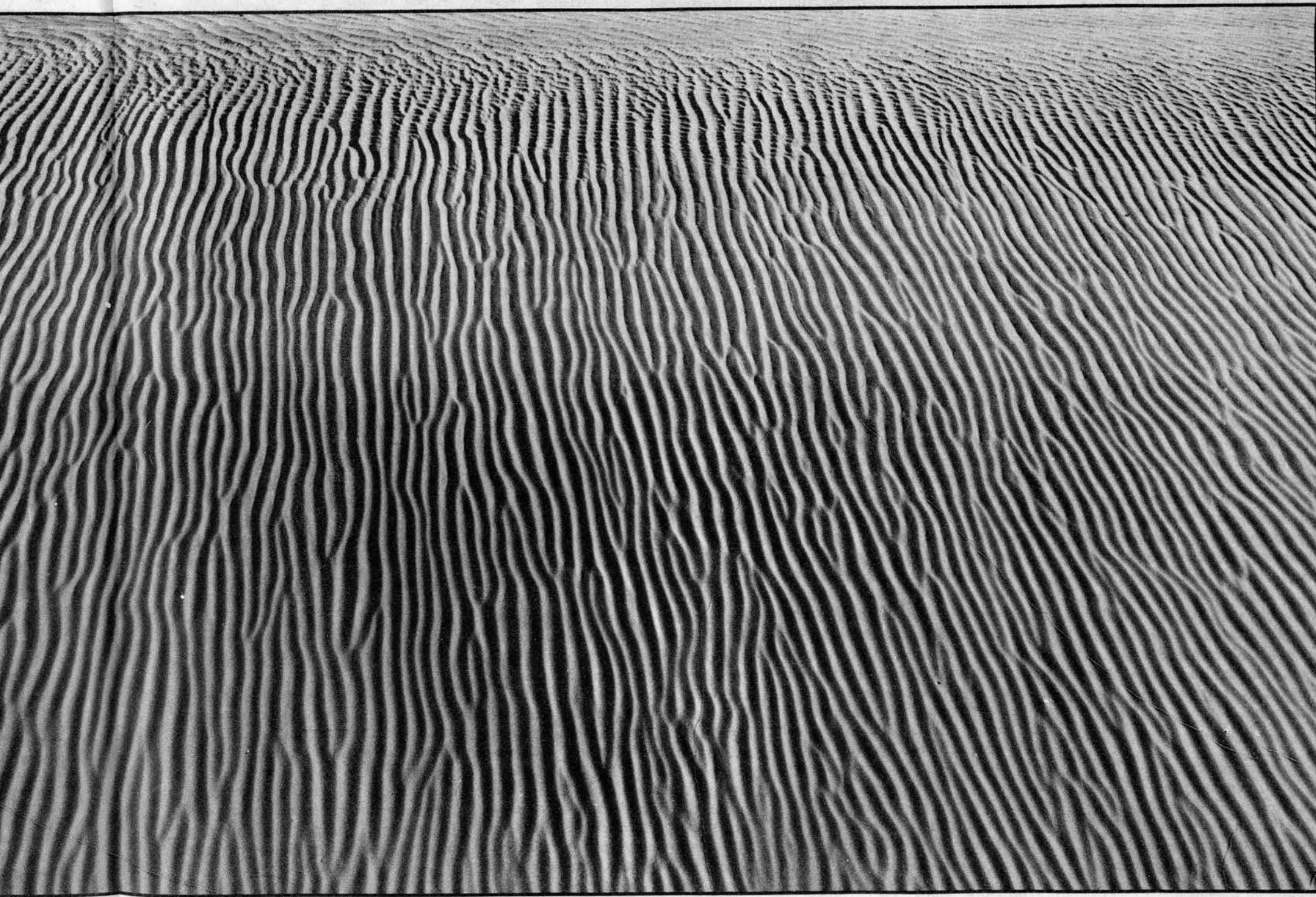
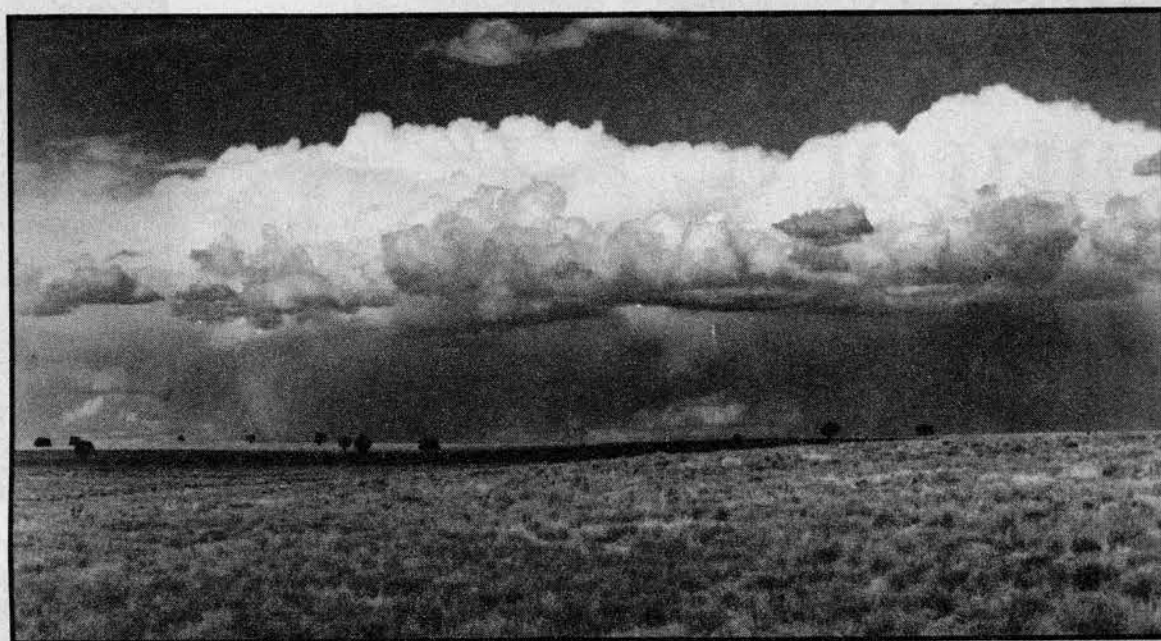
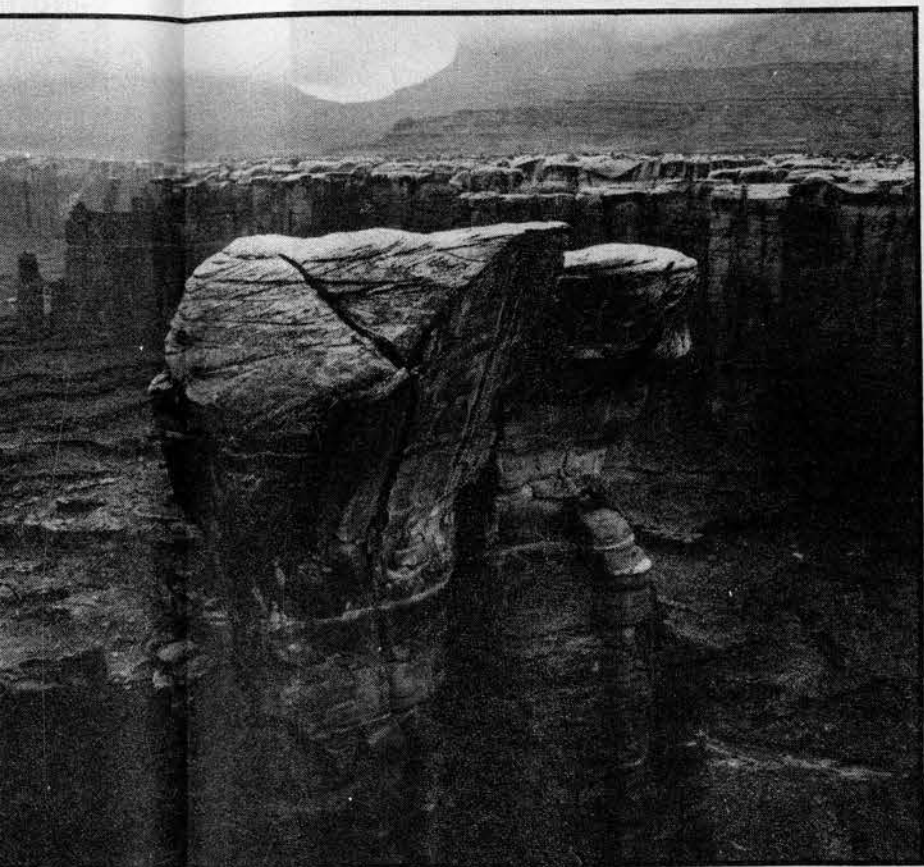
There are only four states in America that touch at a single point. The states are New Mexico, Colorado, Utah and Arizona, and the rugged land that joins them is the basis of a new book, *Four Corners Country*. It features more than 50 striking black and white photos by Dick Arentz with accompanying text by Ian Thompson. The book's publisher is the University of Arizona Press, 1615 E. Speedway, Tucson, AZ 85719.

