High Country News

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INSIDE:

Kit Miller

Bruce Babbitt

Jean Dresden

Town is getting five golf courses

Fore! in Santa Fe

by **Bruce Selcraig**

During the indulgent '80s, when Santa Fe began to feel like an adobefied suburb of L.A. or Dallas, developers courted affluent Anglo immigrants with resort hotels, gated communities and terraced mansions on once-inviolable hilltops of juniper and piñon.

On the East Side, modest Hispanic neighborhoods were gradually converted to gallery districts, where paintings now sell for more than what some displaced residents earned in a lifetime. The average home price doubled — it just passed $200,000 — while the newcomers demanded more hair salons, private schools, Range Rovers, swimming pools and psychiatrists. One would've guessed they had everything they needed.

There was, however, one glaring absence, a missing entrée, as it were, on the Santa Fe banquet menu — exclusive, lusciously green golf courses.

Unlike Scottsdale, Palm Springs and a host of other desert retreats, Santa Fe had managed for nearly 40 years with only one modest 18-hole golf course — at the Santa Fe Country Club. Consequently, Santa Fe became known among golf developers as a great untapped wilderness with seemingly perfect demographics: lots of idle, rich, white folks and a nice climate.

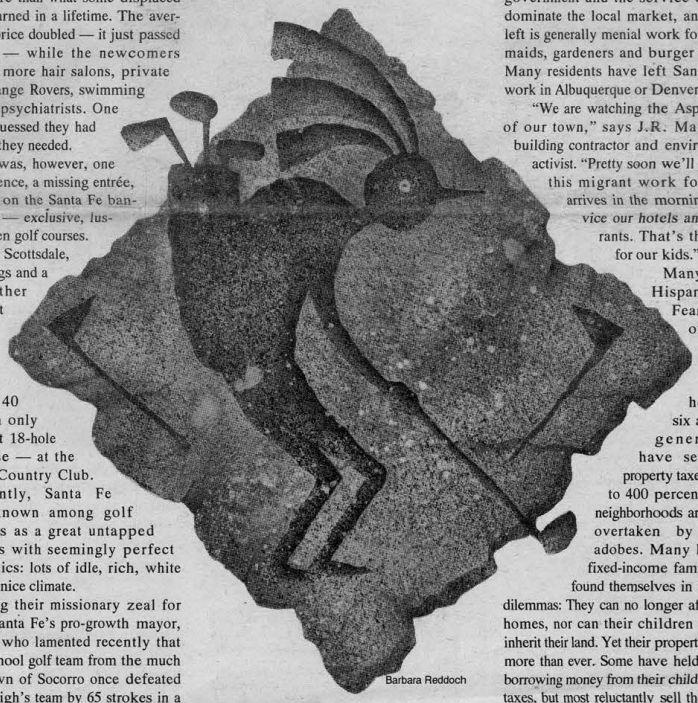
Sharing their missionary zeal for golf was Santa Fe's pro-growth mayor, Sam Pick, who lamented recently that the high school golf team from the much smaller town of Socorro once defeated Santa Fe High's team by 65 strokes in a tournament.

"That's all because they have a (municipal) course," Pick said. "I can't handle that as mayor. We're going to be living in the 21st century, and as long as golf is part of that it's got to be part of our lifestyle. We need golf. We need golf for our kids."

Emboldened by such pleas, developers began laying the groundwork for their golf haciendas during the '80s and are now reaping the rewards: five new golf courses, including the municipal one Mayor Pick wanted, are expected to begin or complete construction in Santa Fe County this year or next. Three will be attached to opulent residential developments that have been advertised internationally; three others are on the drawing board.

Not surprisingly, the arrival of upscale country club golf has met with passionate opposition in a town where environmental and cultural concerns dominate civic affairs. Not only are the courses' need for water and land resented by many, but Hispanic activists and cultural guardians believe the upper-class golf lifestyle will only lure more wealthy Anglos to Santa Fe and intensify the glaring disparity in wealth within the county.

Says city councilor Debbie Jaramillo: "We need affordable housing, job training, good schools and a thousand other things before elite golf courses."



Barbara Reddoch

Often obscured by the allure of Santa Fe's world-class opera, seven museums and some 150 galleries, is the fact that the average annual wage in Santa Fe County is still below $16,000, and almost 13,000 residents live at or below poverty level. But the resentment of many Hispanics toward planned communities, designer boutiques and, now, exclusive golf developments is rooted in more than class differences. Santa Fe's Hispanics are being displaced by affluent whites at close to the rate of 1 percent per year.

