

High Country News

February 1, 1988

Vol. 20 No. 2

A Paper for People who Care about the West

One Dollar

Idaho's potato king

Proposes 100 power plants

The sound of jaws dropping could be heard throughout Idaho after the state's richest man, industrialist J.R. Simplot, announced in late December that he wants to build 100 coal-fired power plants along the Snake River over the next 50 years.

Simplot said he hoped to begin building two 1,000-megawatt plants a year starting in the 1990s, turning Idaho into an energy farm for the Southwest.

"You try to project this out 50 years and you get something so big you can't imagine," Simplot told an Idaho *Statesman* reporter. "(In) 50 years, we would have a hundred -- a hundred -- 1,000 megawatt plants in Idaho on this river."

Simplot, the self-made billionaire who heads a world-wide agribusiness company, said the coal burning plants will be part of his newly-formed Western Power, Inc. The company announced its intention to develop numerous hydro sites in Idaho last June, and to then ship that power to the Southwest through a transmission line it would build,

thereby bypassing the lock electric utilities such as Pacific Power and Light and Utah Power and Light have on transmission.

At the time, however, the firm did not mention a fleet of coal-fired plants. But even without the coal plants, southern California utilities have never indicated they are interested in purchasing power from Idaho.

In addition to doubts about the market for huge amounts of electricity, there is also a question about Simplot's ability to convince Idaho to accept the plants. Bruce Bowler, a Boise attorney and environmentalist, said, "I think it's insane ... In today's context of things, (Simplot's plan) is so completely incredible for so many reasons I can't cite them all."

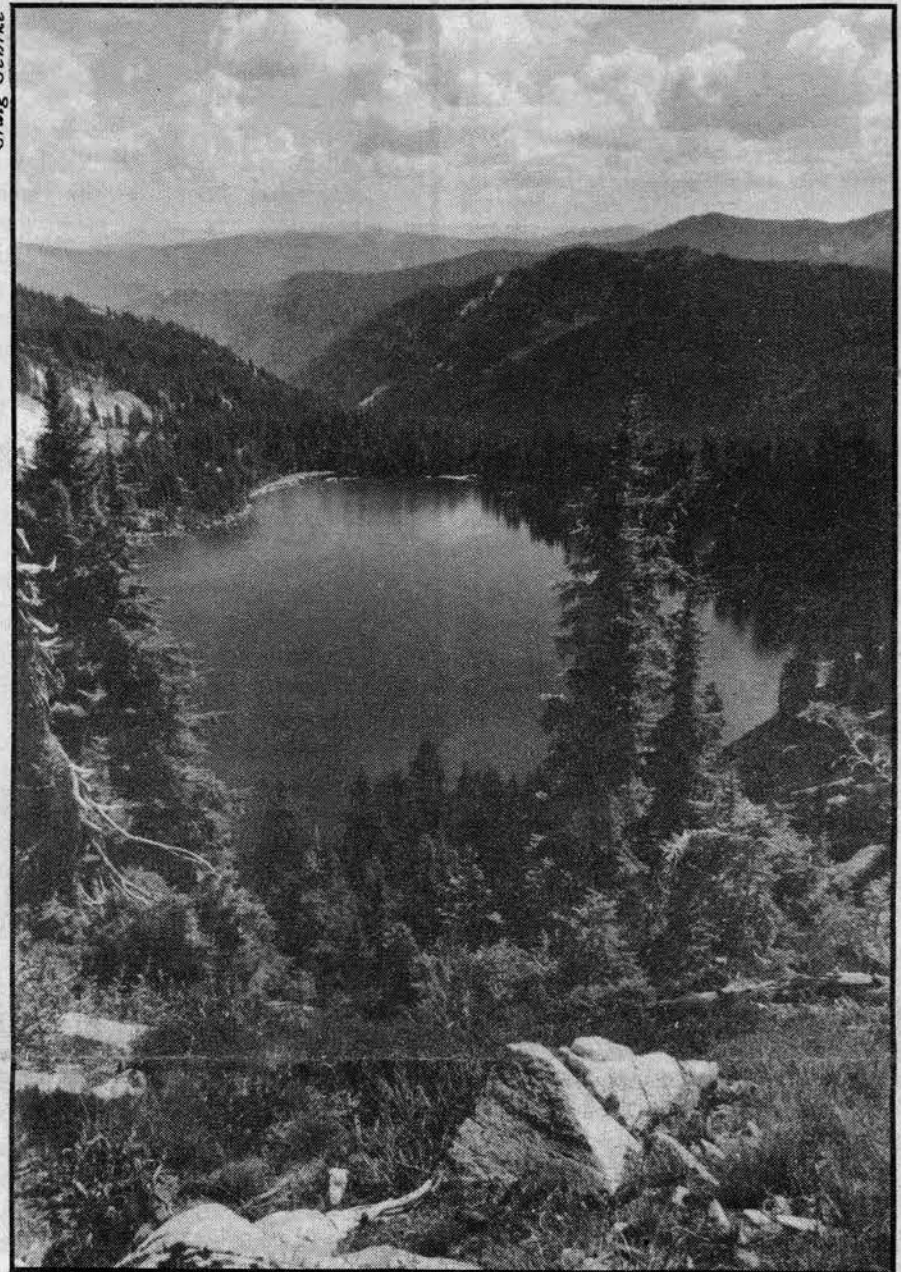
A major obstacle is water. The plants would require cooling water out of the Snake, and more water would be needed to run a coal-slurry pipeline to carry coal from mines in Wyoming to the plants along the Snake. Bowler said demand for Snake River water is already too high.

(Continued on page 14)



J.R. Simplot

Craig Gehrke



Heart Lake in Idaho's Mallard-Larkins Wilderness Study Area

Idaho wilderness bill

Andrus and McClure agree

BOISE, Idaho -- Sen. James McClure and Gov. Cecil Andrus released an Idaho wilderness bill late in 1987 that has things for everyone to love and hate. But on balance, timber companies and off-road-vehicle users appear to have the most to love, and conservationists appear to have the most to hate.

In round numbers, the bill would designate 1.4 million acres as wilderness and another 300,000 acres as subject to special management. The remainder of the immense 9.3 million acres of roadless land in Idaho would get "soft release" -- if it were still roadless in 10 to 15 years, it could be reconsidered for wilderness. The proposal is far smaller than the 3.9 million acre bill introduced by Rep. Peter Kostmayer, D-Pa., on behalf of conservationists.

McClure and Andrus released their privately crafted bill on a take it or leave it basis. The

major national group concerned with wilderness, The Wilderness Society, has decided to leave it. Tom Robinson, the group's intermountain regional director in Boise, said the opposition of McClure and Andrus to any changes in the bill "left us no alternative but to oppose it."

TWS also said the 1.4 million acres was not a large enough share of the 9.3 million acres of unroaded national forest land eligible for wilderness. Moreover, TWS said, several provisions of the bill would threaten existing wilderness.

"There are matters of principle and precedence at stake," said Steve Richardson, TWS chief counsel in Washington, D.C. "This proposal contains provisions and language that are simply inconsistent with the purposes and intent of the 1964 Wilderness Act."

The disposition of Idaho's 9.3

(Continued on page 12)

Dear friends,



High Country News

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Creaky

This is the first issue after our Christmas break, and creaking into action was difficult. Most of the problem was psychological: a fear that two weeks of soft living may have lost us the ability to put out a paper. There is also a reluctance to subject ourselves again to the discipline imposed by HCN's every-other-week schedule. Those who produce daily or weekly newspapers will feel little sympathy.

We have not yet precisely toted up the Research Fund results, but it is clear that, despite the stock market crash, readers gave generously. We topped last year's total by a modest amount, and thanks to that increase, to more subscription income, and to a jump in grants HCN will be here through 1988. A more detailed report will follow. In the meantime, thank you again for your generosity.

Honoring the living

The Bulletin Board section of the Nov. 23, 1987, issue announced a scholarship honoring noted Wyoming geologist David Love. That notice provoked a telephone call from a person in Vermont who had heard that we had announced Love's death. We reread the Bulletin Board notice several times to be sure it had not implied such a thing. It hadn't. The confusion may have been caused by the fact that we are unused to honoring the living.

Assuming the worst

Dr. David R. Robinson of North Miami, Fla., has not endeared himself to us. He filed a complaint against HCN with the U.S. Postal Service for allegedly failing to run his ad even as we took his money. We had run his ad, but hadn't sent him a copy of the issue with the ad in it. That's our oversight. But we're puzzled as to why he would file an official complaint with the Post Office without first calling or writing to us. His ad was for a book of poems.

Founding Fathers goofed

Reader Dennis Burns of Salt Lake City attended the first annual meeting of the "Blue Ribbon Coalition -- the Voice of Western Outdoor Recreation," held late last year in Salt Lake City. One participant, Burns writes, said,

"We have a constitutional right to use our ATVs on the public lands, as stated in the Bill of Rights. Small groups of environmentalists are trying to take this right away from us."

Burns says, "I reread the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence a few months ago, and I don't recall reading that part." Probably what the conference participant meant to say was that, had ATVs existed in the 18th century, the Founding Fathers would have added another right: "Government shall not abridge the people's right to ride ATVs."

Send us your names

We thank Rich Schiebel of Dallas, Texas, for the list of 13 Dallas area residents he thinks are potential subscribers. We shall send them sample copies. If you know people who might be interested in HCN, we would appreciate their names and addresses.

Andy Bartson sent in six back issues of HCN, including a rare one (in this office) containing Utah rancher Cecil Garland's article on stream reclamation. Andy also promises to subscribe "when I get an address."

Spring in South Dakota

Pete Carrels, our South Dakota bureau person, called on Jan. 8 to say, "It's up to eight degrees below here -- it's like spring. I went out in my shirt sleeves."

On the same day, we spoke with Mark Gordon in Kaycee, Wyo. He reported clear, sunny skies even though it was storming in Colorado and most of Wyoming. Kaycee, he explained, is outside of Wyoming's snowbelt. We had thought you had to be outside Wyoming to be outside its snowbelt.

Western Colorado's valleys, especially HCN's North Fork Valley, is experiencing its first real winter since 1977-1978. There is much snow on the ground, and below zero temperatures at night, with day-time temperatures rarely reaching above 20 degrees. We can no longer boast of going outside in shirt sleeves during winter days. Luckily, because western Colorado lacks wind, we are spared the "monster snowdrifts" the Denver Post headlined recently as devouring the state's eastern plains.

Proud in Boulder

Eric and Sara Lundgaard want us to know that not all Boulder contributors to the Research Fund are residents of Boulder, Colo. "We live very happily in Boulder City, Nevada, and are extremely proud of our little community of 12,000 next to Hoover Dam."

Reclaimed office

HCN's toxic office is now occupied. The Pittsburgh Paint laboratory told us they had found an irritant in the paint we put on the office in very early November. Staffers C.B. Elliott and Steve Hinchman discovered the irritant without the help of a lab -- they were unable to work in the room for long without headaches and other problems.

Pittsburgh Paint paid to have two coats of latex enamel applied to the walls, and that has sealed out the irritant for the moment. We would rather have the stuff removed from the walls, but the use of gallons of solvent in the middle of winter has its own problems. Although we wish the situation had never occurred, we were pleasantly surprised that the paint company owned up to the problem and took responsibility for solving it.

We are grateful again to Howard Scott of Moab, Utah, for periodically sending us edited excerpts from Dear Friends. Our main offense: disagreement of cedents and antecedents.

A dog story

One of our valued employees is Donna Gregory -- a Paonia native and utility infielder at HCN. She makes deposits to the checking account, pays writers, works in the mailroom, and does other tasks on a part-time basis.

Several months ago, Donna was good enough to accept a dog that needed a good home. Unfortunately, the dog missed its original owner, who lived down the street, and would on occasion run home. Even worse,



Lee Sayre

the former owner is a Paonia police officer named David Duncan, and in December, Mr. Duncan gave Donna a ticket for allowing her dog to run at large when the dog showed up at his home.

Donna explained the circumstances to town judge Lynn French, but was still hit with a sizable fine. Donna then told officer Duncan that she couldn't afford such fines, and that if she got another ticket, she was going to have his former dog killed. "He looked surprised," she said, "and asked me not to do that." Donna is very good-natured, which is how she ended up with Duncan's unwanted dog in the first place, and probably won't have it killed.

Welcome help

Readers promptly receiving our snappy-looking HCN t-shirts can thank a volunteer in the Paonia office. She is Lee Sayre, who just moved to the valley from Colorado Springs, Colo. A long-time reader of the paper, Lee stopped in recently to ask if we needed some volunteer help.

"I just assumed all non-profit organizations needed volunteers," she said. Restraining an urge to shout hooray, we agreed that any help was welcome.

Lee tells us she visited the Paonia area last fall out of curiosity. "I'd heard of the town and wanted to see it. I thought it was a jewel." Finding people friendly, houses inexpensive and her nerve adequate, Lee said she retired early from office work and 30-plus years of life in a city. Now trying to dig out a vegetable patch from a backyard field of rocks, Lee said, "If I can make peace with the rocks, all will be well."