Photographs, clockwise from left are: Ismay Navajo Indian Trading Post, Utah; mill in Mayday, Colorado; a storm in the Monument Basin of Canyonlands, Utah; Navajo steppe country, Utah; and dunes at Canyon DeChelly, Arizona.



# Our Corners Country

*Photos by Dick Arentz*



# Allan Savory: Guru of false hopes and an overstocked range

by Steve Johnson

The Great Plains Indian tribes of the late 1800s were a desperate people. The buffalo were gone, leaving a horizon strewn with bones. Their grassy plains were split by rails laid for the white man's "iron horse." The demoralized tribes, assigned to various reservations, were ready to believe anything. Then came a savior, a man called Wovoka, the Paiute Messiah.

Wovoka taught crowds of Indians from many tribes to do the Ghost Dance, and promised them that the spring would bring new soil that would bury all the white men, and the new land would be covered with grass, buffalo and wild horses. The dancers would then be reunited with the ghosts of their ancestors, and the Great Plains would once again be the home of the Indians.

Unfortunately for the Indians, the buffalo never returned, and the white man stayed. The vanished herds of buffalo were replaced by cattle, today's equivalent of yesterday's shaggy millions.

Like the Indians of a century ago, today's ranchers have also learned the meaning of desperation, particularly if their cattle are trying to survive on the arid public lands of the Southwest. Beef consumption is declining, prices are down and today's public lands are covered more by rocks than by grass. Finally, an aroused public is now demanding that its lands be managed at last as true public lands, and that wildlife be accorded at least equal emphasis with livestock.

A modern equivalent of Wovoka has appeared to show the besieged ranchers the way. His name is Allan Savory, a man who teaches the rancher that he can bring back the grass by doubling his cattle numbers. The land, accord-

ing to Savory, is overgrazed only because it's understocked. When Savory tells the ranchers his methods will halt their slide toward oblivion, while allowing them to graze more cattle, he gets attention.

Indeed, Savory is getting a lot of attention from many quarters, from ranchers to environmentalists. It's undeniably exhilarating to listen to Savory's precise English-accented words attacking today's grazing methods and describing the destruction that has resulted.

In his well-chosen words, there's something for everyone. The hardcore anti-grazing activists who have learned to hate the very sight of a cow on the public lands smile when they hear today's range management schools and agricultural departments of the Western land grant colleges described as useless and anachronistic. Ranchers who have watched Western grazing lands become more and more unproductive feel their guilt lessen. Savory is telling them that it isn't their fault, but the fault of the system. Nearly everyone at Savory's many week-long schools wants very badly to believe that these abused lands and decimated wildlife populations can come back to where they once were. There is a great hunger for a panacea, a single answer.

More than any other reason, Savory owes his success thus far to the utter failure of today's range management establishment. For over 50 years, range management professionals on the staffs of government agencies and Western land grant colleges have had complete freedom to prove that wildlife and livestock can coexist without destroying the land. Instead, these "professionals" have treated the public lands rancher as their sole constituent and have been a major factor in the establishment of a cattle monoculture on public lands, where wildlife diversity is only a distant memory.

Using research that confirms their

own biases, they have helped the public land rancher successfully resist most livestock reductions, especially on Bureau of Land Management lands. While using the excuse that there are insufficient data to support such reductions, they also attacked most existing data, leaving observers to conclude that the only trustworthy data will remain forever uncollected.

The real proof of the failure of traditional range management approaches is seen today on the West's public lands. According to the most recent BLM data collected from May 1978 to June 1985, 71 percent of BLM lands are in unsatisfactory condition. The allegiance of the range management professionals to the cow and to the maintenance of the rancher in his traditional position of dominance on the public lands now threatens to make the entire archaic structure collapse. By shielding the rancher from the necessity of facing change, such people have also robbed the rancher of his most important right -- the right to know the truth.

Even as the great majority of the West's public land ranchers clung to a fading past, a very few of the more aware and enterprising of their number were listening to Allan Savory. Born in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in 1935, Savory has been a game farmer, a tracker of poachers, a commando and a parliamentarian. He has a botany degree from Natal University, and was a wildlife biologist in Rhodesia until 1964, when he went into game ranching on his own farm. As a result of published studies by a Professor Laycocks on short-duration grazing, Savory became convinced that this method was a clearly superior grazing approach. With a partner, he began a counseling service to teach others about Laycock's findings. In 1978, due partly to the failure of Savory's own game farm as a result of prolonged drought and Savory's

political difficulties with Ian Smith, he came to the United States.

Savory is a mesmerizing speaker, and makes an arresting figure with his erect, almost militaristic bearing and meticulous pattern of speech. He has been derisively called the "Guru of Grass" due to his Messiah-like methods and the semi-religious fervor of his supporters. He has great charisma, enough to transform some people long opposed to all public land grazing into overnight converts. Sometimes the conversion lasts about a week; sometimes it's permanent.