Since 1970, the Hispanic population in this town of 60,000 has decreased from 65 percent to 49 percent, while that of Anglos has increased from 33 percent to 48 percent, according to state labor statistics. During the 1980s alone, some 23,000 newcomers — a majority from Southern California and Texas — settled in Santa Fe County. At the same time 3,500 Santa Fe families, most of them Hispanic, left town.

Some causes of the Hispanic exodus are not surprising. Santa Fe, the state capital, has few major employers who provide solid middle-class jobs. State government and the service economy dominate the local market, and what's left is generally menial work for waiters, maids, gardeners and burger flippers. Many residents have left Santa Fe for work in Albuquerque or Denver.

"We are watching the Aspenization of our town," says J.R. Martinez, a building contractor and environmental activist. "Pretty soon we'll just have this migrant work force that arrives in the morning to service our hotels and restaurants. That's the future for our kids."

Many native Hispanic Santa Feans, some of whom trace their ancestry here back six and seven generations, have seen their property taxes rise 300 to 400 percent as their neighborhoods are steadily overtaken by elegant adobes. Many low- and fixed-income families have found themselves in agonizing dilemmas: They can no longer afford their homes, nor can their children afford to inherit their land. Yet their property is worth more than ever. Some have held on, even borrowing money from their children to pay taxes, but most reluctantly sell their homes to the grateful newcomers and abandon one of the last constants in their increasingly unsettled lives, their community.

"We are becoming a minority in our own town," Jaramillo says. "Imagine not being able to afford to live in the town of your birth, in some cases, in the very home where you were born."

And so, when several wealthy Anglo developers decided to make Santa Fe a world-renowned golf destination, many local residents became angry. "There is already considerable hostility and division between Hispanics and Anglos here," says Sam Hitt, director of the conservation group, Forest Guardians.

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Dear friends,

A national department

When Bruce Babbitt was nominated to be secretary of Interior, a predecessor, Stewart Udall of Santa Fe, N.M., said he hoped Babbitt would lift Interior out of its narrow, regional role and restore it to national status.

Judging by the May 10, 1993, issue of *The New Yorker*, restoration is under way. In a Talk of the Town article, under the headline "Western Heroes," the magazine described a ceremony Secretary Babbitt held to honor the memory of writer Wallace Stegner, who was also a veteran of Interior. Stegner had worked at Interior as "Writer in Residence" during Stewart Udall's tenure in the 1960s, and was a member of the National Parks System Advisory Board.

He will also be a member in spirit of this administration. Babbitt said that he reread Stegner's *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian* during his first week as Interior secretary. In that book, he said, "Stegner showed us the limitations of aridity and the need for human institutions to respond in a cooperative way."

The article also took note of the new Interior secretary:

"Not only is Secretary Bruce Babbitt present as the new Czar of Public Lands; he is a presence."

Babbitt may be a myth in the making. In the last few days, we've learned that *The New York Times Magazine* is planning a cover story on the secretary; he will also be featured in *Rolling Stone*.

Back in New York ...

High Country News editor Betsy Marston returned to her home town and alma mater on Friday, April 30, to accept an Award for Distinguished Achievement. The home town is New York and the award came from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, from which she graduated in 1963.

The award was for her career, which included 10 years as editor of *High Country News*, six years as founder and editor of *North Fork Times*, a Paonia weekly newspaper, and 10 years in New York City television, most of that time at Channel 13, the New York City PBS station. While there, she won an Emmy for her three-part documentary about Paul Robeson, who achieved fame as a football player, a singer and a supporter of the Soviet Union.

The other recipients of awards in the Low Library ceremony were Howard Weinberg, a free-lance television producer; Tony Horwitz and Geraldine Brooks, a husband and wife reporting team for the *Wall Street Journal* who specialize in the Middle East; and University of California journalism professor Neil Henry.