Long necked

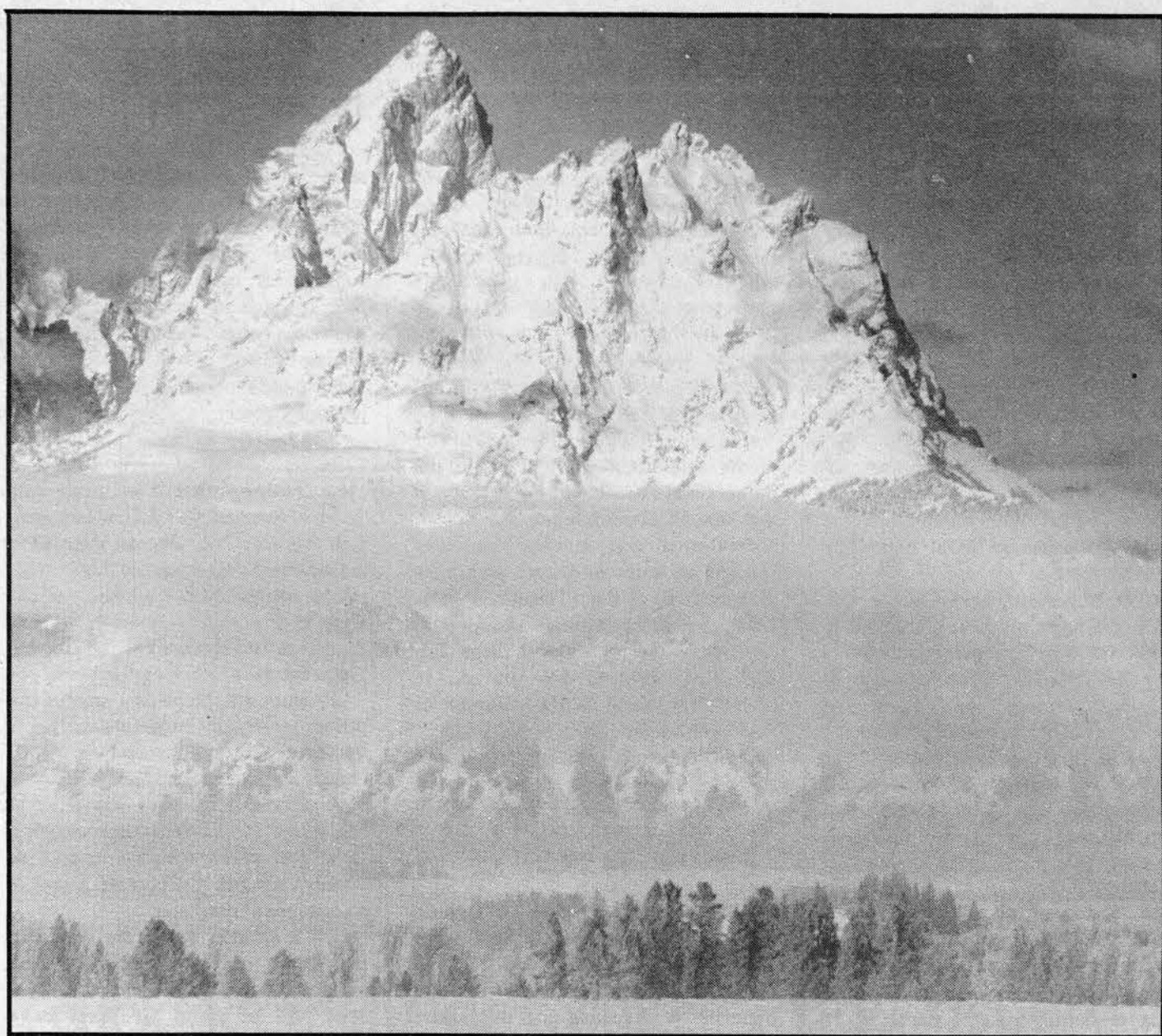
Peter Maier, featured in an HCN story ("Goliath one, David zero") this fall by Steve Hinchman on sewage treatment problems in the Salt Lake City area, is now a giraffe. Editor Betsy Marston nominated him to the Giraffe Project for sticking his neck out.

According to the award letter sent out by Giraffe Project executive director John Graham, "Giraffes are ordinary people who show extraordinary courage, compassion and commitment for the good of others."

Maier's story will be part of a monthly radio script sent out to 120 member stations of the Giraffe Broadcast Service. He will also be written up in *The Giraffe Gazette*. The national group can be contacted at: Giraffes West, P.O. Box 759, Langley, Whidbey Island, WA 98260.

--the staff

WESTERN ROUNDUP



Grand Tetons in Wyoming

Wyoming moves to protect its clear air

Wyoming's Department of Environmental Quality has proposed new air quality regulations to protect visibility in and around its national parks and wilderness areas.

The new regulations would protect Class I areas (parks and wilderness) from any perceivable change in appearance, color and distance that would interfere with a visitor's experience. The proposal is considered non-controversial, says Wyoming Division of Air Quality administrator Chuck Collins, because it matches existing federal law.

But included in the proposed regulations is a highly controversial plan to give state and federal land managers the authority to identify and protect "integral vistas." That would protect outstanding views of surrounding terrain seen from within parks or wilderness.

The integral vistas concept, which goes beyond federal requirements, could turn into a political football, Collins recently told the *Casper Star-Tribune*. He expects resistance to integral vista protection from industry, which regards it as a restriction to future growth.

The ability to identify and protect integral vistas has existed nationwide since the EPA began its integral vista program in 1980. Over the next five years many vistas were identified, says Collins, but because of adverse political pressure only one received protected status. The Environmental Protection Agency dropped the program in 1985.

The Air Quality Division's proposal would revive the vista program in Wyoming under state law, but does not identify any sites for protection.

"The Forest Service asked me to identify integral vistas, but I re-

fused," says Collins. "They had their opportunity to do it through the EPA and missed, and now they want me to do it."

Collins says just reviving the project is controversial enough and he doesn't want to torpedo the idea by going too far.

If a site becomes protected under the integral vistas plan, it would follow the same rules as protected Class I areas. An analysis must be made that the visual impairment is significant and has a measurable impact on a visitor's experience before a polluter can be required to take measures to clean its emissions. If there is no known source, the pollution is classified as regional

haze, and the state is required to draft a three-year strategic plan to clean the air. Class I sites in Wyoming include Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks, and the Washakie, Bridger, Fitzpatrick, North Absaroka and Savage Run wilderness areas.

The proposed visibility regulations are part of a whole set of new air quality regulations for Wyoming designed to bring the state up to federal EPA standards. Also included are regulations governing smoke stack heights at industrial plants and the use of asbestos. All but the integral vistas plan are already in force, as mandated by the EPA.

--Steve Hinchman

Utahn is accused of ecotage

The man arrested for vandalizing bulldozers on the Burr Trail in Utah (*HCN*, 12/31/87) says he is innocent and the victim of Garfield County officials.

Grant Johnson, 31, who has lived for 11 years at Deer Creek Ranch bordering the dirt road, told the *Salt Lake Tribune* he was arrested because he adamantly opposes a paved Burr Trail. "I, of course, wouldn't have anything to do with vandalism."

Johnson faces over a dozen charges for allegedly pouring antifreeze into the fuel tanks of four bulldozers and possessing drugs with the intent to sell them. Police found close to a pound of marijuana, small amounts of LSD, psilocybin mushrooms and a set of scales in his trailer.

Johnson's lawyer, Jim Bradshaw of Salt Lake City, said in a telephone interview that in their zeal county

officials "did some outrageous things." These included obtaining search warrants with sweeping powers and first setting bail at \$250,000, which was higher than that set for Mark Hoffman, accused of murdering two people in Salt Lake City last year, Bradshaw says.

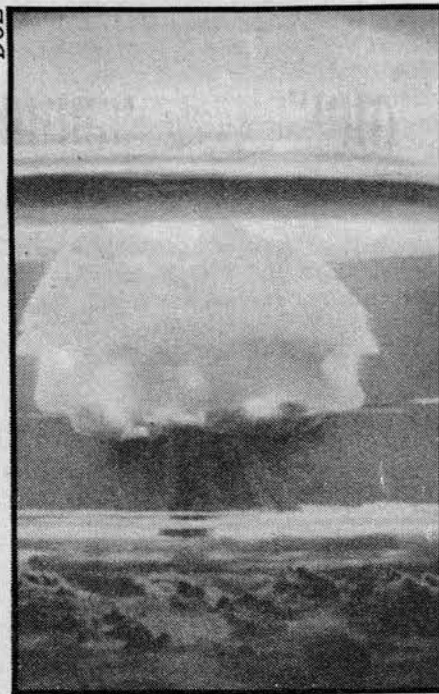
Environmental groups seem to have distanced themselves from Johnson, who is now out on bail. Close friend Sue Fearon says she thinks groups are afraid to back Johnson for fear they might be seen as endorsing environmental sabotage.

Johnson's attorney adds that his client has been feuding with Clive Kincaid of the Southern Utah Wilderness Association for some time.

To help pay for legal fees, Fearon says a Grant Johnson Defense Fund has been established at Box 1373, Sandy, UT 84070.

--Gus Wilmerding

HOTLINE



Downwinders lose

The Supreme Court on Jan. 11 blasted the last hopes of 1,200 residents of Utah, Arizona and Nevada. They had hoped for compensation for cancers and other diseases allegedly caused by radioactive fallout during a decade of atomic testing. The court's unanimous decision not to hear the "downwinders" case lets stand a 10th Circuit Court of Appeals ruling that the federal government has sovereign immunity from damages caused by its testing of over 100 atomic bombs in the 1950s and 1960s at the Nevada Test Site (*HCN*, 7/6/87). The decision was based on a technical clause in the Federal Tort Claims Act giving the federal government immunity for decisions made at its own discretion. It ends eight years of legal battles and leaves the downwinders in the same leaky boat as uranium miners, sheepmen, atomic vets and Nevada Test Site employees. All have been denied compensation by the courts. The Utah congressional delegation now hopes to move the fight into Congress. Utah Rep. Wayne Owens, D, and Sen. Orrin Hatch, R, say they will soon introduce bills to alter the Tort Claims Act to eliminate the loophole government lawyers used to win the downwinders' case. That will make it easier for future suits charging government negligence, but will be too late to aid the fallout victims. The two lawmakers say they are debating introducing a bill to compensate radiation victims, but say experience shows compensation bills seldom pass. Meanwhile, in St. George, Utah, the largest town to be heavily hit by fallout, citizens have opened a cancer center in conjunction with the local hospital and have founded a memorial library to help cancer victims cope with the disease.

BARBS

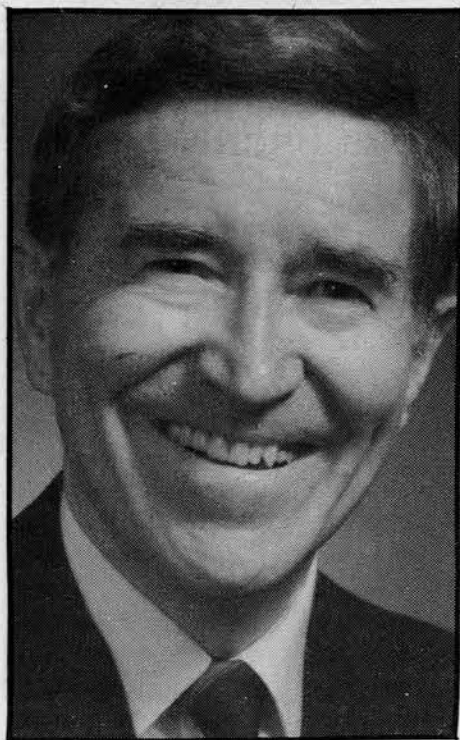
A moment of truth in the nation's capitol.

Utah Sen. Jake Garn lashed out at a roomful of lobbyists recently, saying: "Frankly, ladies and gentlemen, I'm getting sick of you and the whole game."

Oh, for the days when economic development in small towns meant setting up a speedtrap.

Three neighboring towns in eastern Idaho -- Rigby, Rexburg and Blackfoot -- are competing for the right to promote themselves to tourists as "spud centers."

HOTLINE

**Mecham is besieged**

Arizona's Republican Gov. Evan Mecham continues to make headlines as he faces impeachment hearings, arraignment on criminal charges and a potential recall election. The state's Republican Party has now disowned Mecham, and four Republican members of the state's congressional delegation recently asked him to resign. They said the legal and political turmoil surrounding him has virtually paralyzed the state, reports AP. In January, the Arizona state legislature began impeachment proceedings against Mecham. Hearings were based on evidence from a grand jury, which indicted the Governor on six felony charges of fraud, perjury and filing false documents that concealed a \$350,000 campaign loan. Mecham has also been accused of illegally borrowing \$80,000 in state funds to help his car dealership. If convicted on any charges he would automatically be thrown out of office, and, if convicted on all counts, could face up to 23 years in prison. Meanwhile, the recall Mecham campaign says it has gathered 350,000 signatures. That is more than the number of votes the Governor received in his 1986 election. Once the signatures are certified, Arizona Secretary of State Rose Mofford must offer Mecham a chance to resign. If he refuses, Mofford will schedule a recall election within 120 days. Mofford, a Democrat, would succeed Mecham if he leaves office.

Utah takes a stand

The white supremacist group Aryan Nations has been talking about starting a chapter in Utah for weeks. Now they may think twice. State Rep. Grant Protzman, D-Ogden, has sponsored a bill designed to discourage the group from coming. While his bill guarantees protection of the right to free speech, it also puts the Utah House of Representatives unanimously on record as opposing any physical harassment or violence directed against individuals based on race, religion or ancestry. Protzman, in the *Deseret News*, says a lesson can be learned from Idaho, where the Aryan Nations is currently based. Protzman says people think Idaho is receptive to racist views because no one spoke out against the group soon enough. Protzman's bill passed the House unanimously on Jan. 18, Martin Luther King Day, and is expected to breeze through the Senate.

Two western states still in collider race

The West is still in the running for the Superconducting Super Collider.

Of the 11 sites proposed by nine Western states, one near Phoenix, Ariz., and another outside Denver, Colo., advanced to the Department of Energy's list of eight finalists in the intense national competition for the \$6 billion project.

The six other sites also recommended as "best qualified" by the National Academies of Science and Engineering are: Batavia, Ill., Stockbridge, Mich., Raleigh, N.C., Nashville, Tenn., Dallas, Texas, and Rochester, N.Y.

Shortly after the list was announced, New York Gov. Mario Cuomo pulled his state from the running because of local opposition to the project.

The Superconducting Super Collider is a huge machine designed to propel nuclear particles around a ring 53 miles in circumference to collide at speeds just under the speed of light. Scientists hope the device will recreate conditions similar to those occurring at the moment the universe was created in an explosion they call the Big Bang. The DOE and project backers say the collider is necessary if the U.S. is to keep pace with scientific discoveries abroad (HCN, 8/17/87).

Twenty-five states submitted proposals for 36 sites -- a total of 13 tons of documents. A panel of 21 scientists drawn from the national academies narrowed it down to eight sites. The panel, which did not rank their recommendations, said while geology and technical considerations were the most important criteria for the project, recreational opportunities, jobs for spouses and community support were also decisive factors in its decision.

The blue-ribbon panel asked the DOE, which will make the final selection, to keep those criteria high on the list. "A variety of cultural and recreational opportunities, as well as openness to various lifestyles is highly desirable for the diverse -- and international -- group of people who will be in residence," the panel said in its report to the DOE, according to AP.

Colorado and Arizona officials are ecstatic over their victory, but acknowledge that the race is just beginning. Leaders in both states say they have the geology, academic and business communities and the quality of life to be serious contenders.

The next step is a massive environmental impact statement that will look at each site's soil conditions, ecology, air and water quality, and socio-economic impacts. Arizona SSC project liaison Dr. Ray Russell says although the DOE will be responsible for writing the study, he expects Arizona to spend \$400,000 to \$500,000 to gather information. That comes in addition to the \$1.5 million the state already spent on its initial proposal.