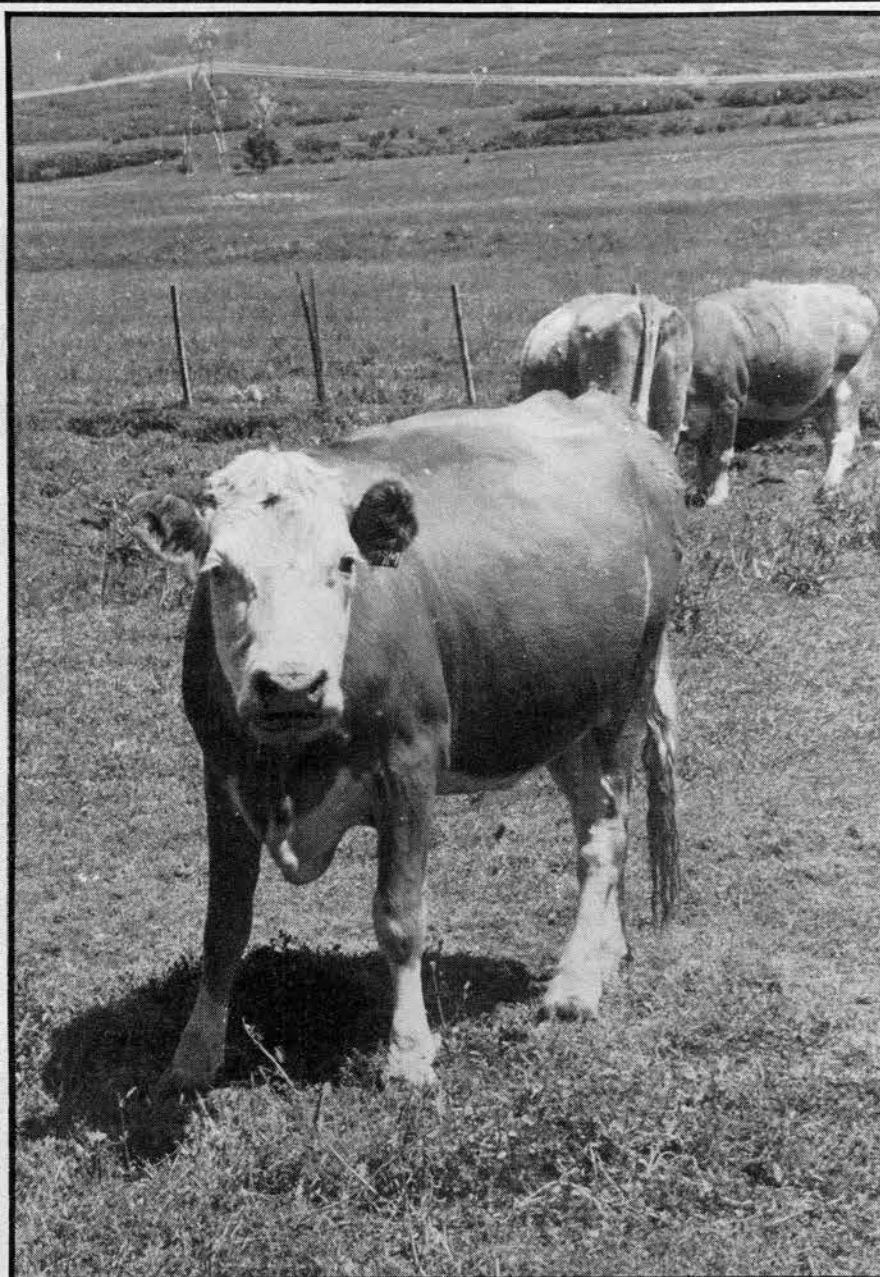
If you were to attend one of Savory's many week-long schools of Holistic Resource Management held across the West, here's a paraphrased example of some of what you would hear:

- The entire U.S. system of agriculture is not sustainable due to its reliance on huge machinery, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and unacceptably high levels of soil loss. Consequently, the long-term exportation of our agricultural system to the rest of the world is a cruel hoax, doomed to failure.

- Desertification is occurring in the southwestern U.S. at the same or higher rates as anywhere else in the world, despite our higher level of education, sparse population and great wealth.

- Cattle are the most available tools for recovering abused land and to help the water, nutrient and mineral cycles to regain their proper functioning again. Cattle are the ecological replacements for the vanished buffalo and other wild ungulates.

- Nearly all grazing methods in use today result in understocking and overgrazing. The practice of grazing small numbers of cattle all year (the



(Continued on page 12)

# Allan Savory: Creator of a Socratic approach to land management

by Sam Bingham

Allan Savory is an ex-Rhodesian wildlife biologist and racial egalitarian who has made waves in this country, largely on the strength of two contentions:

- Overgrazing is not a function of stock numbers;

- Cattle, sheep, goats, and horses may be the cheapest, most natural, and only realistic tool for restoring certain lands devastated by cattle, sheep, goats and horses.

But that is not all.

The Center for Holistic Resource Management, which Savory and his wife founded with the help of some people intrigued by his work, attempts to tackle all aspects of the paradox surrounding man's impact on nature. But the tendency for holistic solutions to fall outside the lists where environmentalism and technological arrogance have shattered lances for the last quarter century has brought cries of heresy from both sides.

HRM is not, as many believe, a system for running cattle through

webs of electric fence. Nor is it a Trojan horse for grazing-permit holders on public land. It is rather an idea concise enough to fit on the back of a Center for HRM membership card.

One can use this schematic rendition of holistic analysis to make management decisions, analyze a policy, diagnose a problem or define a research project. According to the underlying theory, everything depends on the functioning of four interrelated processes that define the ecosystem. One influences these with a limited selection of tools applied through the agency of money, labor and wit.

Basically meaningless to a layman, the guidelines are catchwords for lessons learned through practice. Among other things, they eliminate any policy that doesn't reflect the goal (whatever it may be) and isn't ecologically, socially and financially sound.

Thus defined, the question of whether or not "it" works never arises. A rancher, refuge manager, or game-department agent sets goals

for a piece of land, makes plans according to the HRM model, then monitors what happens. If the plan leads awry, one controls what one can and replans if necessary, until the goal comes in sight.

In this way, the model helps to unravel highly complex situations and avoid simplistic decisions.

The HRM movement has raised the most dust for including grazing in its list of tools. Adherents say since virtually no major grassland evolved without grazing herds, total rest is unnatural. In areas where low humidity inhibits decay processes that might recycle old plant material, healthy succession depends on large animals to do the job through hoof action, dung and urine.

Nevertheless, experience has shown that beneficial use of herds must follow guidelines for timing, herd density and herd behavior. Today, even among wild populations, mankind has unfortunately destroyed those relationships by eliminating predators, cutting migration routes, limiting home ranges and through myriad other practices.