Visitors

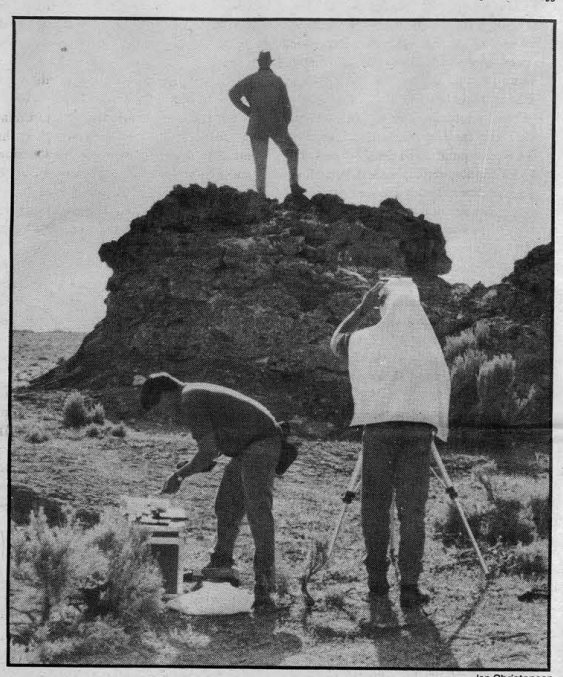
Friday, May 7, was a rainy, muddy day in western Colorado — so rainy and muddy that a small group of federal employees was unable to float the Gunnison Gorge. Instead, they drove to Paonia to share their picnic lunch with the *HCN* staff.

The trip had been planned to show Bonnie Cohen, who has been nominated assistant secretary of Interior for budget, management and policy, the gorge. Her guides, and our other guests, were Martha Hahn, the assistant state director of the Colorado BLM; Alan Kesterke, the Montrose BLM district manager; and Allan Belt, the Montrose BLM area manager.

Wrong number

Circulation manager Gretchen Nicholoff fears an onslaught of telephone calls from librarians fearing they did not get *HCN* volume 25, number 8. That is because we called the May 3 issue number 9, when we should have called it number 8. And we are calling the May 17 issue number 9B because it is really number 9. So there is no missing issue; only a missing 8.

— Ed Marston for the staff



Jon Christensen

Myth in the making: a photographer poses Bruce Babbitt in the Nevada desert for *The New York Times Magazine*

HOTLINE

Faxed memo tells all

By mistake, a development company released plans to destroy wetlands and line the bottom of four artificial lakes with mine tailings in a valley near Telluride, Colo. A consultant for the San Miguel Valley Corp. faxed a memo March 31 to the San Miguel County Planning Office, outlining a strategy to develop more than 800 acres of land into a hotel, condos, private homes and a golf course. Consultant Kevin Scanlan's master plan included drying wetlands under the guise of agricultural activity, using the county land-use code to bargain for zoning advantages and even purchasing the Telluride *Times-Journal* because "this region of Colorado is a vocal one and these people will not go quietly." County Commissioner Bill Wengner said the county can't press charges against the company for its intentions, but he sent copies of the fax to the Environmental Protection Agency, the Army Corps of Engineers and the Colorado attorney general. Grady McNure, chief of the Army Corps of Engineers' regulatory office in western Colorado, said, "My gut reaction is that the intent here is to drain wetlands." The development company said April 2 that suggestions in the fax were made without authorization.

Compromise pleases no one

The U.S. Forest Service's final environmental impact report on new grazing regulations for the Stanley basin of central Idaho is in, and it pleases neither ranchers nor conservationists. The plan allows ranchers to graze cattle at 56 percent of past levels in the 45,000-acre basin within the Sawtooth National Recreation Area. Ron Wilson, a rancher from Challis, Idaho, said the decision has put him in a bind. "We've had a lot of sleepless nights. I'm in a situation where I may have to change my livelihood," he said in the Idaho Falls *Post Register*. But environmentalists say the Forest Service did not reduce grazing enough to protect threatened chinook salmon. The fish spawn in the Stanley basin, headwaters of the Snake River, but cattle have degraded their habitat by trampling spawning beds. The Forest Service earlier called for a two-thirds reduction in Stanley basin grazing in a draft environmental impact statement (*HCN*, 6/1/92). Paul Ries, a ranger for the Sawtooth National Recreation Area, said the Forest Service will delay a final decision on the plan until the end of May. For copies of the report or an executive summary, call the Challis National Forest (208/879-2285).

WESTERN ROUNDUP

Montana is made safe for polluters

On April 22, an angry Montana state representative took his peers to task on the House floor. "This is Earth Day in Montana but we don't have an awful lot to celebrate," said Bob Raney, a Livingston Democrat. "We've passed numerous bills to turn back the clock."