The DOE will begin by holding scoping meetings to ask citizens living adjacent to each site what issues should and should not be included in the study. Meetings will be held Feb. 9 in Tempe, Ariz., and Feb. 12 in Ft. Morgan, Colo. Nothing controversial is expected for Arizona, but in Colorado some residents say a proposal by Browning-Ferris, Inc., to build a toxic waste landfill (HCN,

7/6/87) less than 50 miles away could hurt the state's chances.

Neither the DOE nor the academies' panel mentioned why the other 28 proposed sites were disqualified, but the DOE has offered to explain to those states where they fell down. Losing states in the West voiced their disappointment, but all said they would listen to the DOE's criticisms. Idaho even sent SSC project coordinator Rick Tremblay back to Washington to rebut the DOE's decision to nix the state's proposed site near the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory.

"They put the ornamental ahead of the scientific," Tremblay told the Idaho Falls *Post-Register*. He argued that the DOE emphasized the social, recreational and cultural qualities needed in order to attract scientists to the facility. But, Tremblay says, DOE's idea of amenities stopped at the opera and excluded things like the opportunity to hike or ski in Idaho's beautiful White Clouds or Sawtooth Mountains.

Even though they are out of the running, many Western states hope to get at least a small bang out of the project by supporting Colorado and Arizona over Eastern contenders. Wyoming Gov. Mike Sullivan has already thrown his weight behind Colorado because, he told the Casper *Star-Tribune*, "having the SSC in Colorado would produce spinoff benefits for Wyoming and our entire region."

A spokesperson for Utah, Randy Moon, said he will approach Arizona and Colorado asking what it's worth to have Utah's support. Among the promises Utah expects are a guaranteed number of faculty positions for

Utah scientists and students, as well as an allotment of jobs during the atom-smasher's \$3.2 billion construction phase, reports the *Deseret News*.

The reduction in the number of states means the project has reached a critical phase. Fewer eligible states means there are fewer politicians interested in the project who will support its massive budget in the face of soaring national debts. In addition, some academics are questioning the use of half the money the U.S. spends annually on science on just one project.

The debate will start in earnest in February, when President Reagan's 1989 budget goes to Congress. Energy Secretary John Herrington says he expects to ask for \$350 million for the super collider. This year's request of \$35 million was cut back to \$25 million; most observers expect at least similar cuts in the 1989 request.

Proponents hope to push the project through by maintaining its broad base of support. *Science News*, reporting on the national SSC symposium held in Denver last December, wrote, "The symposium seemed to be part of an attempt to build an intellectual and political coalition of an unprecedented sort."

On a smaller scale, the states in the West may be employing the same strategy. Says Arizona's Russell, "All of us in the West have worked on developing a coalition from the beginning. It's important that we keep (the SSC) in the West. If we don't get it, we hope Colorado will get it."

--Steve Hinchman

West loses two high-tech projects

Two high-tech development projects coveted by Western government and business leaders have slipped their grasp.

The Sematech consortium recently selected Austin, Texas, for its research and development laboratory. The cooperative research station, expected to have a \$250 million annual budget and create 800 jobs and up to 2,100 spinoff jobs, will try to develop tiny computer chips. Thirty-four states across the nation submitted 135 proposals to lure the project. Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Oregon and California were among 12 semi-finalists.

In another race, this one confined to 14 Western states, Boulder, Colo., was selected as the site for the \$50

million U.S. West telecommunications research laboratory (HCN, 11/9/87). However, even this guaranteed victory for the region was lost when a federal court in Washington, D.C., forced the regional telephone company to scale back its plans.

The court, which oversaw the divestiture of AT&T, ruled that U.S. West and the other regional telephone companies carved from Ma Bell may not engage in design and production of telecommunications products, nor manufacture equipment for use in a customer's home. As a result, U.S. West will only build a \$20 million facility, employing 500 employees instead of 1,500.

--Steve Hinchman

HOTLINE

Wyoming's Leslie Petersen will not run

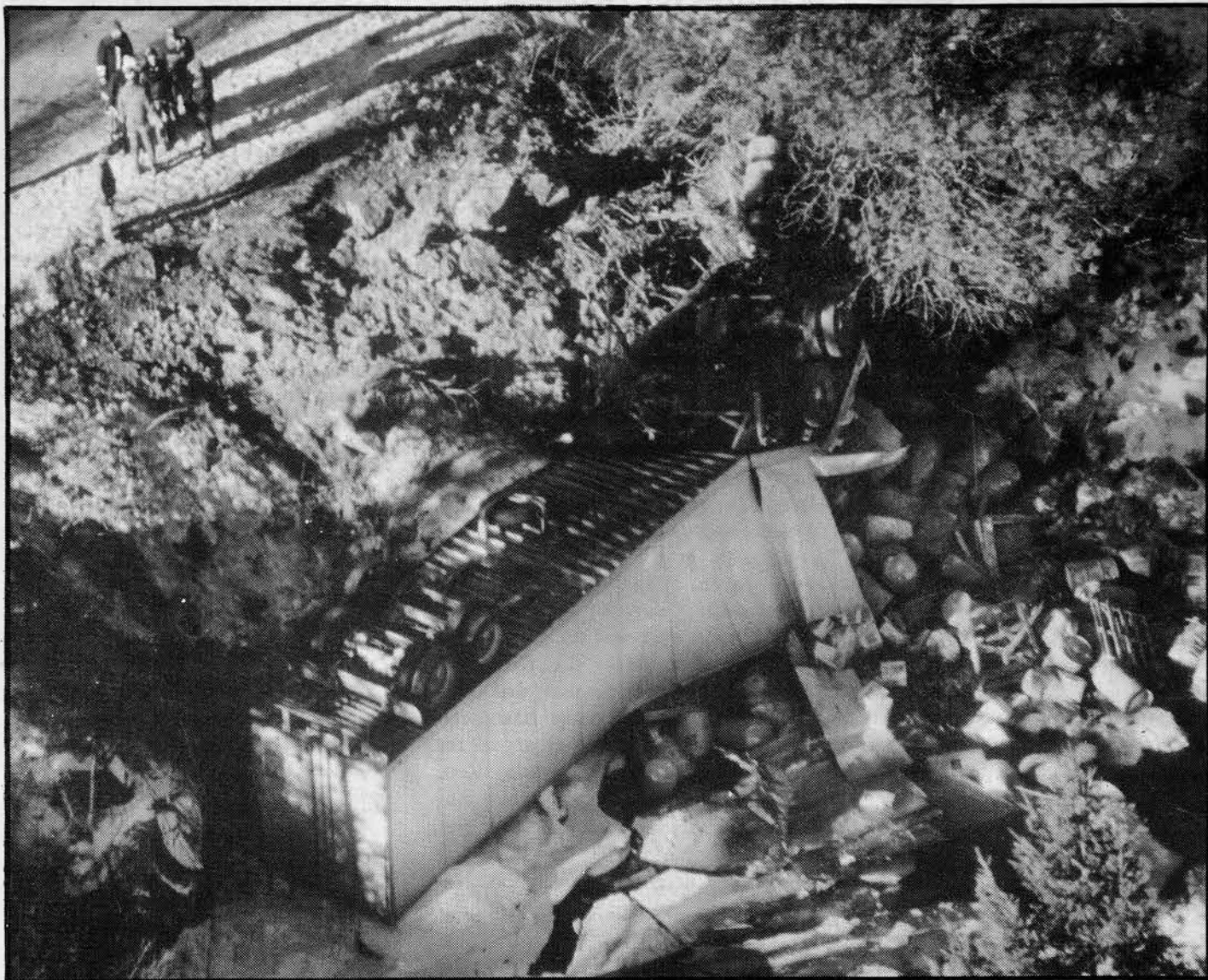
Wyoming Democrat Leslie Petersen announced she will not challenge Republican Malcolm Wallop for the U.S. Senate seat this year. Petersen, a Dubois native who is currently chair of the Teton County Commission, has been active in Wyoming environmental politics for two decades. In the 1970s she presided over the Wyoming Outdoor Foundation, forerunner to the High Country Foundation, which owns *High Country News*, and the Wyoming Outdoor Council. Petersen was con-

sidered a Democratic front-runner but said she is unwilling to surrender her privacy or Wyoming home to live in Washington, D.C.

BARBS

There must be some mistake.

Adding to the smog in Los Angeles is a heavy dose of marijuana, says the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, which sampled airborne pollen, AP reports.



Dave Brookman

Fungicide spill on the Little Salmon River

Truck accident devastates Idaho fishery

Idaho's Department of Fish and Game has been looking for fish on the Little Salmon River, but so far the results are grim.

"We're not finding very many," said Don Anderson, resident fisheries manager for Fish and Game in McCall.

Anderson and his associates have been working non-stop for nearly a month to quantify damage from what Idaho officials call one of the state's worst toxic spills. An Arkansas-based tractor-trailer rig carrying 3,700 gallons of the fungicide Vitavax catapulted off U.S. 95 at about 5:30 a.m. Dec. 19, flipping into the Little Salmon, a prime steelhead and salmon spawning area.

Some 25, 55-gallon drums of Vitavax ripped through the trailer's side upon impact, leaking about 500 gallons of the deep-magenta liquid into the river and killing thousands of fish.

"It's the biggest fish kill I've ever seen," said Anderson, a Fish and Game veteran of 18 years. The biologist said he has worked six toxic spills in Idaho. The worst of those, a diesel spill of 2,800 gallons, caused a 100 percent fish kill in 1983. That wreck, which occurred only a couple miles from last month's spill. The Vitavax "hit all the species," Anderson said, including wild steelhead and salmon smolts. The fish are valuable, with the Bonneville Power Administration spending \$25-35 million a year to rescue salmon and steelhead runs. "The recovery of the wild population has been set back for several generations," Anderson said.

Idaho Gov. Cecil Andrus delivered a stern message a week after the spill, saying the state would seek damages from the trucking firm, Southern Refrigerator Transport, and possibly the driver. "People who haul dangerous materials over our

highways better know that if they have an accident and foul our water, they will pay to clean it up," Andrus said.

It took environmental cleanup crews four days of work in sub-zero temperatures to pull all the barrels out of the river. The truck was removed after the second day.

Andrus said state officials would investigate the possibility of restricting semi-truck use of U.S. 95 -- known as a goat trail among highway workers -- during certain hours and weather conditions. But he noted that a complete ban would violate federal interstate commerce laws.

U.S. 95 is the only north-south route through Idaho's rugged interior. The narrow two-lane highway winds along the Little Salmon and other streams for most of its route. "The spill showed that the road is not as safe and effective as it should be," said Hugh Lydston, chief of

transportation services for the Idaho Transportation Department.

The spill prompted the Snake River Alliance to point out that if the Special Isotope Separation facility is built in southeast Idaho, trucks hauling nuclear waste from Hanford, Wash., also could crash along U.S. 95 and contaminate the Little Salmon.

"We can all breathe a sigh of relief that the truck that crashed on the Little Salmon River was carrying Vitavax and not 'feed' for the SIS plutonium refinery," said alliance spokeswoman Liz Paul.

"If that had been plutonium, Riggins' water would not have been fit to drink for 24,000 years (approximate half-life of plutonium), and the fish kill could have extended throughout the entire Salmon and Columbia rivers," Paul said.

--Steve Steubner

Montana's big, dirty skies

Because the big skies over seven Montana communities have become brown, the EPA says the towns are likely to violate federal air quality standards this year. The agency recently directed the cities and towns to develop plans for cleaning up their dirty air.

Missoula, Kalispell, Butte, Ronan, Polson, Libby and Lame Deer were flagged by the Environmental Protection Agency as "Group I" communities, a classification identifying each as having a 95 percent chance of violating federal air quality standards. According to Stan Sternberg of the Montana State Air Quality Bureau, each will have three years to implement a pollution reduction plan upon determination of the sources of the dirty air.

Sternberg says that the three-year deadline is flexible because the communities are still in the process of identifying sources of airborne pollutants smaller than 10 microns, which is of most concern to the EPA. Most of the pollutants are from woodstove smoke and winter road-sanding, and are often exacerbated by winter inversions.

Missoula and Libby are the most advanced in terms of developing plans, says Sternberg. To insure public involvement in the plans, each community should form advisory committees that include interests as diverse as wood stove dealers and public health officers, Sternberg says.

--Bruce Farling

HOTLINE



Delay,
delay,
delay

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Frank Dunkle says he will use every bureaucratic means at his disposal to delay reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone National Park, reports Andrew Melnykovich, a columnist with the *Casper Star-Tribune*. Talking to the Wyoming Wool Growers Association, Dunkle said reintroduction was an idea cooked up by the Park Service to "undo the disastrous conditions it has created in the park by years of mismanagement of elk and bison herds." He suggested that hunting was a better solution. Dunkle added that he is not about to allow wolves to be reintroduced into Yellowstone unless Park Service officials prove they can manage wildlife to his satisfaction. If Congress passes a bill to force reintroduction, Dunkle promised to defy the law however he can, including using hearings, environmental assessments and permits as stall tactics. "If you've seen bureaucracy in action you know the Glacier (National Park) wolves are likely to reach Yellowstone before the paperwork is done," Dunkle said.



Three-wheelers banned

A federal lawsuit to stem the rising death toll among young riders of three wheeled all-terrain vehicles was settled when manufacturers agreed to stop selling their most dangerous model and provide free safety training to buyers. The Dec. 30 agreement, negotiated by the industry, Justice Department and Consumer Product Safety Commission, also requires the makers to change marketing techniques aimed at children. Critics among medical groups, Congress and consumers said the agreement should have recalled all ATVs, refunded owners and banned future sales. An estimated 2.3 million ATVs are in use, and in the past five years, more than 900 people -- many of them children -- have been killed and close to 7,000 hospital-treated injuries are reported monthly. Wyoming State Sen. and rancher Charles Scott, however, told the press that the ban on three-wheelers will "make irrigation in Wyoming that much more inefficient."

HOTLINE

Boost for Yellowstone and Teton parks

Entrance fees at Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks will double April 1. President Reagan signed a bill increasing the entrance fees to \$10 per vehicle for a seven-day pass just before Christmas. This is expected to generate an additional \$3.3 million for Yellowstone and \$1.3 million for Grand Teton. In the past, park fees went directly to the Land and Water Conservation Fund, responsible for recreation and land acquisition on the state and national level. Under the new bill engineered by Wyoming Rep. Richard Cheney, R, 50 percent of the fees collected will remain in the park they were collected in; 40 percent will go to all parks in the national park system, and the director of the National Park Service will decide how to direct the remaining 10 percent to parks. The yearly area pass to both parks and the Golden Eagle pass to all national parks and monuments remain the same, at \$15 and \$25 respectively. Tom Robbins, president of the Jackson Hole Visitor Council, said, "If it hurts out of town visitation at all, it will be marginal, and the offsetting benefits to the park will make it well worthwhile."