On literally scores of ranches in the United States, HRM practitioners have, by concentrating animals and moving them according to the growth rate of grasses, produced astounding advances in the productivity and successional diversity of rangeland. For wildlifers and environmentalists, the same idea offers possibilities for recreating something like the spontaneous plant-animal relationships of yore.

Theodore Stans manages the quarter-million acre Sevilleta Wildlife Refuge on the Rio Grande south of Albuquerque, N.M. From the late 1940s until sold to the Nature Conservancy in 1973, it suffered heavy grazing pressure, but has seen none since.

"Before HRM came on the scene we had only one course of action," says Stans. "We could withdraw

land from grazing and guard it, and whatever happened then happened. Now the HRM model enables me to observe things we never considered before and entertain options we never thought we had. When you're working with a block of land, you're not dealing with one thing, but with a thousand different matrices. HRM offers solutions that may be more complex than most of us want to deal with."

For the most part, established grass on the Sevilleta responded to rest from grazing, but in many areas, plants have not reseeded. Some areas, bare 13 years ago, remain barren and gullying today. In some areas mature grasses thrive but do not reseed.

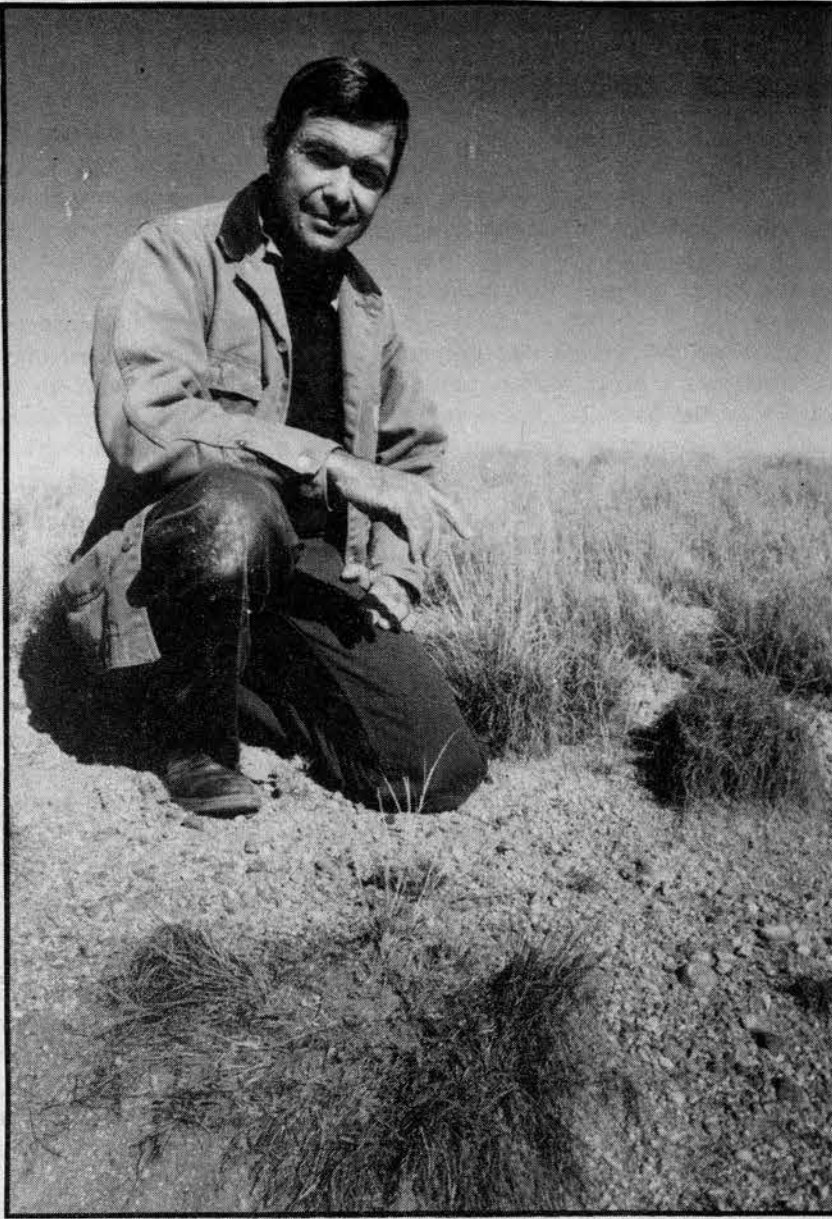
In another area, an apparent monoculture of Indian rice grass contains vestigial specimens of nearly 50 other grasses, hinting at a robust diversity as yet unrealized. A growing herd of pronghorn antelope stays only in certain corridors, perhaps because their activity maintains the quality of grazing. A natural fire, though stimulating mature grasses, exposed soil and damaged seedlings.

"For the most part, HRM analysis predicted these things," says Stans. "That does not mean we are going to bring in cattle to advance succession in our stagnant areas, but we now at least know what we face. We monitor things we never would have monitored before, and recognize that withdrawing land commits us to a lifetime of work."

A thousand miles away in the Bear Creek watershed of Oregon, the BLM is using HRM thinking to promote landscape and production goals quite different from what archival records of the area described. When Hudson's Bay trappers passed through in 1825, they found an area of wall-to-wall

(Continued on page 13)

Terrence Moore



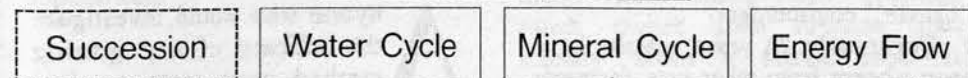
Allan Savory

## HOLISTIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MODEL

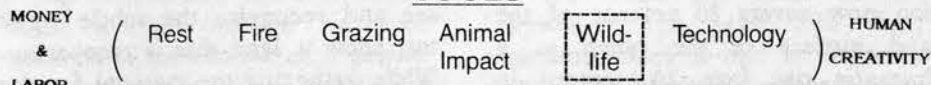
### GOAL

QUALITY OF LIFE  
PRODUCTION AND LAND DESCRIPTION

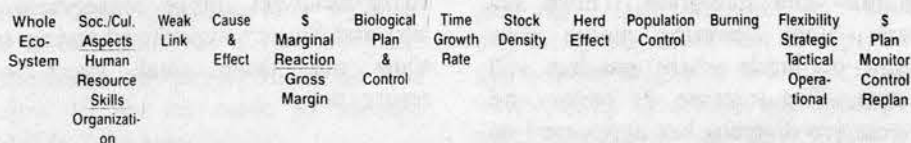
### ECOSYSTEM BLOCKS



### TOOLS



### GUIDELINES



## False hopes...

(Continued from page 10)

usual practice in the Southwest) is extremely destructive to the land, and is responsible for most overgrazing on public and private lands today.

- Unlike the wolves that preyed on yesterday's great buffalo herds, today's cattle have no predators to cause the necessary "excited behavior" and the consequent "herd effect" that causes the needed soil disturbance. To replace the predator, the herding of large groups of cattle is recommended.