Indeed, environmentalists and their allies in Montana's legislature say the only people celebrating are the mining, cement and waste industries. All largely succeeded in weakening the state's environmental regulations.

"This has been a wild, bad year for Montanans who are concerned about protecting their groundwater from mining, their air against hazardous waste burning, and their politicians from being influenced by special interests," said Hal Harper, a Helena Democrat and a 20-year veteran of the state House of Representatives. Harper said the pendulum had swung too far in favor of the "polluting side of things."

At nearly every turn, industry interests and their allies in the legislature weakened progressive laws — particularly in the Republican-controlled House, Harper added. Their victories included:

- Passage of a bill that allows mining companies to seek permits to degrade water quality in streams;
- Passage of another mining industry-sponsored bill that allows judges to hold citizens liable for court costs and other legal expenses related to legal challenges of mining projects. The law also grants companies the right to choose their consultants to prepare environmental impact statement on projects.
- Passage of a law that allows importation of solid waste into Montana, and another that raises the threshold for megasize landfill siting to 300,000 tons a year.
- Passage of a bill that exempts some leaking underground storage tanks from the state cleanup program. Under the new law, unlicensed operators can remove literally hundreds of leaking tanks, increasing the threat of ground water contamination.
- Defeat of a bill granting state control over siting of hazardous waste burning kilns located near populated areas, schools and sensitive watersheds like the headwaters of the Missouri River.
- Defeat of a measure endorsed by sportsmen to protect in-stream flows for fish.

In addition to stinging legislative defeats, environmentalists say they felt the pain of being out-maneuvered on a personal level. Only days into the legislative session in Helena, lawmakers temporarily expelled one of the state's most vocal environmental lobbyists from the capitol building after he allegedly threatened a legislator. The dispute was over easing restrictions on the mining industry and allowing the state's pristine rivers to be polluted.

But the confrontation between Jim Jensen, executive director of the Montana Environmental Information Center, and Henry McClernan, a senator from the famous copper mining town of Butte, only foreshadowed what was yet to come.

House Speaker John Mercer ousted Rep. Rob Raney from the Environmental Quality Council and replaced him with Democrat Jody Bird of Superior. "Her voting record," Rep. Harper said, "was more Republican than most of the Republicans." Yet in a strange twist of justice, Raney's wife, Jeanne-Marie Souvigney, who works for the Greater Yellowstone Coalition in Bozeman, was subsequently named to one of the citizen posts on the council.

Souvigney and her conservation colleagues did tally a significant victory when the state and federal governments successfully negotiated a compact that protects water rights inside Yellowstone and Glacier national parks as well as the Big Hole National Battlefield. "It was a welcome respite from the antagonism that existed throughout the rest of the session." Souvigney said.

To put the year in perspective, Harper said that two years ago the legislature passed into law 72 bills considered beneficial to the environment, but this year less than a half-dozen initiatives survived. "And most of those were miraculous flukes," he added.

One of those miracle measures was designed to help close loopholes during reviews of private-land subdivisions. The final bill, similar to one sponsored by Rep. Emily Swanson, D-Bozeman, subjects all subdivisions of 160 acres or less to review. Current law exempts subdivisions 20 acres or larger.

A related measure died, however, following intensive lobbying from the real estate industry. It would have established a statewide real-estate transfer tax to encourage reduction of suburban sprawl and raise funds for protection of open space.

Environmentalists managed to fight off a government takings bill sponsored by supporters of People For The West, an arm of the wise-use movement. The bill, which died after gathering considerable support, "just said anytime a government regulation or rule costs a private person or a company money, it is considered a takings of private property and allows the government to be sued," Harper said. Similar legislation went further in Idaho and Wyoming but was vetoed by the governors in those states.

But despite the victories, the overall Republican-led assault on environmental regulation stunned environmentalists. It came just months after Pat Williams —a Democratic moderate—triumphed in a popular election over the anti-environmental candidacy of Ron Marlenee in the race for Montana's lone seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, and after Clinton became the first Democratic presidential candidate to win the state in decades.

In addition, the inauguration of Gov. Marc Racicot came after his predecessor Stan Stephens had toured the state holding a series of public meetings to help draft an economic plan for Montana's future. Hundreds of citizens attended the forums and a concern that consistently ranked at the top was environmental protection.