A new defender

Defenders of Wildlife, the 80,000-member group based in Washington, D.C., will have a new president as of this February. He is Lloyd Cutler, former assistant secretary of agriculture from 1977-80 under President Jimmy Carter. It was Cutler who directed the Forest Service to re-evaluate roadless lands as potential wilderness. Later, he served as vice president of the National Audubon Society and was assistant executive director of The Wilderness Society. Cutler, who was trained as a wildlife biologist, replaces Joyce Kelly, a former Bureau of Land Management professional who resigned in July.



Down from the bills

West Yellowstone, Wyo., had a visit from a wild stranger recently. Down from the hills in Yellowstone National Park wandered a bighorn sheep. Townspeople gaped and dozens reached for their cameras, reports the *West Yellowstone News*. Unfazed, it rambled through town until a pack of dogs challenged it on the street. The ram then fled to the shelter of the Fly Fishing Museum where he grazed out back for most of a sunny day. When it returned the next day the town decided to call on Fish and Game warden Dave Etwiler. He netted the ram and immediately checked to see if it was sick. It wasn't; just lost, apparently. The warden took the animal back to some cliffs 30 miles from town.

Denver wants to breathe

In an effort to clean up Denver's air, motorists in nine Front Range counties from Fort Collins to Colorado Springs have been required to use only gasoline that is blended with a high-oxygen additive from Jan. 1-Feb. 29. Customers can choose between gasoline blended with the petroleum-based MTBE, or the agriculturally-based ethanol. Ted Hollam of the Colorado Department of Health and Air Pollution estimates that 90 percent of the gasoline coming into the state contains MTBE. Since ethanol cannot be mixed at a refinery, suppliers must clean their gas station tanks and pipes to accommodate the alcohol-based ethanol. Those house-keeping chores apparently dissuade oil suppliers from using ethanol, despite its reputation as a cleaner burning fuel. Tests conducted by the Department of Health proved that the additives reduced carbon monoxide emission by 10 to 30 percent.

Incinerator galvanizes Moab

MOAB, Utah -- The prospect of a privately developed toxic waste incinerator in Cisco, Utah, spurred Moab residents to turn out in force at six public meetings in 10 days (*HCN*, 12/21/87).

That is unusual for a town that has traditionally backed industry, but Moab Planning Commission Chairman Kyle Bailey explains that many residents understand "our future is geared to people who want to get away from the pollution-producing urban environments they live in."

Some traditionalists remain, however. The county's Republican Central Committee recently held an emergency meeting to voice its support for the incinerator. They also opposed wild and scenic designation for Westwater Canyon.

And County Commission Chairman Jimmie Walker says, "When you're committed to economic development, you take what comes along."

But at one of the meetings on a master plan and accompanying zoning regulations, Moab newspaper

publisher Sam Taylor said, "I would hate to see the county become perceived as a great place to dump garbage. A toxic and hazardous waste facility would attract more -- just like cow droppings attract flies."

John Groo, a mountain bike entrepreneur, said the new local group he is in opposes the incinerator but supports most other industry. Of the 51 possible uses listed in the proposed county zoning rules for heavy industry, the group called ARISE opposes only three. They are the incineration of hazardous or toxic wastes, storage of those wastes except those created locally, and the manufacture of toxins, viruses, pesticides, herbicides, fungicides or chemical and biological weapons. Groo said ARISE has prepared both a citizens initiative and referendum to prohibit those three industrial uses.

A special hearing on proposed zoning rules for heavy industry takes place Feb. 1 at 7 p.m. at the county courthouse in Moab, Utah.

--Craig Bigler

A dump for Nevada

Just before Christmas, Congress approved Yucca Mountain in Nevada as the only site suitable for the nation's first permanent high-level nuclear waste dump. Nevada politicians vigorously opposed that choice even though the state might receive \$20 million a year in federal money once the repository begins to accept wastes. Sen. J. Bennett Johnston, D-La., the man who engineered the December 17 decision, apparently won support by focusing on economics and regional politics. He said eliminating two other possible sites in Washington state and Texas would save \$3.9 billion, and canceling language in the 1982 Nuclear Waste Policy Act calling for a second repository in the East would save even more. According to the *Congressional Quarterly*, Texas and Washington were well represented at meetings that led to the choice of Nevada; however, Nevada was not. "No one from our state has been permitted to participate or argue for our interests," said Nevada Rep. Barbara Vucanovich. Wright Andrews, Washington lobbyist for Nevada Gov. Richard Bryan, said that Congress' decision settling on Nevada illustrated "gang-rape mentality."

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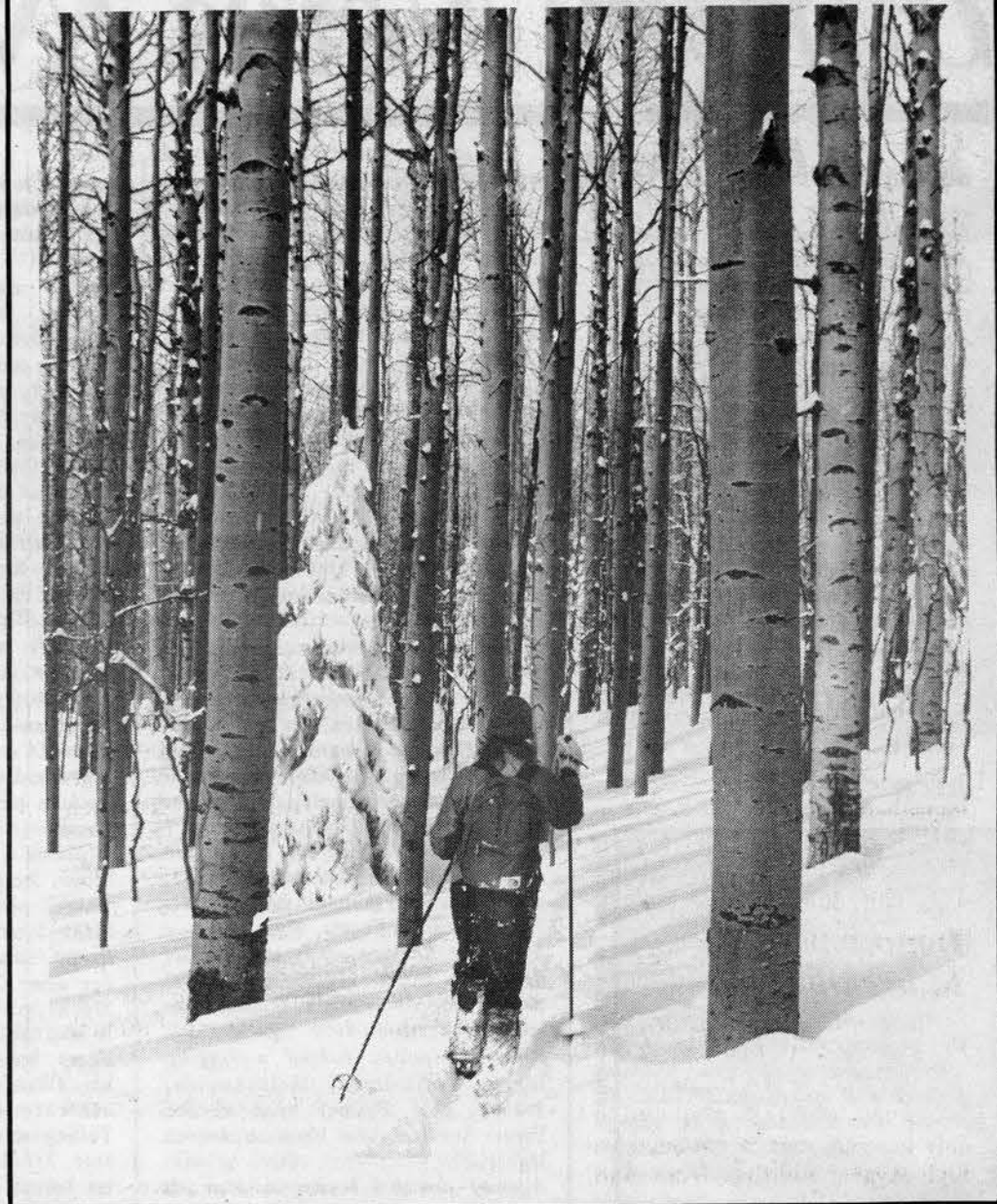
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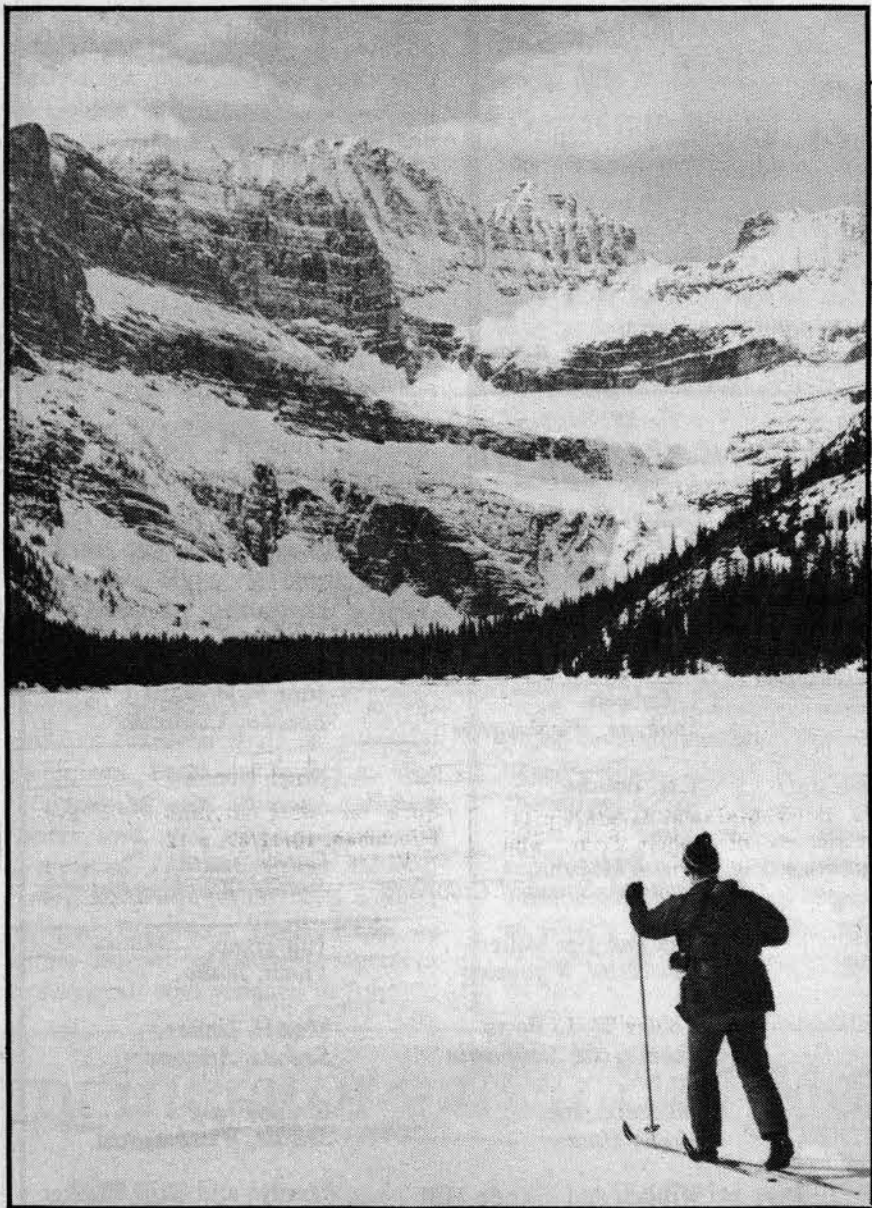
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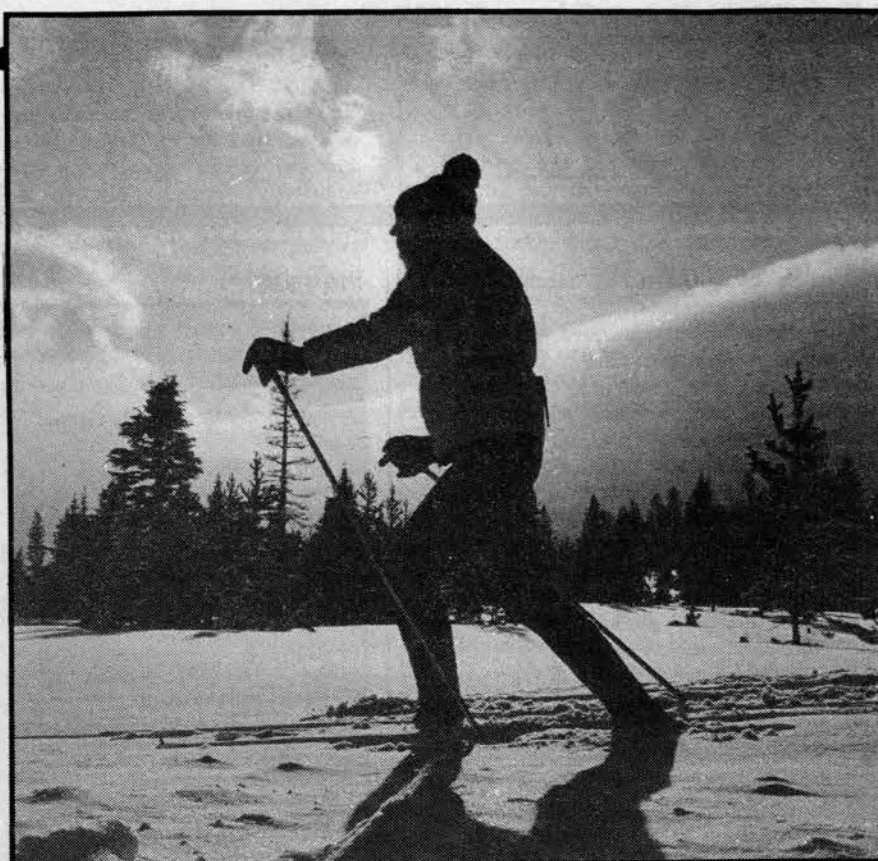
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Caribou are opposed as threat to logging, Pat Ford, 4/27/87, p.4: Controversy over whether caribou deplete Idaho's timber.