- If herding is not possible, more fences must be built, and the cattle moved from one "grazing cell" to another as needed, with each cell grazed by great numbers of cattle for just a few days.

- In "brittle" environments (which Savory defines as those areas of the earth characterized by prolonged periods of adverse plant growing conditions), extensive rest from grazing causes deterioration of existing plant growth. Old plant material does not decay and must be physically knocked down on the ground by grazing animals. In non-brittle environments, rest is not harmful, as the normal breakdown of old plant material is accomplished without the need for mechanical means.

- The goal of HRM is to halt desertification, not to double cattle numbers. Cattle are merely the most accessible tool to achieve the overall goal of halting desertification.

It is this last item that is most questioned by critics of Allan Savory. Because ranchers and governmental agencies are the only real sources of income for Savory's HRM, critics fear that the result will inevitably be more grazing on land already reduced to a remnant of what it once was. The many fences required by HRM also are of great concern. In response, Savory has recently begun to support a return to intensive herding as a way to minimize fencing, and to state frequently that cattle can be removed once the land recovers.

As an example of their concern that HRM is merely a ploy to increase cattle numbers on the public lands, Savory's critics point to a recent brochure that guarantees "double production or fees returned" for all those who "...attend this school and then apply (HRM) as I will teach it to you..." The result, according to the brochure, will be achieved "...regardless of how low or high a rainfall area you are ranching in... how good or poor your range condition is... without any brush clearing, reseeding or any other costly range reclamation aid, and within one year of first applying (HRM)."

Such extravagant promises are a hallmark of Savory's HRM schools, and have prompted many to investigate the actual status of ranches currently using his methods. There are ranches in Arizona, for instance, that are now into their fourth or fifth year under HRM and under Savory's direct guidance.

One example is the Dodson Allotment located on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. A pilot

study to determine the suitability of HRM there is in its fourth year.

In late August of 1986, Forest Supervisor Nick McDonough examined the Dodson Allotment and found that there "...was not enough grass left to carry the cows through the winter, or any reserve left for wildlife or plant vigor." The rancher was forced to move his cattle to another allotment that had been intended for winter elk range, and to ultimately sell them earlier than planned due to lack of forage. McDonough said that "...I don't intend to permit any new (grazing) cells until the pilot cell is fully evaluated."

Farther south in Arizona, the F-Bar Ranch is in its fifth year under HRM. According to the BLM, the owners of the ranch were told that "you can do anything Savory wants" in order to prevent Savory from claiming that management constraints prevented him from succeeding. BLM personnel are now preparing their analysis of the experiment, but unofficially say that they are unable to document any improvements in the vegetation. Only snakeweed, an inedible shrub, showed any increase in abundance. According to one BLM researcher, "(t)he principles (of HRM) seem sound, but I have not been anywhere where I've seen the improvement promised."

One of the features of Savory's HRM schools is a visit to a local example of traditional grazing methods and a contrasting visit to an area under HRM methods. At a recent tour near Phoenix, Ariz., several wildlife professionals in the class said they preferred the appearance of an ungrazed area shown to another area under HRM, and challenged Savory to show them a comparable area that was grazed and looked better. The challenge went unanswered.

In fairness, it's possible that five years simply isn't long enough to adequately judge the merits of HRM. The next logical step is to consider the record in Zimbabwe and South Africa, where Savory spent over 20 years trying to implement his methods. When asked, Savory himself claims that there is no currently successful example of his methods in his native land. No one, according to Savory, has been able to keep it going in his absence, and all the efforts have degenerated into fixed methods of short-duration grazing.

In 1982, the World Bank/International Finance Corporation investigated the Savory Grazing Method (SGM) in Zimbabwe, examining seven ranches that have been under the system for periods of time ranging from seven to 14 years. The largest of Savory's former clients is the Liebeg Towia Ranch covering 1.3 million acres. At the time of the above investigation, a return to normal rainfall had just required a stock reduction, and "...there was no grass at all left on the paddocks and the stock were living on the fallen leaves of the Mopani trees." It was found that "...no significant change in range composition has so far been recorded."

In response to Savory's claim that no one in Zimbabwe is actually following his methods adequately, the report had this to say: "At the same time it could be said that if a highly committed range extension officer and a number of able ranchers have been unable to fully appreciate and practice Savory's

*'Anyone who investigates the efficacy of any grazing method must learn to deal with ambiguity.'*

methods after 10 years of contact and advice then these methods can only be of severely limited application."

In listing relevant research on SGM in Zimbabwe, the World Bank/International Finance Corporation found "...virtually no different effects attributable to grazing systems," and that most of the small changes that did occur are due to "...short-term changes in rainfall pattern."

According to its letterhead, the Center for Holistic Resource Management is "a non-profit foundation dedicated to halting desertification world-wide..." The use of cattle breaks up the soil, allowing improved water penetration and reduced erosion and water runoff, thus improving the viability of the water cycle. This "herd effect" also allows seeds to establish themselves in the broken soil surface, and the resulting root mat will greatly improve water retention in the soil. Savory repeatedly stresses that cattle are only a tool for the recovery of ecosystems.

The results of recent research in the November 1986 issue of the *Journal of Range Management*, if accurate, strongly refute the ability of grazing systems such as HRM to halt erosion and desertification. Five separate studies in both Texas and New Mexico found that short duration, high intensity grazing as recommended by Savory caused a decline in the water infiltration rate and an increase in sediment production or erosion. Instead of making the soil more permeable, soil compaction was occurring, causing greater water runoff. According to one of the studies, "...the data do not support the hypothesized beneficial hydrologic advantages of increased stocking density via manipulation of pasture size and numbers." In direct opposition to Savory's ideas, one study concluded that "...rest, rather than intensive livestock activity, appears to be the key to soil hydrologic stability."

One of the best examples of long-term rest from cattle grazing is in the National Audubon Society's 8,000-acre Research Ranch, located near Elgin, Ariz. The Research Ranch is a natural antithesis to Savory's teachings that rest from livestock grazing is bad for a "brittle" environment.

For nearly 20 years, cattle have been absent from what was formerly an intensively grazed ranch. Vegetation now covers 80 percent of the land surface of the ranch -- a dramatic rise from 20 percent in 1969. Short-grass has been replaced by tall- and mid-grass. There are many more flowering plants than found on lands where grazing still occurs. The increase in cover and vegetative diversity has supported an increase in diversity and population

size of birds, small mammals and insects.

In apparent recognition of the threat represented by the Research Ranch to his theories of range management, Savory has devoted much attention to the Audubon property. In the HRM newsletter of October 1986, Savory described the Research Ranch as "visibly deteriorating" and added that "(t)heir own measurements confirm this."

Dr. Mark Stromberg, the resident Director of the Research Ranch, has met Savory and listened to his analysis of the "decadent" and "decaying" grasslands of the Audubon property. Unexploited plants, says Stromberg, respond similarly to unharmed animal populations. In both cases, the populations have greater numbers of older individuals, which eventually die. Savory, he believes, neither understands nor accepts that heavy exploitation is not necessarily a part of all environments.