"Everyone realized that preservation and betterment of the environment was connected to our future," said Harper. "But here we are in 1993 moving in the opposite direction."

Not everyone agrees with that assessment. Gary Langley, head of the powerful Montana Mining Association, said the legislature's actions were truly representative of Montanan's values. "While the Clinton administration heads for even more regressive regulations and taxation under the guise of environmental protection, the Montana legislature has looked forward to secure the economic future and quality of life for the men, women and children who live here," Langley wrote in the Helena *Independent-Record* .

"The question that begs the answer is why did political environmental groups object so strongly to these measures?" he added. ".... The legislation that was passed this year was initiated by people who are tired of seeing their American dream and secure future turned inside out by political lawsuits and appeals. And in the end the legislature listened to the people."

Politicians also listened to lobbyists. According to state records, groups with the most registered lobbyists included the mining, timber, hazardous waste burning and agriculture industries.

On the issue of burning hazardous wastes, the cement kiln industry spent nearly $200,000 on lobbying while the environmental community spent just $20,000, Jensen said. "The story is that the Montana Legislature put itself up for sale and the mining and cement kiln industries bought it."

— Todd Wilkinson

Todd Wilkinson lives in Bozeman, Montana, and writes about conservation issues in the West.

Legal knothole may let agency ax appeals

New rules for public appeals of timber sales issued by the U.S. Forest Service April 14 will allow logging on thousands of acres of national forest without public recourse, environmentalists say.

Based on a law passed by Congress last year, the rule exempts from administrative appeal "emergency" and salvage logging for timber damaged by insects, disease or fire (*HCN*, 10/19/92).

Salvage logging proposals on national forests have increased dramatically in recent years, particularly on the east side forests of Oregon and Washington.

At a congressional oversight hearing Rep. Charlie Rose, D-N.C., questioned the legality of the new rules. He told Forest Service Chief F. Dale Robertson, "I want you to get one of your lawyers to write us a memo of where you think you got the legal authority to propose this exemption business in this new regulation."

The agency says the new regulations will streamline the appeals process by reducing the time frame for appeals and encouraging earlier public participation. On April 16, the Clinton administration tried to distance itself from the proposed rule and promised to extend the comment period. "The regulations that were put forward are in no way set in stone," said Marla Romash, spokeswoman for Vice President Al Gore and the White House office on environmental policy.

Comments can be sent until June 1 to Deputy Chief, National Forest System (1570), Forest Service, USDA, Box 96090, Washington, D.C. 20090-6090.

— Greg Peterson, HCN *intern*

HOTLINE

Steve Hinchman

Inside the West Elk Wilderness

Wilderness developer signs off

The Forest Service and Colorado developer Tom Chapman signed an "agreement in principle" May 3 that may stop construction of a glitzy subdivision in one of Colorado's largest wilderness areas. Under the compromise plan, Chapman's West Elk Development Corp. agreed to enter formal procedures to exchange 240 acres of private land it owns in the West Elk Wilderness for 105 acres of national forest land near the Telluride Ski Area. Both properties were appraised at $640,000 by an independent contractor. The agreement culminates months of negotiations begun last October after Chapman helicoptered building materials and crews into the West Elks to construct the first of six threatened homes. At the time, Chapman said the Forest Service could buy him out at $5,000 an acre by trading him forest land near Telluride or Aspen (*HCN*, 9/7/92). The current appraisal values the land at $2,667 per acre, which Chapman says he will accept for the purposes of this agreement only. "In so doing, we will incur a loss of 40 percent of our invested capital," says Chapman, "and will hopefully lay to rest unfounded charges that we are somehow profiting at public expense." Chapman and the Forest Service have until November 1993 to reach a final agreement. Meanwhile, Chapman says, to push the agency along he will resume construction "via helicopter airlift" at 8 a.m. June 1, even though the agreement requires him to restore the area to its natural condition once an exchange is final.

County thinks again

In a setback for the wise-use movement, Lincoln County, N.M., dropped a lawsuit against the Bureau of Land Management. The county had challenged a land swap between the BLM and a private company that would have altered the ratio of private and public land in the county. In 1992, commissioners passed an ordinance modeled after one in Catron County, N.M., that forbids changes in that ratio. But by a 3-2 vote April 8, commissioners voted to accept a memorandum of understanding with the BLM that spells out terms for cooperation on land exchanges. "This was a common-sense approach." Commissioner Wilton Howell told the *Albuquerque Journal*. "We weren't going to win."