Should wolves return to Yellowstone?, Dee Oudin, 5/11/87, p.3.

Jaguar is slaughtered in southern Arizona, Dan Daggett, 6/22/87, p.3.

Black-footed ferrets born in captivity, Steve Hinchman, 6/22/87, p.6.

Conservationists sue to protect cougars, Tom Arrandale, 7/6/87, p.4: New Mexico Game and Fish Commission challenged.

Wild horses arouse very strong feelings, Florence Williams, 7/6/87, p.5: Angry response to BLM's proposal to kill 10,000 horses.

Once again, buffalo herds roam the West, Steve Voynick, 7/6/87, p.6.

The grizzly issue is mauled at a convention of writers, Jyl Hoyt, 7/6/87, p.6.

Wolves and humans: depredating kinfolk, Bruce Weide, 8/31/87, p.3: What people who live in wolf country think about wolves.

Canadian wolf hunt could hurt U.S. packs, Jim Robbins, 9/14/87, p.7.

Fish and Wildlife Service abandons wolves, Rocky Barker, 9/28/87, p.4: Wolf recovery plan and wolf reintroduction controversy.

A Wyoming pack pulls down Mott, Andrew Melnykovich, 9/28/87, p.5: Wolf recovery plan; Politics of support and opposition.

If it's a wild and free animal, then kill it! Steve Johnson, 10/26/87, p.13: Criticism of federal Animal Damage Control activities in Arizona.

Grizzly is executed despite legal moves, Joseph Piccoli, 11/9/87, p.3: History of Yellowstone bear No. 83.

Home brew hits bears hard, Diane Hackl, 11/9/87, p.3: Effects of railroad spill of corn in Montana.

Grizzly pen proposed for Dubois, 11/23/87, p.3.

Does Park Service have a grizzly 'hit list'? Steve Hinchman, 11/23/87, p.4.

Wolf recovery is stopped dead, George Wuertner and Mollie Materson, 11/23/87, p.10: The story of wolves in Montana and Wyoming.

Looking at wolves from a Montana rancher's point of view, Ursula Mattson, 11/23/87, p.12.

Wild turkeys fill an empty ecological niche, Chas. S. Clifton, 12/7/87, p.4.

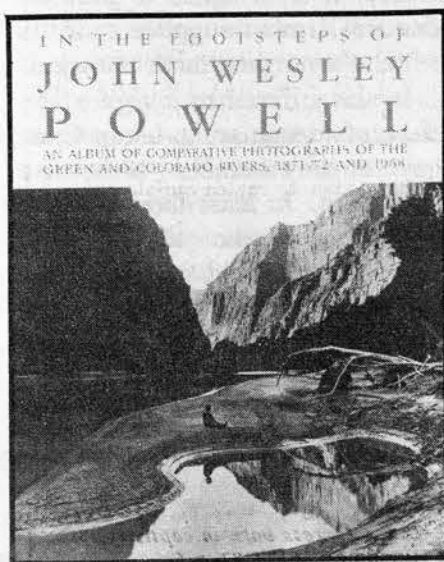
Man enticed, and then killed, Grizzly 83, Jean Heller, 12/7/87, p.6.

Trumpeting at Red Rock Lakes, Mary Moran, 12/7/87, p.8: Refuge for swans.

BULLETIN BOARD

SPECTACULAR SCENERY

Spectacular scenery around Moab, Utah, will be the backdrop for an ambitious series of courses offered by the Canyonlands Field Institute this spring. Courses range from one-day seminars to weekend excursions, and cover a wide range of topics from anthropology and astronomy to hiking and biking. There is a seminar on writing from nature in Arches National Monument, given by poet and author Chip Rawlins May 15, and a desert writers workshop Oct. 14-17 with William Kittredge, Terry Tempest Williams, David Lee and Richard Shelton, held at Pack Creek Ranch. Those with a passion for the visual might drop in on one of five photography seminars, running from Feb. 19-Oct. 6. On President's Day weekend, Feb. 19-22, Tom Till and Steve Mulligan will lead a weekend expedition to Arches National Park to explore and photograph the park's winter light. University credit can be arranged for certain seminars for those so interested. More information is available from Canyonlands Field Institute, P.O. Box 68, Moab, UT 84532 (801/259-7750).



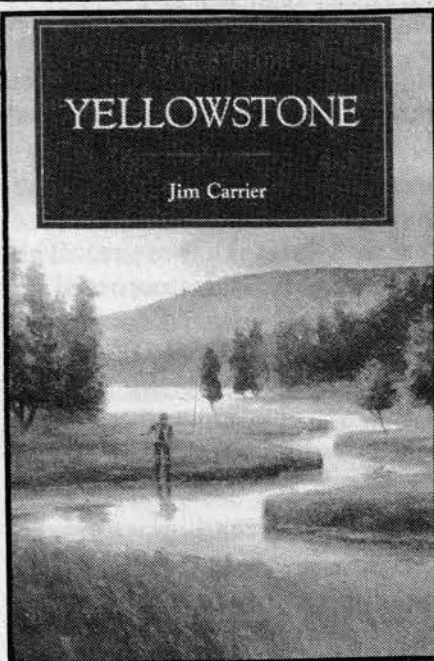
FOLLOWING THE LEADER

To commemorate the centennial of John Wesley Powell's first expedition through the Green and Colorado rivers in 1869, authors Hall Stephens and Eugene Shoemaker retraced the length of that trip in 1968. Under the auspices of the U.S. Geological Survey, they also took photographs recreating those taken by photographers E.O. Beaman, James Fennemore and John K. Hillers during Powell's second expedition of 1871-72. Few of the original plates still exist and the collection of photographs has never been systematically published until now. Extensive research of those photographs, their captions, and the diaries of expedition members allowed the present-day team to identify some 150 camera stations of the earlier photographs and make duplicate pictures. A comparison shows that man has caused the most obvious changes while nature's hand can be seen in beaches lost to vegetation. *In the Footsteps of John Wesley Powell* is a well-documented and objective reference to the rivers' century of change.

Johnson Books, 1880 South 57th Court, Boulder, CO 80301. Cloth: \$34.95. 285 pages, illustrated.

WILD FILMS

The 11th Annual Wildlife Film Festival will take place April 4-11 at the University of Montana in Missoula. Any individual, company, agency or film unit making films about wildlife is encouraged to enter, with three films or videos the maximum permitted. The deadline for obtaining entry forms is March 1, and March 18 for sending the film itself. Entered films must have been made or released in 1987. Other events scheduled that week include a wildlife photo contest, workshop on children's films, Native American and Native Canadian wildlife films, and a wildlife filmmaking course and workshop. Wildlife groups and conferences are invited to schedule events in Missoula at the same time. For rules, entry forms and more information, you can write to Norm Bourg or Charles Jonkel at IWFF, University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812, or call 406/243-4493 or 728-0345.



LETTERS FROM YELLOWSTONE

Writer Jim Carrier, who has the enviable job of roving the West as the Rocky Mountain Ranger for the *Denver Post*, spent four months of 1986 living in Yellowstone National Park and writing three stories a week about his experiences. Now his *Letters from Yellowstone* are in a slim, elegantly illustrated book that offers a broad, albeit somewhat sketchy, picture of the country's first national park. Carrier writes about how 2.6 million visitors a year affect one of the continent's most sensitive ecosystems, and about how the region affected him.

Roberts Rinehart Inc. Publishers, Post Office Box 3161, Boulder, CO 80303. Hardback \$16.95, Paper \$7.95. 140 pages. Illustrated by Robert Spanning.

BEARS IN ARIZONA

Bear Tracker is a quarterly membership publication of the Arizona Bear Society, a group dedicated to protecting bears in Arizona. The fall issue of the newsletter has an account of the killing of the last grizzly in Arizona on Sept. 13, 1985, by a Safford cowboy named Richard R. Miller, who lived long enough to regret what he had done. The society, formed in 1986, has a committee on reintroducing the grizzly to Arizona, has sent a member to Italy to investigate how the grizzly (*Ursus arctos mariscanus*) survives in that country, and regularly holds events that attract surprising numbers of people. For example, a fundraising banquet in August, in Scottsdale we assume, drew 440 people and netted \$32,000. Annual membership dues are \$20. The group's address is: ABS, P.O. Box 9281, Scottsdale, AZ 85242.

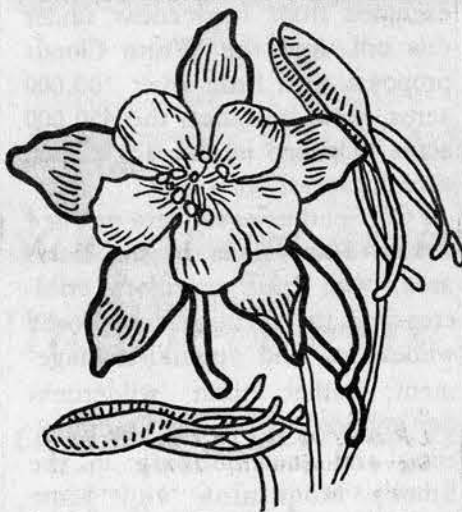


THE LAST REFUGE

Russ Arensman, who writes for the *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, tells us he recently received a request on his computer bulletin board from the mayor of Zushi, a city outside of Tokyo, Japan. Mayor Kiichiro Tomino said Zushi needed help protecting one of the last remaining areas of virgin forest in the Tokyo area. Since 1945, he said, the Ikego forest has been used to store ammunition for the U.S. Navy. That made the forest off limits for people and allowed it to become the only sanctuary for wildlife near Tokyo. Recently, however, the Navy announced it plans to build housing in the forest. To save the area for wildlife, Mayor Tomino is coming to the U.S. this February to appeal directly to Congress and environmental groups. For more information, Arensman suggests contacting David R. Hughes, 6 N 24th Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80904 (303/632-4111).

UNDERSTANDING YELLOWSTONE

A new look at Yellowstone National Park in the context of its bureaucratically complex surroundings has just been published by the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee, a group of nine managers from the Forest Service and three from the Park Service. Their 228-page report sells for \$65, cost \$200,000, took two years to produce, and uses full color for its 51 maps and photos. Called *The Greater Yellowstone Area: An Aggregation of National Park and National Forest Management Plans*, the report "is the first attempt to look at parks and forests as one unit -- whether you want to call it an ecosystem or an area," says Targhee National Forest planner Robert Williams, whose Targhee forest group wrote the report. Ed Lewis, executive director of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, a non-profit citizen group agrees with Williams. "The agencies are beginning to talk in ecosystem terms," he says. "But if all they do is publish a bunch of pretty maps, they'll accomplish nothing." The four-color maps and charts consumed the lion's share, or 75 percent, of the budget, Williams says, because they efficiently show the area's resources, from wildlife to timber and oil and gas, and where resources will stand in 10 years under current management. Lewis says agencies have started implementing report recommendations by standardizing data collection, mapping, leasing terminology, and by directing staffers to make greater efforts at cooperation between themselves and the counties in which they operate. The report is available at park and forest service offices and public libraries in the Yellowstone area, or one can be obtained by writing to the Yellowstone Association, P.O. Box 117, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190.



LANDSCAPING NATURALLY

Landscaping with wildflowers and native plants will be presented by the Denver Botanic Gardens Feb. 5-6. Landscape designers and managers, botanists, horticulturists, landowners, home gardeners and anyone else interested in the esthetic, economic and environmental advantages of landscaping with native plants are encouraged to attend. Among the speakers is naturalist Gary Nabhan, author of *The Desert Smells Like Rain: A Naturalist in Papago Indian Country*, and *Gathering the Desert*. Nabhan is currently assistant director at the Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix, Ariz. Other speakers include Mike Alder, founder of Native Plants, Inc., in Utah, David Northington, director of the National Wildflower Research Center in Austin, Texas, representatives of the State Arboretum of Utah and state highway department officials from Arizona and Colorado. The conference will be held at the Brown Palace Hotel in Denver and costs \$75 for Botanic Garden members, \$85 for nonmembers. For more information contact the Denver Botanic Gardens at 909 York St., Denver, CO 80206 (303/575-3751).

YELLOWSTONE

South Dakota cinematographer Bob Landis doesn't mind waiting for good shots. Along with Dale Johnson, Landis spent months in Yellowstone National Park photographing its wildlife, geysers, indefatigable tourists and, one day, a grizzly running at top speed to bring down an elk. The result is a videotape called *Yellowstone: High Country Treasure*, which is for sale for \$34.95 plus \$2.50 postage from Trailwood Films, Box 1421A, Huron, SD 57350.

NATURAL HISTORY WRITERS

Author and illustrator Ann Zwinger (*Run, River, Run*) and naturalist Gary Paul Nabhan (*Gathering the Desert*) are among writers you can meet this month at Utah's Museum of Natural History in Salt Lake City. The program, called "Writing Natural History," is held under the auspices of the University of Utah and runs through Feb. 22, with authors giving readings every Monday at noon. Other authors in the program are Paul Brooks (*Roadless Area*), Edward Lueders (*Reflections on a Gift of Watermelon Pickle*, editor), Terry Tempest Williams (*Pieces of White Shell*), and Robert Finch (*Common Ground*). Two at a time, the writers will also talk about aspects of their work. Finch and Williams will discuss landscape, people and place on Feb. 8, Zwinger and Nabhan will talk about field notes and the literary process on Feb. 15, and Brooks and Lueders will discuss natural history as literature on Feb. 22. All dialogues with authors are free and begin at 7:30 P.M. in the Fine Arts Auditorium at the University of Utah. For further information contact the University of Utah, Utah Museum of Natural History, Salt Lake City, UT 84112.

CASUAL BLACK TIE

Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado hosts its annual fundraising celebration with a "casual black tie" party Feb. 5th at 8 p.m. at the Prudential Plaza Building in Denver. Aside from complimentary beer, wine, hors d'oeuvres and dancing, the group will present its award to the state's outstanding volunteer of 1987. Tickets are \$20 per person, \$15 for a volunteer and \$35 per couple. Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado is at 1410 Grant St., Denver, CO 80223.

SEARCHING FOR FALCONS

The Four Corners School of Outdoor Education, Utah Audubon Society, Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management are co-sponsoring a three-year research expedition to survey the canyon country of southeast Utah for endangered peregrine falcons. Interested birders can take part in two summer sessions costing \$740 each with biologist Clayton White of Brigham Young University. Traveling by foot and four-wheel drive vehicle, researchers hope to locate nesting peregrines as well as other raptors. For more information contact Janet Ross, Four Corners School, East Route, Monticello, UT 84535 (801/587-2859).