Southwestern geological history does not support the thesis that there is a need for "herd impact," as defined by Savory. According to paleontologists, none of the arid Southwestern states have had large herbivores present for at least 10,000 years. The last one, in fact, was the giant ground sloth. Buffalo were not found west of the Texas Panhandle or south of Wyoming. The deer, pronghorn and bighorn sheep native to the arid Southwest were never numerous enough to generate any "herd effect" that even comes close to that of the buffalo on the Great Plains. The vegetative response of areas such as Audubon's Research Ranch to the banning of cattle is a further indication that many of the native plants did not evolve in the presence of large herbivores, and do not benefit from the impacts of such grazing today.

The weight of all available scientific evidence regarding livestock grazing in an arid environment -- such as today's Southwest -- shows that grazing is far from benign. This is a boom and bust land. Native species are adapted to wait out the extremes of heat and aridity and take full advantage of the periods of heavy rains. The land is simply not capable of furnishing a steady state of resource withdrawal, such as the 10,000 pounds of plants consumed each year by one cow.

Anyone who would investigate the efficacy of any grazing method must learn to deal with ambiguity, and try very hard to see and recognize the subtle signs that show a land that is recovering. While gathering the material for the following article, I repeatedly listened to ranchers, range conservationists, and Savory himself, all trying to show me those small signs of resurgence.

(Continued on page 16)

## Socratic...

(Continued from page 11)

sagebrush so poor in big game they nearly starved.

One hundred and twenty years of heavy cattle use opened up the land considerably, creating better deer and elk habitat, but simultaneously destroying riparian areas and crippling the water cycle to the point that streams became intermittent. A galloping infestation of juniper eventually cut into cattle production.

Conventional practice called for reducing cattle numbers and clearing juniper. But according to the Bureau of Land Management's Earl McKinney, plant response hit an unsatisfactory plateau after about five years, and juniper seedlings sprouted thicker than ever.

McKinney set a landscape goal of 30 percent juniper in patches that would provide cover and 70 percent grassland, interlaced by willow-shaded perennial streams.

He still cuts, and later burns, juniper, but has successfully fostered dense grass cover by an intensive dose of animal impact in late winter and early spring. Baled alfalfa attracts the cattle to the burned areas in particular. Knowing that early spring grazing stimulates willows but summer grazing hurts them, he puts a hoard of cattle in those areas only during the window between spring runoff (when he wants vegetation to slow the flood) and warm weather.

Monitoring shows that since the program started four years ago, ground cover has increased two to 20 times, raw gullies have softened and started to heal, new springs and seeps appeared, and trout have been taken from perennial streams for the first time in 20 years. Forage harvested by livestock has increased 70 percent and deer and elk habitat improved.

The landscape does not, of course, look like it did in 1825, and whether it should depends, of course, on the people who set the goals. However, the present landscape supports both cattle and game, continues to improve and pays. Although cattle vacate the land for most of the year, a further goal of eliminating them altogether might lie in the future.

The HRM model does not discourage that but does raise many questions. Can the area, given developments on neighboring land, support a year-round population of animals sufficient to provide the intensive, short-term impact required by the grass? Can predators, including man, keep such a population from hanging around the willows like a herd of tame stock under conventional management? Can existing winter cover and forage carry such a population?

Greg Simonds, manager of the 400,000-acre Deseret Ranch in Utah, wrestles with such questions in the context of a private enterprise committed to making a profit while raising the productivity of the land and increasing wildlife. He sees wildlife as a resource that Americans will pay to maintain and enjoy. "I use my cattle to manage wildlife," he says.

Though Simonds has built none of the wagon-wheels of fences commonly associated with Allan Savory, his HRM plan takes into account an extraordinary number of factors. Wintering areas for game and cattle must rest through the summer to assure forage that reaches above the snow. Animal impact must not make unbroken grasslands where deer need browse. Cattle that used to get winter supplements in stinking feed rows now feed on standing plantations of five-foot Basin wild rye that grows with minimal irrigation cost.

Bison that forage for themselves through the winter may replace cattle altogether. By planning their grazing to keep them on fresh ground, Simonds handles the bison like cattle and summons them with a whistle.

Between 1979 and 1987, Simonds says the elk count on the Deseret increased from 350 to 1,200 with a better reproduction record than Yellowstone Park. Cattle numbers have risen from 4,500 to a peak of 12,000 last summer. An understory of grasses and forbs has appeared under sagebrush in some areas. Several old arroyos have become flowing streams and new seeps appeared where no record showed them before.

Where a staff of 20 once produced beef for a dollar a pound, 11 hands now get it to the packer for 61 cents.

While good seasons may account for some of the improvement, HRM planning procedures include substantial margins for drought. The kind of monitoring implicit in the guidelines will give early warning of any downturn. The Deseret can then de-stock if necessary long before range or animals suffer, and before a glut of starving animals from elsewhere floods the market.

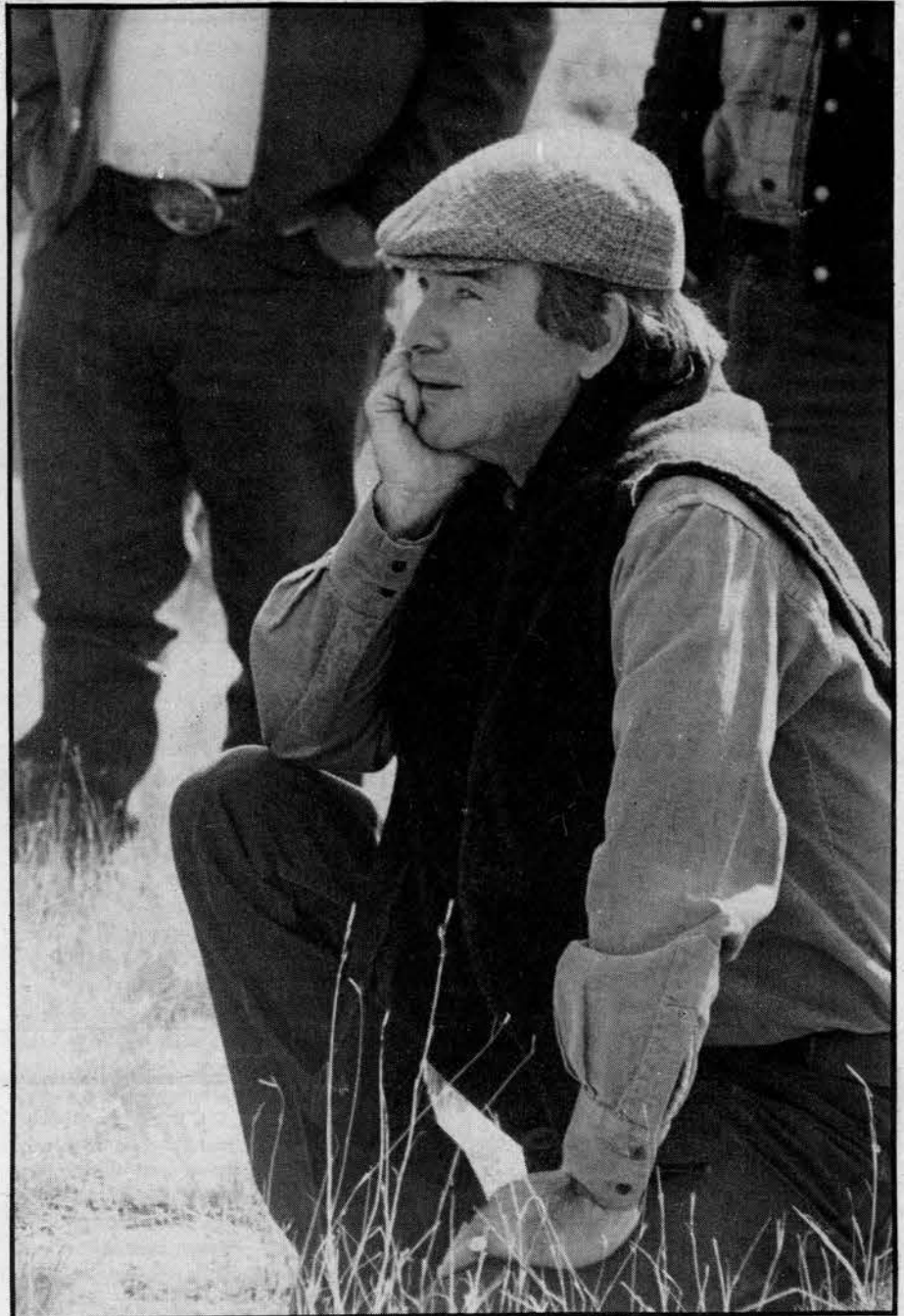
The notion of using livestock as a tool for managing the environment has other implications as well. The state of Montana, like many Western states, annually budgets considerable sums to poison noxious weeds. In 1987 it will spend \$4.7 million to spray a commercial variant of Agent Orange on infested ranges.