HOTLINE

Indians lose an ally

South Dakota Indian leaders say they will remember Gov. George Mickelson as an agent of reconciliation. Mickelson died with seven others April 19 in a plane crash near Dubuque, Iowa. In 1986, Mickelson defeated former Gov. William Janklow, whom many Indians saw as their enemy. Although Mickelson, a Republican, had some differences with tribes, they were debated in respectful tones, tribal leaders told *Indian Country Today*. "He always had some form of underlying feeling for the tribes in the state," Duane Big Eagle, chairman of the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe said. "And he worked hard to keep Indian-Anglo reconciliation going forward." In an editorial, Tim Giago, publisher of *Indian Country Today,* lauds Mickelson for helping the Indians fight a brewer's appropriation of the name "Crazy Horse" for its malt liquor.

Rio Grande not so

Author Paul Horgan once called it "Great River," but the Rio Grande now has a more dubious distinction. It has won the annual "most endangered river" ranking from the national environmental group, American Rivers. The group called the Rio Grande "more of a sewer than a stream," particularly along the Texas-Mexico border, where high releases of human and industrial waste have made it a public health menace. Environmentalists say the river is also threatened by dams which hold back water that used to feed cottonwoods along the river banks; by mining companies that dump hazardous chemicals into its tributaries; and by sewage plants that allegedly don't treat their wastes adequately. A key environmental solution: find an agency or agencies that will look at the three-state river's problems as a whole instead of in pieces. Scientists and government officials in New Mexico criticized the term "endangered" for the river as too emotionally loaded, and say they are not ignoring the river's problems. Just last month, for instance, the U.S. Fish and Wildife Service proposed to list the Rio Grande silvery minnow, one of a handful of still-native fish in the river, as an endangered species. Other Western rivers ranking in American Rivers' top 10 are the Columbia and Snake river system, the Virgin River, and the Rogue and Illinois river system in Oregon. American Rivers is based at 801 Pennsylvania Ave., Suite 400, Washington, D.C., 20003 (202/547-6900).

BARBS

Et tu, Perot.

After blaming the northern spotted owl for "destroying the timber industry," Ross Perot said, "if people get hungry enough they'll be looking to these birds for food," he told the Seattle *Post-Intelligencer*.

When ski areas fail, taxpayers clean up

The Forest Service is beginning to come to grips with a little known impact of skiing on public lands: the reclamation work that must be done when ski areas go belly-up.

A handful of old resorts that could not compete have shut down, leaving behind such headaches as open dumps, decrepit buildings and sewage treatment plants.

Environmentalists have long charged that the Forest Service never saw a ski area it didn't like. Indeed, the agency rarely rejects proposals for new ones. But a growing number of defunct ski areas are straining the agency's longstanding love affair with the industry.

In Colorado, reclamation work for the Pikes Peak and Berthoud ski areas alone is expected to cost at least $400,000. The cost of reclaiming an area called Geneva Basin, closed since 1986, is unknown.

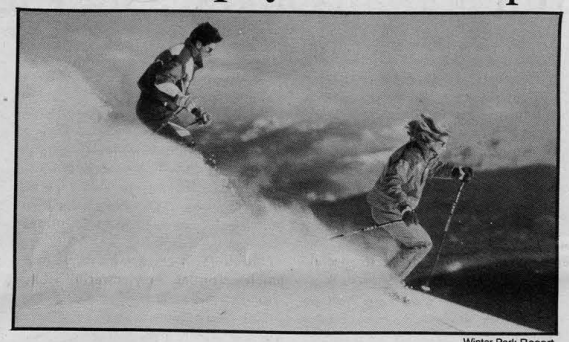
In Idaho, the Forest Service tore down what was left of a ski lodge at a closed ski area in the Targhee National Forest north of Idaho Falls. But it has more work to do, and agency officials don't know what the final tab will be.

In southeastern Utah, the agency must reclaim the defunct Blue Mountain ski area at a cost not yet known.

In almost every case, the Forest Service allowed the ski areas to open without requiring the investors to post a cash bond. When the areas went bankrupt, creditors carted off what they could, leaving the agency to clean up the rest.