Carl Cook



WOLF ADOPTION

The symbolic adoption of one of 33 wolves is possible at a 60-acre tract called Wolf Haven near Olympia, Washington. The only sanctuary west of the Mississippi, Wolf Haven takes in wolves from zoos, reserves, university research laboratories and families that tried to raise them as pets. Wolves are studied at the haven, and the non-profit organization also encourages awareness and appreciation of the animals by holding open houses and bringing some animals into public schools. "Adopting" a wolf for \$35 brings adoption papers, a 3" x 3" black and white photo of the animal, "visitation rights," which mean unlimited admission to the haven, and a subscription to a quarterly newsletter. Wolf Haven is at 311 Offut Lake Road, Tenino, WA 98589.

Wilderness...

(Continued from page 1)

million unroaded acres has been the subject of a long feud in Idaho. Public hearings in prior years within the state have been divisive. In Congress, clashes between the anti-wilderness Idaho delegation, led by McClure, and former public lands subcommittee chairman John Seiberling, D-Ohio, led to a stalemate.

Following the election of Andrus as governor, he and McClure decided to settle the wilderness question in private. It seemed like a good match. McClure is the arch conservative -- a staunch defender of subsidized logging roads, of maximum forest cuts, of mining, and of the rights of motorized recreation. He has fought most of the major wilderness bills of the last decade, including the one that set aside the Frank Church-River of No Return wilderness in Idaho.

Andrus, on the other hand, has excellent environmental credentials. He is a former consultant for The Wilderness Society, and as President Jimmy Carter's Secretary of Interior, he was point man in the effort to rein in federal water projects. He also played a major role in the Alaska Lands Act, which set aside more wilderness than any other piece of legislation.

Despite political and ideological differences, the two senior Idaho politicians have been friends since they entered the public political stage in 1961 as freshmen state senators. Given the strength with which they back their proposed bill, and given their stature in their respective camps, the proposal has got to be looked at seriously both within Idaho and in the Congress.

In attacking the bill, The Wilderness Society has treaded carefully on Andrus. George Frampton, TWS president, said, "Although it pains us to oppose a proposal put forth by Gov. Andrus, who has made important contributions to the cause of conservation in the past, on this package we part company."

The bill which Andrus and McClure have put forth won't make them popular, but they want to get it through and put the issue behind them. They also hope it will help their long-term images. "We hope that 50 years later historians say, 'They were statesmen,'" said Andrus.

Although it will go to the Congress as an Idaho wilderness bill, it is also an interstate wilderness bill. Many of the areas at issue run across borders, connecting with forest land in Montana, Wyoming and Utah. In addition, the bill states that land designated as wilderness does

not come with any reserved federal water rights. This puts it into the fight over wilderness water rights that originated with a victory by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund in a federal district court in Colorado (HCN, 11/9/87).

The land fought over sprawls across lightly-populated Idaho, which has 1 million people and two congressmen. Portions of roadless areas proposed for wilderness designation include: the Palisades, Bear Creek, Poker Peak and Winegar's Hole areas on the Wyoming border; the Lionhead, Italian Peaks and Scotchman's Peak areas on the Montana border; Mount Naomi on the Utah border; Borah Peak, White Clouds, Pioneers and Sawtooth Completion in Central Idaho; Trinitities, Snowbank Mountain, Secesh-Payette Crest in the Boise and Payette national forests; Kelly Creek-Cayuse Creek, Mallard-Larkins in the Clearwater National Forest, and Selkirk Crest-Long Canyon and Salmo-Priest in the Panhandle.

Off-road vehicle users were pleased that several areas in eastern Idaho, most notably the Lemhi Mountains, would be excluded from wilderness under this bill. And the White Clouds proposal, at a little over 100,000 acres, is far less than the 450,000 acres proposed in the 3.9 million acre conservationist bill.

ORV enthusiasts were granted similar concessions in the Boise area, with trail corridors crisscrossing the Trinitities proposed wilderness, and special management, rather than wilderness designation, to allow motorcycling and snowmobiling in the Smoky Mountains and Lime Creek areas.

But ORV users did not win everywhere. The Italian Peaks and Lionhead roadless areas on the Idaho-Montana border are slated for wilderness in the proposal, and both are popular ORV spots. The Bear Creek area south of Palisades has a state-funded ORV trail that would be closed if the area becomes wilderness. And several other state-funded ORV trails would be closed under the plan.

Clark Collins, executive director of the Blue Ribbon Coalition of motorized trail users, said he was encouraged by some of what he has heard. But like many representatives of special interest groups, he is taking a wait-and-see attitude.

"We're going to have to see the boundaries and see if there aren't a few areas where they can make adjustments," he said. "We're going to try and work with our delegation, and if it's acceptable, we'll go for it."

Conservationists were not so upbeat after meeting with Andrus. Craig Gehrke, TWS forest coordinator in Boise, said, "he basically just set the maps up, and we asked why they put the boundaries where they did.

Sometimes they could tell us and sometimes they couldn't."

Just as the White Clouds proposal pleases ORV users, it greatly disappoints conservation groups, especially since the proposed wilderness includes none of the roadless areas in the Challis National Forest. The same set of reactions occurred on the Payette National Forest and, because of the lack of wilderness recommendations in the Lemhis and in the Ten-Mile West roadless area, in the Boise National Forest.

But conservationists were pleased with the inclusion of the heavily-forested North Fork of Meadow Creek in the Mallard-Larkins proposal in northern Idaho, and with the use of their proposed boundaries for several northern Idaho areas, including Scotchman's Peak on the Montana border. However, they lost on the western border of the Mallard-Larkins, which McClure and Andrus proposed for special management which will allow logging.

Mary Kelly, executive director of the Idaho Conservation League, a coalition of Idaho groups, said, "We're disappointed because of the number of areas that were left out."

The timber industry had sought language to prevent conservationists from fighting logging on roadless land released by the bill. They didn't get it. McClure said it was impossible to write language that would prevent conservation groups from appealing timber sales using the Clean Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act and other laws.

But the timber industry did get some local guarantees of access to roadless areas. The bill includes sections designed to override Forest Service planning figures, so as to ensure that more timber will be harvested in some areas. The most sweeping language is a requirement that the Forest Service find 40.5 million board-feet of timber to cut each year in the Bonner's Ferry Ranger District in Boundary County. It is designed to provide adequate timber supplies to mills in Idaho's northernmost county.

It was offered to mitigate the effect of designating Long Canyon, a key timber area, as wilderness. At least three million board-feet of the 40.5 million board-feet would come from Situation 1 grizzly habitat, where the bear is supposed to be the major management concern.



Pat Ford

West Pass looking into West Pass Creek.

McClure and Andrus said the logging should be possible without hurting grizzly recovery. Conservationists are not convinced, and the proposal is likely to be among the most controversial in the bill.

"This proposal actually seeks to emulate the situation in Alaska's Tongass National Forest -- the nation's greatest money loser," said TWS president Frampton. Under a provision of the Alaska Lands Act, the Forest Service is required to offer Tongass timber for sale no matter what the cost of the sale and the demand for timber.

Special management areas in the Mallard-Larkins, near Kelly Creek, east of Orofino, French Creek near Riggins, and along the South Fork of the Salmon River near Yellowpine are designed to allow logging while protecting important elk and fish habitat.

Richardson of the TWS said the special language was essentially "hard release," and would prevent future wilderness consideration 10 to 15 years from now.

The South Fork of the Salmon proposal displeased the timber industry because of a proposed one-mile, no-cut corridor along the river, said Joe Hinson, Idaho Forest Industry Council executive vice president. The no-cut corridor goes beyond restrictions written during negotiations between the timber industry, the Forest Service and several conservation groups.

Some conservation groups accepted the negotiated restric-

tions; others, including TWS, rejected them and left the negotiations. Whether the one-mile corridor will answer their concerns remains to be seen. The South Fork is famous because roading and logging in the 1960s, followed by heavy rains, led to enormous sediment flow and devastation of the salmon fishery in that stream. It has partially come back, but never recovered its original productivity.

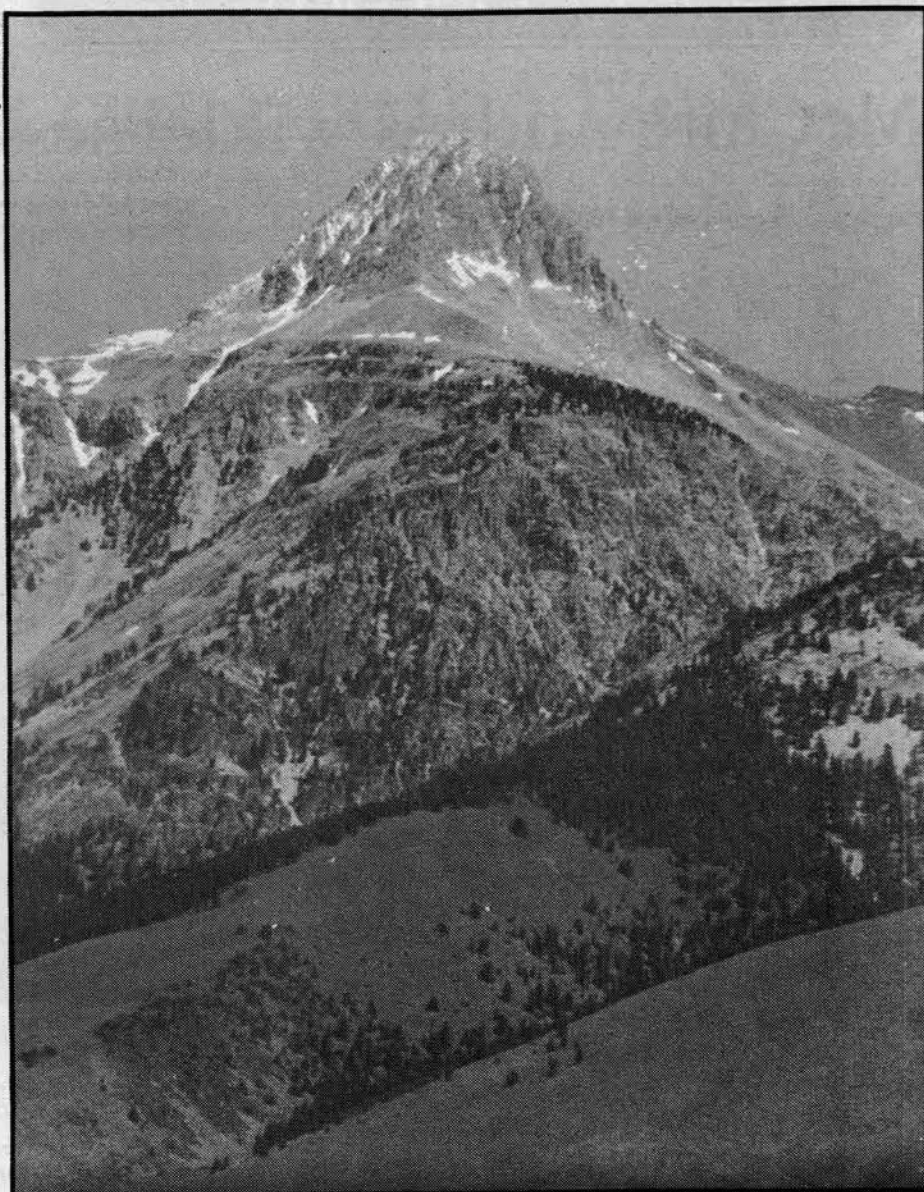
In addition to providing certainty for logging in some areas, which the industry's Hinson said pleased him, the bill also takes care of some ranchers and guides and outfitters. Ranchers who now use motor vehicles to haul in salt and fencing will be allowed to continue such practices in newly-designated wilderness. Predator control will also continue.

Idaho outfitters and guides were granted a similar grandfather clause, allowing them to continue current practices. This is a major controversy in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, as the Forest Service has forced outfitters to stop leaving established camps in wilderness areas. Conservationists are caught between principle and politics, since the guides and outfitters support wilderness in general.

Fifty southern Idaho conservationists held a strategy meeting in Sun Valley on Jan. 9, and reacted to the bill with a mix of disappointment and anger.

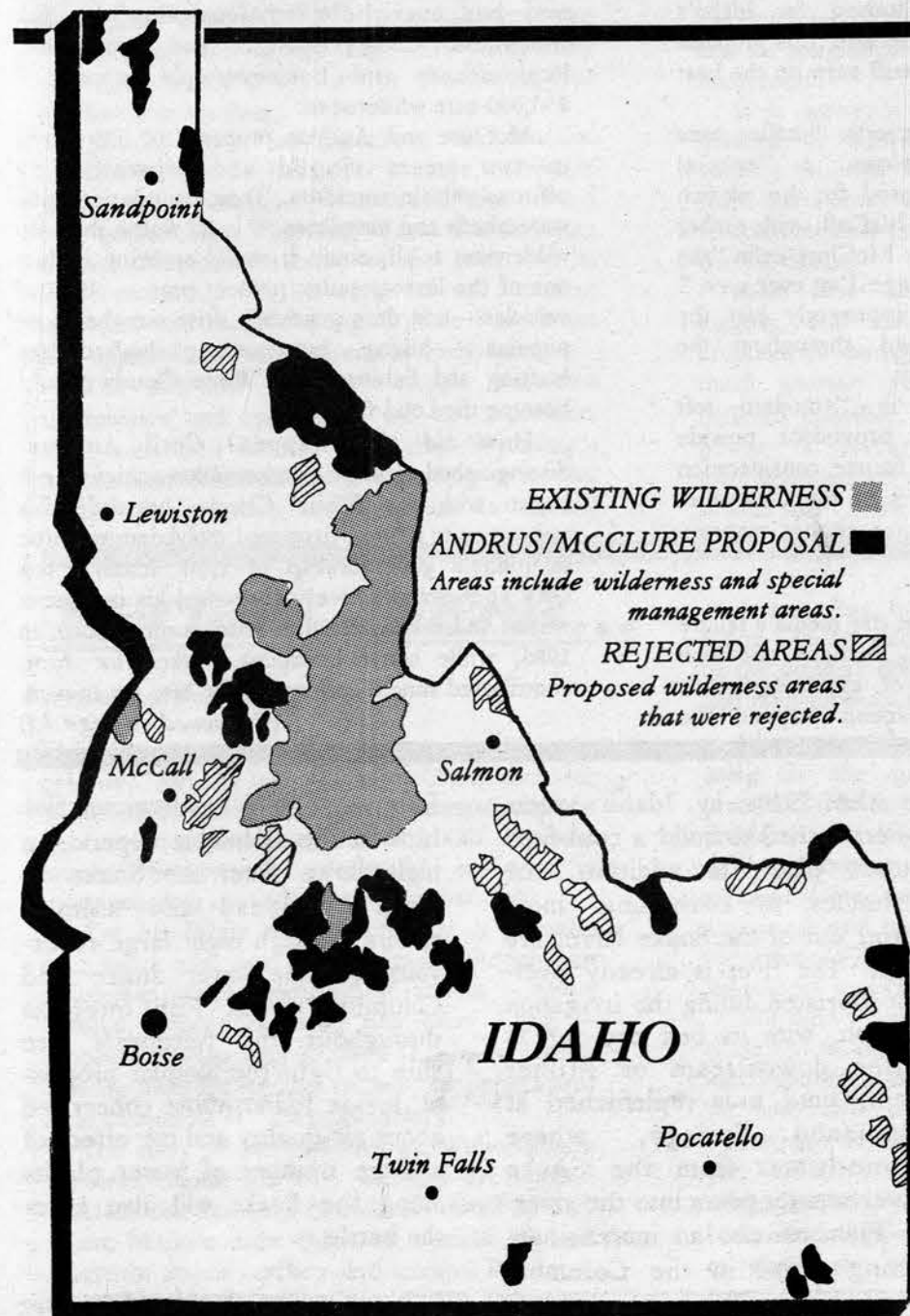
"It's a pretty bad bill," said Jerry Jayne of Idaho Falls, a board member of the Idaho

Rocky Barker



Bell Mountain in Idaho's Lemhi Mountains

A Sierra Club member in Idaho said of the Andrus-McClure bill: 'Take it or leave it is always a tough bargaining position, but I rarely see any political issue that is really take it or leave it.'