Spotted knapweed, an "introduced" species, is said to poison surrounding grass, sicken livestock, spread without remorse, and has no natural enemies. But analysis through the HRM model indicates that it only spreads where succession opens a niche for it -- typically where grasses choked by unharvested old growth become stagnant and moribund, and where lack of animal impact has allowed soil to become too puffy and crusted to permit establishment of grass seedlings.

Last summer the Center for HRM lobbied the Montana Legislature to earmark \$5,000 of their pesticide money to monitor knapweed on a ranch that practices holistic management. After taking HRM training, ranch owner John Robbins had already taken a second look at knapweed himself.

"We found that cattle do eat knapweed," he says. "In fact, sometimes seek it out, as in early growth stages its nutritional value rivals alfalfa. We also find grass growing right through it, thus dispelling the myth that it's pathogenic to its neighbors. On the kind of well-sodded grassland our management produces, we also found it

CHRM



Allan Savory

sprouted and grew six or eight inches, then withered and died without producing a seedhead."

If state monitors do find that a revenue-producing herd of cattle under holistic management can expose an expensive and destructive pesticide program as a non-solution to a non-problem, the whole ecosystem, as well as the copper-poor Montana exchequer will benefit.

Of course, none of these examples of HRM in practice address the political question of whether or not private cattle belong on public land or how much they should pay for the privilege. That is a matter of goals, public understanding and the development of a land ethic among cattlemen and other land users.

Author Edward Abbey occasionally breaks into a song that goes:

*Oh give me a home, where the buffalo roam,  
Where the elk and the antelope play,  
Where never is heard, the bawling beef herd,  
And the flies are not swarming all day.*

*Home, home on the range,  
Where the wolf and the grizzly bear play,  
Where seldom is seen a hamburger machine,  
And the dung is not stinking all day.*

Allan Savory might have written that. It reflects a radical vision of a pristine country cleared of fences from Tijuana to Point Barrow. But even in the near term holistic management, by concentrating stock for short, intense, impact on an area, eliminates the disgusting scene of logy cattle hanging around the cottonwoods and systematically destroying mile after mile of good country.

More interesting questions derive

from the holistic recognition of the fact that the ecology of the West includes man and has since before the time of Folsom hunters. Human goals now require restoration and maintenance of watersheds vital to national health, but they also must include some form of stable, self-sustaining rural population, productive enough to resist wholesale exploitation by people who have no land ethic.

Several years ago Miles Keogh faced this challenge when he took over management of the Mountain Island Ranch on the Utah-Colorado border, a piece of country largely reduced to cheat grass and bare ground by years of exploitation. His own conscience and BLM regulations prohibited him from building any fences, so he hired two couples with an old-time chuck wagon to herd cattle.

Few traditional cattlemen believed that anyone could handle 2,000 cattle in open country, but it happened, and it worked. "Holicating," they called the constant gathering and moving of the herd. Even after only two summers, Keogh claims his monitoring shows perennial grass beginning to re-establish itself and soil-saving organic litter increasing.

"It's a wonderful thing for us," says Irma Goddard, a Mountain Island cow hand who escaped west from Louisiana and never went back. "There has to be a way a family can live and raise kids in country like this without wrecking it."

□

Sam Bingham is a freelance writer based in Denver. He has also worked with Allan Savory and his organization.

14-High Country News -- April 27, 1987

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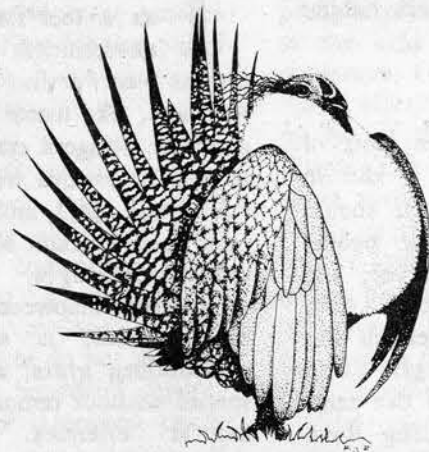
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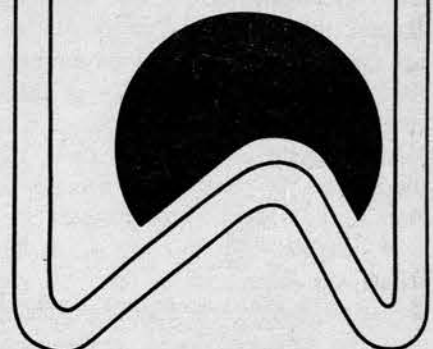
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## afield

### Going 2000 miles for breakfast

by David Schoonmaker

It may not mean so much to you: you live in the West and enjoy the region's natural resources daily. I, on the other hand, have to drive almost 2,000 miles before I can get a breakfast that has flavor and can be eaten with a utensil other than a spoon. Think about what bounty nature has provided for your part of the country: huevos rancheros, salsa, refried beans, tortillas, pico de gallo. To eat breakfast out in North Carolina, I have to carry my own bottle of Tabasco.