On Pikes Peak, near Colorado Springs, Colo., where a ski area went bankrupt in 1985, the Forest Service has already spent $250,000 on a reclamation job that is far from complete. It plans to leave a small landfill on site to bury such items as cinder blocks, a bathtub and pieces of the old ski lodge and out-buildings.

The Forest Service has also done extensive drainage work on the old ski runs. The former operator mistakenly, and illegally, diverted a stream, and now a gully has been cut to a depth of five feet in some spots.



Winter Park Resort

Skiers at Winter Park Resort in Colorado

At Berthoud, which failed under its third consecutive owner, managers of the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest are left with the job of dismantling drinking water and wastewater treatment plants, all at taxpayer expense.

"We've not been very good ... at figuring out just how financially viable a given applicant is," says Austin Condon, a Forest Service recreation specialist based in Fort Collins, Colo. Condon says the Berthoud resort, which first opened in 1937, could never make a profit.

"They come with their hopes and their dreams and they manage to pull together enough money to get started," Condon said. "After a year, things don't look as good as they thought."

When you combine that sort of wishful thinking with pressure from rural communities looking for a quick economic boost, the local Forest Service office has a hard time saying no. "If we say no, we get made into the bad guy," says Matt Glasgow, a spokesman for Colorado's Grand Mesa-Gunnison-Uncompahgre National Forest.

When faced this year with applications to re-open three Colorado ski areas with troubled financial histories, the Forest Service said yes. In two of the cases, Mountain Cliffe, west of Pueblo, Colo., and Cuchara Valley, near Trinidad, Colo., the agency failed to require the applicant to post a cash bond.

The Forest Service only granted the Mountain Cliffe operator a one-year permit while it awaits more evidence of financial stability. The resort was formerly owned by the Small Business Administration after the previous owner defaulted on a loan. Cuchara Valley obtained a 40-year lease from the federal agency.

Meanwhile, a third area on Colorado's West Slope, Powderhorn, near Grand Junction, is open even though it is managed by a bankruptcy court trustee. The Forest Service required an up-front $30,000 bond, but reclamation of the site, should it go under, would likely cost much more.

All three of the areas share the same market-based problems. They are not close to major population centers; they don't benefit from proximity to other large resorts; and they are relatively distant from major highways. What's worse, as even the owners of prosperous resorts admit, the number of skiers nationwide is not growing appreciably.

— Barry Noreen

The writer works for the *Gazette-Telegraph* in Colorado Springs.

Timber firm seeks grass-roots allies

Ranchers, miners, loggers, recreationists and others who use public lands must refuse to negotiate with "preservation" groups. That was the message Dennis Winters, a community organizer from Billings, Mont., gave to 75 people at a meeting recently of the Multiple Use Association in Meeteetse, Wyo.

Any negotiations will only play to the preservationist goals of pushing traditional users off public lands in small, incremental steps, Winters said. If ranchers agree to limit cattle grazing once, he said, the next time they will be asked to reduce it further.

"The rancher is into solving problems, the preservationist is into positioning," said Winters, whose consulting services to such local groups are funded by the Louisiana-Pacific Corp., a timber giant that shut down a mill in Dubois, Wyo., in the 1980s.

"As soon as you negotiate, they've won," he said of environmental groups with no economic stake in land use. "You agree to make him an equal partner when he hasn't even bought a pair of boots in the state."

In an often impassioned talk in which he encouraged those in attendance to become active to protect their cultural heritage for their families' sake, Winters talked of growing up in Montana. His grandfather taught him to respect even bees that stung him, he said, and industries that use the land today still take good care of it.

"How dare they walk into our country and tell us we don't take care of the resource?" he asked. "They want to stop an entire way of life."

Some conservation groups such as Trout Unlimited and Ducks Unlimited that accept consumptive use of resources are merely "an annoyance," Winters said. Others, like the Sierra Club, Audubon Society and National Wildlife Federation, which he called preservationist, are more sinister.

"They want you gone," he told the audience of ranchers, loggers and others gathered in the Meeteetse High School auditorium.

Preservation groups, which believe that people always harm the environment, see states like Montana and Wyoming as a "zoo with them as caretakers," Winters said. "They're not bad people but their vision is lethal."