Environmental Council. "We'll work for major improvements, but they need to be major to make it acceptable." At present, he said, "this bill is worse than no bill at all."

Ralph Maughn, a member of the Sierra Club from Pocatello, said the bill is a starting point. "Andrus and McClure deserve credit for trying to resolve the issue. Unfortunately, what they've produced is not acceptable as written."

But Maughn said the bill can be fixed in Congress. "Take it or leave it is always a tough bargaining position, but I rarely see any political issue that is really take it or leave it."

Rep. Richard Stallings, D-Idaho, said he generally supports the proposal but is planning changes when the bill gets to the House. He wants to add an area around Diamond Peak in the Lemhi Mountains that was negotiated for inclusion

by Maughn and ORV lobbyist Clark Collins of Pocatello. Stallings said he was also open to other changes.

Rep. Larry Craig, R-Idaho, says the acreage proposed for wilderness by Andrus and McClure is too large. Sen. Steve Symms, R-Idaho, has been silent on the issue.

The key people who now must be satisfied with the legislation are Rep. Bruce Vento, D-Minn., who replaced Seiberling as head of the public lands subcommittee, and Rep. Harold Volkmer, D-Mo., who chairs the agricultural subcommittee on forests, family farms and energy.

Vento works closely with national environmental groups, and has enough clout to change the bill. Volkmer's committee will be involved due to the special management language that is part of the bill.

--Rocky Barker

14-High Country News -- February 1, 1988

GUEST OPINION

McClure-Andrus wilderness bill is worse than nothing

by Pat Ford

On Dec. 30 I sat in Gov. Cecil Andrus' office as he and Sen. James McClure unveiled their "statewide wilderness proposal" for Idaho national forest lands. The room was crowded. Cables, cameras, lights, mikes, handlers, reporters -- all so feverishly engaged in such passive work. Whispering staff members lining the walls.

Five squinting conservationists with long faces sat too far from the quickly turning maps to confirm just how bad the bad news was. Under the lights, Andrus and McClure moved smoothly through the script.

The surreality of the event left me dizzy. The proposal itself came wrapped in fictions. The reporters (save one) did not know and could not inquire into what they were shown and told. And Idaho conservationists -- the five of us there could stand for the rest -- had done so much without doing what was necessary.

"We have agreed," Andrus and McClure said, on a "statewide wilderness proposal." But in fact, wilderness was a minor subtext of their agreement. Ninety percent of the wildlands it allocates -- 8 million of 9.3 million acres -- would not be wilderness.

Their statements concentrated on the many non-wilderness provisions; so will the legislative text. Their proposal contains more special management provisions of more kinds than any state "wilderness bill" Congress has ever seen.

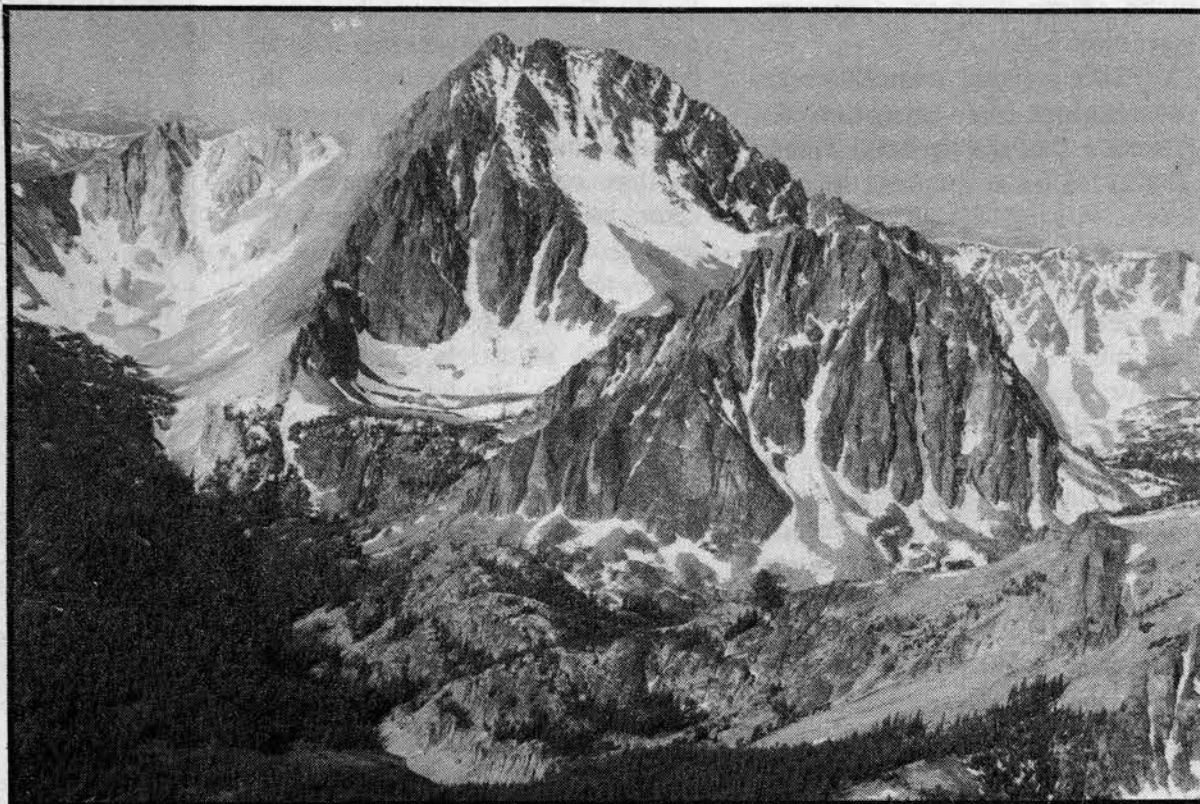
We developed this proposal, they said, without "any specific acreage figure," target or ceiling. But in fact, keeping the wilderness acreage low was a guiding logic. This is clearest in central Idaho where nearly 1 million acres are excluded despite strong local support, important fish and wildlife habitat and little or no resource conflict.

Andrus' staff argued it is "de facto wilderness" -- not threatened -- and so rugged it will stay wild without legislation. That is partly true but the same can be said, indeed better said, of most they did include. Most of their proposed wilderness acres are rocks and ice, as de facto as acres excluded on that basis. No, these areas were left out because McClure had an acreage ceiling, and there would be no deal unless Andrus kept near it. That ceiling explains many exclusions and some very arbitrary boundaries for areas which were included.

This is a "package," they said. "We will not accept major changes or much tinkering." In fact, the proposal deliberately leaves room for some changes and opens itself to many more. Room is left in southern Idaho for Rep. Richard Stallings, D-Idaho, to add to the bill in return for his support. Stallings hasn't bitten on that offer yet, in part because he knows -- as must McClure and Andrus -- that the long list of special provisions guarantees lengthy scrutiny and amendment in Congress.

Some provisions seem doomed from the start: One mandates a north Idaho Forest district to offer 40.5 million board feet of timber for harvest yearly -- whatever the market, cost, and impact on other values -- and notwithstanding other

Idaho Conservation League



Castle Peak in the White Clouds

laws. If there is no tinkering, and some major change, the bill won't pass.

Our proposal, they said, will "settle the wilderness problem in Idaho." In fact, it leaves the core conflict almost untouched. The "wilderness problem" is shorthand for many related issues -- timber harvest, aggressive roadbuilding, shrinking wildlands, degraded fish and wildlife habitat, public land budget shares and subsidies, and conflicts among economies (notably timber and recreation). But the heart of the management stalemate is the Forest Service's fast-track roadbuilding program, which is slicing habitat, silting streams, destroying backcountry, and draining budgets.

The rising grassroots challenge to this roading will barely be deflected by this bill. Of 4,500 new road miles planned for Idaho's national forests in the next decade, this proposal would stop 50. If passed, it will turn up the heat on the forests, not lower it.

Those are the major fictions. Smaller ones reside in specific provisions. A "special management area" is proposed for the elk-rich French Creek area north of McCall, with timber harvest constrained by what McClure calls "the tightest elk protection language I've ever seen." In fact, the language is apparently just the general elk guidelines used throughout the Payette National Forest today.

The release language is "standard soft release." In fact, special provisions provide back-door hard release (no future consideration as wilderness) for large parts of the Clearwater National Forest by mandating timber management permanently.

And so on.

There is little to say about the media's failure to challenge these fictions. Perhaps television news is capable in theory of exploring public issues in depth. In Idaho, it doesn't happen. The

notion that reporters should inquire into the accuracy of what their cameras record is beyond the format even if a reporter considered it. And, of course, he or she will be off to a bigger market in a year anyway, so why bother.

I spent last summer and fall working full-time to influence this proposal. Since Dec. 30 I have particularly pondered the hash made of my favorite place. That place is the White Cloud Peaks and Boulder Mountains that form the largest unprotected roadless area left on the national forests -- about 500,000 acres of peaks, canyons, basins, lakes and chain lakes in spectacular array upon array. It is part of Idaho's greatest natural treasure, the Salmon River watershed. Wildlife is varied and abundant. It is the most popular wild area in southern Idaho and has overwhelming local support for wilderness. Conservationists and sportsmen, local officials and businesspeople support a 450,000-acre wilderness.

McClure and Andrus propose 100,000 acres in two pieces ringed and separated by off-road-vehicle corridors. Their boundaries split watersheds and meadows. It is far worse than no wilderness at all, since it would enshrine in law one of the least-popular present uses -- off-road vehicles -- and thus gradually drive out the most popular -- hiking, horseriding, backcountry hunting and fishing. The White Clouds would become the Loud Clouds.

How did this happen? Cecil Andrus' distinguished record of conservation achievement began with the White Clouds; he rode his opposition to a huge proposed molybdenum mine to Idaho's governorship in 1970. Idaho's top ORV spokesmen actively supported his opponent when Andrus returned to the governorship in 1986, while conservationists worked for him, contributed funds and voted for him en masse.

(Continued on page 15)

Potato king...

(Continued from page 1)

Certainly, Simplot is thinking on an immense scale. Building 2,000 megawatts a year for 50 years would dwarf anything the West has seen thus far. For example, the Intermountain Power Project in central Utah is only 1,500 megawatts, while Colorado-Ute's large complex at Craig, Colorado, has 1,800 megawatts. The three power plants at Colstrip, Montana, total 2,250 megawatts. All of the projects

caused controversy, and took many years to build.

But Simplot has had grandiose plans before, and has succeeded in implementing them. No one believed he could turn Idaho's bountiful potatoes into an immense fortune through his Ore-Ida Foods. And no one believed he would expand that fortune in the computer software business through his firm, Micron, Inc. But he did both.

He faces an even larger task this time, however. The Idaho Power Company was beaten back

in the 1970s by Idaho voters when it tried to build a coal-fired power plant. In addition, the obstacles to consuming more water out of the Snake River are high. The river is already over-appropriated during the irrigation season, with its bed dry for 75 miles downstream of Milner Dam, until it is replenished at Thousand Springs, where groundwater from the Snake River aquifer pours into the river.

Fish are also an increasingly strong factor in the Columbia River basin. The expensive ef-

forts to rebuild anadromous fish runs in the Columbia depend on high flows from the Snake to flush steelhead and salmon smolts through eight large reservoirs on the lower Snake and Columbia rivers. Fish interests throughout the Northwest are sure to fight the Simplot proposal. Inside Idaho, those concerned about air quality and the effect of a large number of power plants along the Snake will also enter the battle.

--Stephen Steubner

OPINION

Ultimately, only the West can save the West

The staff of *High Country News* is like a troop of ancient priests fingering the entrails of gutted birds in search of the future. The entrails told the priests how much trouble the bird was having capturing food, what kind of food it was finding, and perhaps even, by extension, about the overall quality of the environment. Out of that bloody, malodorous information, the priests predicted the fate of kings and armies, for both ultimately travel on their stomachs.

It is our conceit that the stories in *HCN* can be almost as useful to the rural West as the birds were to ancient soothsayers.

In 1987, *HCN* was dominated not by wilderness or water or mining or logging, but by wildlife: by everything from grizzlies to wolves to ferrets. After spending decades exterminating whatever moved, but especially the large predators, we are now debating at length and with great ferocity the extent to which wildlife -- and especially the predators -- should move back onto the land.

Things always make sense in retrospect, and with hindsight we can see that the drive to create wilderness, which culminated in 1984 with the many state bills signed into law by President Reagan, would naturally be succeeded by a push to populate the sheltered land with wildlife.

The fight is more difficult than that over wilderness. Wilderness can be defined by lines on a map; it lends itself to certainty. But as the roaming wolves and grizzlies of Montana and the wandering bison of Yellowstone National Park prove, wildlife is not subject to the drawing of lines.