Late in February I couldn't take it anymore; I drove west to have breakfast. Even the most humble offering provided a nearly transcendental experience. In the Denny's of Williams, Arizona, I had huevos rancheros that, while marginal when ranked against others in the region, far outperformed the best attempt at eggs by Asheville, North Carolina's finest: the Inn on the Plaza. Imagine a Denny's getting a four-star rating!

In March, as I sit back home with only the remains of a homemade quesadilla -- bland Pancho's tortilla and Kraft monterey jack with

jalapenos -- my memory flits to Mr. Rosewater's chili with fried egg in Durango, Colorado, resavors the Huevos rancheros at the Plaza Restaurant in Santa Fe, New Mexico, pauses to relocate taste buds found only by the green chile on the huevos at Lori's in Durango, pines for Lillie Langtry's of Golden, Colorado, and even recalls dewey-eyed the layered jalapenos and egg at the Holiday Inn in Lubbock, Texas. Those were breakfasts that ruled out lunch.

Tomorrow morning, even if you eat at home, appreciate your local diner as you pass by. Think about the bounty of the place you live, and reflect on those of us less fortunate.

If that proves difficult, try imagining pallid grits with a pool of half-melted oleo floating in the center, two undercooked eggs with rubbery bacon in grease staring up at you and cardboard biscuits with library paste-gravy dripping off the edge of the plate. Truly, you live in the land of taste... or at least flavor.

When David Schoonmaker isn't eating, he's an editor for *The Mother Earth News* in Hendersonville, North Carolina.

## LETTERS

### MISINFORMATION

Dear HCN,

The article by Jeanne Englert in the March 30, 1987 issue of the *High Country News* with regard to court action by the Dolores farmers against the Bureau of Reclamation and the Dolores Water Conservancy Board is characterized by misinformation.

1. Englert stated dryland farmers in southwest Colorado "have gone to court rather than accept federal irrigation water." Counsel for the Southwestern Water Conservation District, the Dolores Water Conservancy District and Special Counsel for the Animas-La Plata Water Conservancy District ask which court and what case number? We are sure we would have received notice had such a court case been initiated, other than notice via publication in the *High Country News*.

2. The Bureau of Reclamation offered more than a time delay for water delivery and payment. The Bureau has pledged their resources to make the Dolores District work for all individual farmers.

3. Junior Hollen, the alleged leader of those farmers against the Project, has stated innumerable times in public forums that he is not against the Dolores Project per se, but that it just doesn't work for him. Furthermore, several Dolores area farmers have met with Animas-La Plata farmers to assure them of the soundness of both the Animas-La Plata and Dolores water projects.

4. Englert fails to point out in her article the fact that all entities she discusses have signed valid contracts with the United States government that they would take and pay for water, and that millions of tax dollars have been spent based on these commitments.

5. Englert provides no specifics of

how alleged government action has damaged the complaining farmer.

In conclusion, let me state that underlying the First Amendment of the Constitution guaranteeing freedom of the press is the assumption that the press will attempt to print the truth in order to protect the peoples' right to know. Your readers deserve the truth.

Frank E. Maynes  
Durango, Colorado

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## False hopes...

(Continued from page 10)

As much as anyone, and more than most, I wanted to see those signs of improvement, and to believe that the destruction brought by the cow could be cured by the cow. Like fighting fire with fire, there is a sort of wisdom to it, a completeness.

Unfortunately, I saw nothing that can justify the optimism that now swirls around Allan Savory, and talked to no one who could show me any resurgence beyond that of hope. After several years of trying, I could see little or no difference on either side of the many fences that separated HRM from year-round grazing, rest-rotation grazing, or any other sort of grazing "management." The lands all remain pillaged and needing respite from those who seek more than the land has left to give.

Anyone who values diversity in the natural ecosystem must also be concerned about diversity in human society. It is for this reason alone that some people long for Savory's methods to succeed. For them the goal of healing the abused land is less important than preserving an important segment of rural life, the rancher. There is no question that such people are important contributors to the notion of who we are, to our own concept of what our nation is. At the same time, such concerns must somehow be balanced with a strong dose of reality.

Many ranchers are in great financial difficulties despite paying a federal grazing fee that is only one-fourth to one-eighth of fair market value, receiving a direct

subsidy of over \$30 million per year and an additional \$100 million annually in hidden subsidies. If these ranchers are in trouble, what about the great majority of our ranchers without subsidized federal grazing rates, ranchers who must compete with their subsidized neighbors in a depressed beef market.

At this time, there seems to be no solid evidence available that HRM works, either in its land of origin, Africa, or in the U.S. Despite the lack of evidence, every U.S. ranch using Savory's methods has increased cattle numbers by at least 20 percent, with many operators doubling their livestock numbers. Much of this increase has occurred on public lands already in very poor condition, without any real justification beyond a desire to experiment. This must be seen as a very reckless and dangerous development. For now, it must be concluded that HRM bears a stronger resemblance to a religion than to a scientifically based method of land renewal. As with Wovoka, there is far too much reliance on the personality of Savory himself, a feeling that only he has the answers. Just as the followers of the Paiute Messiah had "Ghost Shirts" that would stop all bullets, the believers in Savory have armed themselves with an amazing facility for rationalizing what would seem to be failures to anyone outside the fold.

Steve Johnson is the southwest representative for Defenders of Wildlife in Tucson, Ariz., and a free-lance writer.

## Dear friends...

(Continued from page 2)

City and then in Washington, D.C., to talk to foundations and news sources could have been incredibly expensive. Even modest hotels are at or above \$100 a night. But thanks to a network of old friends, readers and strategically placed board members, one or two of us were on the road for 10 days without ever staying in a hotel.

New York required the most stamina. The city thunders. You go into the street calm and relaxed, and are immediately caught up in a human flow that propels you to walk faster and faster, and make quicker and quicker decisions. We found ourselves talking our way, out loud, through crowds and from one destination to another.

It may be a faulty memory of a town we grew up in, but it seems there are fewer backwaters in the city where one can eddy out for a few moments. Twice we saw trucks, parked near corners, back slowly into pedestrians as a signal to them to move. Those nudged didn't take offense. They simply moved out of

the way, as if being pushed on by a truck were an acceptable form of non-verbal communication.

New York has taken on aspects of a Third World nation. Sidewalks are occupied by peddlers who spread a blanket and sell watches, books, sunglasses and hats. Entrances leading to upstairs apartments have been turned into four-foot-wide stores, many of which have more inventory than 'real' stores in small Western towns.

By comparison, Washington is low rise and low key. It has a subway that works, rush-hour commuter traffic that by New York standards moves quite well and no sidewalk stores. Both cities, however, exploit their taxi drivers, keeping fares unconscionably low.

We were told by almost all Washingtonians we met that the city has a beltway mentality that leads its residents to think they are at the center of the universe. Perhaps for lack of time, we didn't find the arrogance we were assured was endemic. The people we saw understood that Washington is a creature of America, rather than vice-versa.

--the staff



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