The new concentration on wildlife could prove powerful. The drive to reintroduce the large predators, and restore some balance to nature, may go well beyond wilderness legislation in preserving and recreating some of what we have lost.

The clearest example of that potential is the Big Open proposal in central Montana, which would turn a mix of federal and private land into a preserve for big game, and perhaps even for predators. Thus far, the local ranchers are strongly opposed to the Big Open idea; they seem determined to live or die with cattle. But the battle is not over.

To the south, in Wyoming, the situation is different. For the past year or more, there has been a noisy struggle for control of the state's big game. The Wyoming Farm Bureau has moved to claim ownership of the game, or at least ownership of the right to sell hunting licenses. And the Wyoming Wildlife Federation has opposed the Farm Bureau at every turn.

The outcome of the struggle between landowners and sportsmen will be important. But overlooked is the fact that Wyoming's agricultural community isn't arguing over the value of big game, as they are in central



Montana. They are implicitly saying that they are willing to accommodate themselves, and their cattle and sheep, to big game. They accept game's tremendous economic value; they are simply fighting for some of the money.

It would be wrong to see the wildlife struggle as purely economic. The desire of so many people to see grizzlies and wolves again roam the West is based on emotion -- on the sense that the West lost a vital part of itself when it wiped out those predators, or confined them to a few corners of the land.

We can see this stirring in other places. It is easy to mock Interior Secretary Donald Hodel's suggestion that California's Hetch Hetchy Valley next to Yosemite be reclaimed. But that proposal stirred more interest than any proposal we can recall environmentalists making in 1987. Hodel's reasoning may have been of the same kind that led him to suggest sunglasses and a hat as a cure for the destruction of the ozone layer, but the Hetch Hetchy idea struck our national nerve, and the sunglasses and hat suggestion struck our funnybone.

It is assumed that if Hetch Hetchy were drained, we would be left for centuries with a stinking pit. But in the last issue of the year, *HCN* ran a story on the way devastated Mount St. Helens has come -- in biological terms -- roaring back.

Land first devastated by Forest Service logging, and then destroyed by a volcanic eruption, is being recolonized by nature in a much shorter period of time than anyone believed possible. We give lip service to the power of nature, but down deep even environmentalists may believe more in the power of man than in the power of nature.

Perhaps more than fine political and economic calculations, we need to have faith. We need to believe that the Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Forest Service, the road-builders and the over-grazers won't have the last word. We have to believe that if they can be brought to bay, and driven back from the land, nature will retake, more quickly than we now hope, what they have tried to destroy.

Perhaps coincidentally, stories on Indian issues were prominent in *HCN* during 1987. Indian issues are very complex, but surveying the entrails of our stories, it feels as if the tide of coerced assimilation and acculturation of Indians is receding. As that tide recedes, one sees that the Indian nations are still there, their religions and languages damaged but alive.

They are alive at a time when the salmon are being nursed back from the edge of extinction in the Columbia River basin, when the white man's agriculture is in retreat on the Great Plains, and when people are talking seriously of returning part of the West to an older order.

Amidst signs of natural health, academic researchers in 1987 told us of human disease. In the rural West, young people in their teens and 20s are more at risk from suicides, drunken brawls, auto accidents and random violence than young people in deprived urban ghettos. Those who say they want to live in a small Western town because it's a great place to raise children are fooling themselves.

The start of another year should be a time for optimism, but the only bright sign we can find in this area is the recent banning of three-wheeled ORVs -- destructive toys which many young people use to first trash the public land, and then to trash themselves.

There may be a lesson here for the environmental movement. In general, the movement has tried to save the West despite itself. That's the message of environmentalist concentration in Washington, D.C. To a limited extent, that can work. Enclaves such as a Glacier or Yellowstone national park can be established, and for a while protected from the general carnage which has been visited on the West.

But in the end, a handful of locals will have more effect on the West's land and wildlife than any number of distant supporters of a natural West. Ultimately, the distant, hands-off approach will fail.

We have no answer to this grim conclusion. Changing the values of the West's population, or the settlement of the region by people with different values, is a much harder job than going to Washington in search of a new law. Perhaps all we can do is accomplish what we can in Washington, as a stopgap, while we wait for the West to change at its roots.

--Ed Marston

McClure-Andrus...

(Continued from page 14)

Moreover, economic development is his top priority, and a large White Clouds/Boulder Wilderness would further it dramatically in recreation-dependent central Idaho. Andrus knows the country personally; he shot a mountain goat in the Boulders this past fall.

Yet his White Clouds proposal is actually less, much less, than Idaho's leading Republican politicians and anti-wilderness zealots -- Steve Symms, George Hansen, and Larry Craig -- proposed for the area in 1984. The word I keep hearing from old Andrus friends, supporters and local Democrats is "unfathomable."

The many people who love the White Clouds are determinedly low-key, but they are baffled and hurt. We knew the boundaries would be bad where McClure drew them, and might be bad where the timber conflicts are intense. We knew McClure's acreage ceiling would keep deserving

areas out. But no one imagined the proposed White Clouds wilderness in this proposal would be the biggest threat to the White Clouds since that molybdenum mine 18 years ago.

I keep returning to a phrase Andrus has been using for the past year -- "the wilderness problem." He is trying to "settle the wilderness problem." All last summer and fall we used a different language. In letters, ads and publicity we tried to present him in central Idaho with the arguments and backing to seize the "wilderness opportunity." That's why the economic case for wilderness was ridden so hard.

We didn't get through, or if we did Andrus chose not to tackle McClure on that ground. So Idaho conservationists have the challenge today we had, and dropped, in 1984. With John Seiberling's leadership in Congress, we stopped Jim McClure's attempt to pass a terrible Idaho wilder-less bill. We bought breathing space for a badly-needed positive statewide education effort to reverse the terms surrounding wilderness -- from problem to opportunity, from job loss to job

gain, from lock-up to keep open, from past to future, from land use to land ethic. We had the ideas and could have found the money. We didn't, and the politician who is Idaho's governor is signalling the consequences.

We did work, growing expert at staving off immediate threats to wild places, making localized progress on public attitudes, making some political progress. The Andrus/McClure package is obviously superior, statewide, to McClure's 1984 proposal. But the transformation of public perceptions that we require has not occurred. Now the exigencies of substantially improving or fighting this legislation will dominate our time.

We will do all right, but we will have many opportunities to regret what we did not do in 1985, 1986, and 1987.

□

Freelancer Pat Ford worked on the wilderness proposal for the Idaho Conservation League last year.

Snowcaves: excellent places to spend cold, wet nights

by Mark Jenkins

A smooth, violet blanket has dropped over the sky; it's so close you can almost wipe your fingers across it. The snow around you is blue, soft and deep. Although it is almost dark, the thought of leaving, returning to the noise and lights of town, is repugnant; you want to spend the night out; camp in the snow, in the mountains.

"Build a snowcave," is the thought that flashes through your mind. Simply burrow into a nearby drift and sleep soundly, cuddled by nature's insulator.

Although few people have built and slept in a snowcave, the snowcave is famous -- everyone raves about snowcaves. It is the hand-hewn home with vaulted ceilings, Roman arches and a tunnel entrance, a shelter as snug as a pika's den beneath the blizzard, the ultimate winter accommodation. A snowcave can be all these things. It can also be the wrong choice.

Years ago I decided to introduce a close friend to winter camping. With visions of a warm cavern and hot chocolate we slid smack into a Rocky Mountain white-out. The higher we skied, the more the weather deteriorated. Soon the distinction between falling snow and snow on the ground vanished.

After ascending for five hours in progressively deeper snow, we slumped into a bergschrund -- at the base of a rock wall. Visibility had dropped to the tip of our skis; the wind clawed at our backs. On the way in we had passed many house-size drifts, prime forms for snowcave architecture. But searching for just the right white mound had become impossible. We chose the bergschrund wall in front of us, pulled out our shovels, and attacked.

The snow was not much softer than ice; each jab with the shovel plopped out only a softball-size chunk. Spading even the smallest cave would be an arduous chore. But I had promised my friend a night in the legendary snowcave, so we dug.

It took four hours to excavate a hole no bigger than a fat couch. The effort soaked our long underwear, wool pants and sweaters with sweat. From groveling in snow our wind-pants and parkas were drenched. We crawled into the cave wetter than muskrats, both shivering fiercely. It was pitch dark and colder than a meat locker inside.

My body became torpid and my speech was slurred. Through a mental fog I recognized hypothermia. I tried to concentrate on simple tasks: Light the stove. Scrape snow from the cave wall into a pot. Eat a handful of nuts. Remove wet clothing. Get into sleeping bag. For an hour, life was reduced to a monosyllabic pantomime, every action performed in an instinctive haze. Eventually water was boiling. Hot chocolate never meant so much.

That night was cramped, cold and almost sleepless. After warming up, we widened the floor so as not to sleep with our shoulders overlapping. Throughout the night we punched out the ventilation hole, plugged and replugged the entrance to block gushing spindrift. At some dark early



Lisa Johnson enters a snow cave in Wyoming during a National Outdoor Leadership School expedition.

morning hour we tried to list all the things we had done wrong, the pros and cons of a snowcave.

The next morning we skied out.

That was an atypical winter trip, and yet the conditions we encountered were those many suggest are ideal for cave building. It was storming, night was falling and drifts were abundant. Still, other snowcaves have been accommodating.

One year we mined a grotto that could sleep 10 people. The ceiling was high enough for a game of golf with ice axe clubs and balls of knotted wool socks. (Four days later the ceiling had sagged so far we used the axes to hold it up.) Another winter we carved out a cave with one entrance and a three-leaf clover floor plan, each side room slept two cavers.

In truth, a snowcave is not a universal winter shelter; it is often not easy to build and not as warm as a living room. Furthermore, a snowcave built incorrectly can be cold and dangerous.

Enter the alternative: a tent, the high-tech, 20th century counterpart to the Sioux teepee, wigwam or Tibetan yurt. A portable home, weighing less than a kitchen appliance, capable of being set up in less time than it takes to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Side by side, snowcave versus tent, which is best? A combination of

weather, terrain and altitude will dictate which shelter is most appropriate. Each has its advantages and disadvantages.

A tent can be erected quickly in almost any geography without exhausting or soaking the camper. It is portable, dry inside and has easy exit/entrance access. It is not warm, can in the worst tempest be torn apart, and loud in the wind. The snowcave requires a sizable drift, is relatively warm if the living quarters are excavated on a higher plane than the entrance, and quiet. A snowcave is always wet and takes at least 30-40 minutes to build. In that time the caver will become soaked. Finally, the exit and entrance to a snowcave is inconvenient.

Usually a snowcave is best suited to the following circumstances: on an expedition where the weather is torturous and the cave will be used for many days; as a multi-day basecamp, hub for wagon-wheel ski tours; for shorter trips if the primary purpose of the camp out is to build a snowcave.

A tent is the manifestation of domicile versatility. For any trek where a new camp site in a new location is made each day, a tent is ideal. Building a snowcave, after all, would be a waste of calories and time. On a weekend camp-out, the tent dweller has more time to slice telemarks or plop headplants than

the cave digger.

The tent is also an indispensable back up when building a cave is impractical because your temporary home-site has no drifts, small drifts or ice-hard drifts; you and/or your party are already cold, wet or exhausted; and tunneling a cave could make matters worse. In short, for most winter excursions, the tent is both more efficient and more functional than the celebrated snowcave.

But not all tents are created equal. An A-frame pup tent will tear like tissue paper in the first savage storm. A tent capable of withstanding the rigors of winter, a "four-season mountain tent," is expensive -- \$250-\$500 -- but worth the investment if you plan to winter camp much. Most modern mountain tents are sleek, hump-backed beasts with tough nylon or Gore-tex skins and aluminum ribs.

What size is best? The heavier the tent, the more cold air tent dwellers must warm with their bodies. A tent just small enough to be comfortable is best. Too, the simpler the set-up procedure the better. Trying to figure out which pole goes in which sleeve, in a blizzard, is annoying. Finally, although the debate over which fabric is more functional -- Gore-tex or regular nylon -- rages on, a Gore-tex tent has no rainfly and is therefore quicker to erect. This factor may be offset by the fact that a tent with a double wall -- two layers of fabric with an air space in between -- is arguably warmer than a single wall tent. Other subtleties play a role in how well a tent functions but are more subjective.

Pleasurable winter tenting requires planning. Always bring a shovel is the first rule. With it, there are numerous ways to make a tent warmer and less susceptible to wind. If no natural wind-blocks exist for your site and the snow is hard-packed, build a thick, self-supporting snow wall around the tent. For even more protection, spade a trench 1-2 feet deep and set in your tent. In deep powder, stamp the tent site on skis, then in boots alone. After erecting the tent, fill in snow along its perimeter to a height of 10-20 inches. This drift will not only make the tent more wind resistant but also create an insulating dead air space if you're using a tentfly.

Natural wind blocks are sometimes abundant. A stand of closely clustered trees or the lee of a large rock, drift or trees are excellent locations.

Obtaining enough stake purchase can be difficult. Snow stakes of long aluminum or plastic blades are essential. In their absence choose a site near protruding vegetation or a rock formation; guy lines can arrest a tent attempting to take flight.

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Freelance writer Mark Jenkins of Laramie, Wyoming, tells us he spends "about half of every year in a sleeping bag on some mountain and the other half in front of a computer writing about it." He was a climber on both the 1986 U.S. Everest North Face Expedition and the 1984 American Xixabangma Expedition.

How to dig yourself in

1. Choose a drift six to 10 feet high composed of solid but not hard snow.
2. Build the entrance tunnel on the lee side of the drift using a large scoop shovel.
3. Keep the entrance hole as small as possible and dig upward.
4. Dig approximately three to five feet in and three feet up. The slope of your entrance tunnel should be no less than 25 degrees.
5. Hollow out the ceiling so that it is evenly arched to a center point. The more domed the ceiling, the less likely it will collapse.
6. Cut a two-level platform. The first level should slope off into the entrance tunnel, the second, the sleeping platform, should be one to two feet above the first.
7. The height of the apex should be only high enough for a person to sit on the sleeping platform without his or her head touching the ceiling. A ceiling any higher is a waste of energy and only creates more air space that the body or stove must warm up.
8. Punch an air hole straight up over the first level.
9. Dig a cupola on a cave sidewall big enough to accommodate your stove, pots, pans and food. If your stove is inefficient or leaks gas, punch an air hole above where the stove will be used.
10. If possible, cut a snow block that will fit snugly in the entrance.