To battle such an organized movement, those in the opposite corner — from snowmobilers to ranchers — must ally and make themselves heard, Winters advised. That's how multiple-use interests beat back the "Vision" document for federal management of the Yellowstone region.

Such alliances are growing in Montana and Wyoming.

Another speaker warned the audience that they had to stick together. Alice Gustin, vice president of the Wind River Multiple Use Advocates of Riverton, Wyo., said that a group of foundations that fund environmental groups last year plotted to split apart multiple-use alliances.

"They know they can whip timber people" by themselves, Winters said, but timber plus other industry and user groups are stronger. "We don't have the capital, but we have the numbers."

While Winters said he will not take money from local groups, he asked those attending to stake their reputation on his message and persuade others to get involved. "No one can occupy an area if the indigenous population fights against it," he said.

— Michael Milstein

From Cody, Wyoming, the reporter writes for the Billings *Gazette*.

Jim Richards looked under all the rocks

During six years as the Interior Department's chief watchdog, Jim Richards sank his teeth into some of the biggest prey in the West.

Ranchers and the Bureau of Land Management felt Richards' bite as the Interior Department inspector general documented poor range conditions and a hidebound bureaucracy.

Farmers and the Bureau of Reclamation clashed with Richards over irrigation water giveaways and allegations that federal managers were captive to special interests. National park concessionaires fought Richards in court in an effort to challenge his scathing review of long-term, low-fee park contracts.

Now, after a career of fighting abusers of the public trust, Richards is settling into retirement in Grand Junction, Colo. For Richards, a Colorado native who stepped down at the end of March, it will be an apt vantage point to observe how the Clinton administration manages the West.

"All of the bureaus have powerful constituencies, both in the private sector and on (Capitol) Hill," Richards said in an interview the day before his retirement.

The Clinton administration proved the truth of Richards' comments on the day of his retirement, when it retreated at least temporarily from its plans to increase grazing fees, phase out below-cost timber sales and charge miners royalties for use of federal land. The retreat came in the face of pressure from Western lawmakers; the kind of powerful "constituencies" that Richards noted.

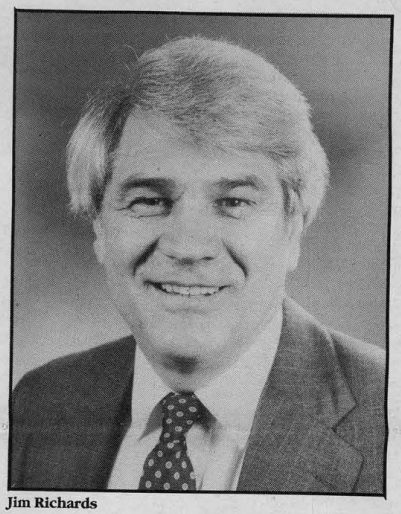
As inspector general for the Interior Department since 1986, Richards oversaw about 329 auditors, criminal investigators and other staffers. He was to search out waste, fraud and abuse within the 74,000-employee Interior Department and evaluate management of 500 million acres of public land. Before becoming the inspector general, Richards was head of the federal Organized Crime Strike Force in Buffalo, N.Y.

The always-quotable Richards and his steady stream of blue-bound audit reports became a regular feature of congressional hearings and press inquiries into Western resource issues — so much so that several Park Service officials characterized him as a "grandstander" and a "showboater."

Richards valued the spotlight, but he also appreciated its public policy value when it could be turned onto troubled agencies like the Bureau of Land Management. Richards focused on the BLM, which he characterized in his last congressional appearance as a "classic example of an organization that has often failed to accomplish its mission effectively."

"The BLM is such a dug-in bureaucracy," Richards said in an interview. "It's one of the most entrenched, that's unwilling to reform — but I see reforms coming."

Richards blamed some of BLM's problems on the "very powerful" state directors who, he said, sometimes are too close to the ranchers, loggers and miners whom the agency oversees. Richards' auditors uncovered that the BLM loses over $30 million annually by failing to charge market rate grazing fees, and that "wealthy ranch owners possessing large land tracts" control one-third of all the BLM's grazing land. Richards' team further determined that the BLM had failed to protect hardrock mining land and had failed to prevent the proliferation of more than 1,000 illegal trash dumps on public land.



Jim Richards

"Jim Richards was the only person of influence at the Department of the Interior who was willing to stand up for enforcement of the law and the interests of the taxpayer," said a congressional staffer for Rep. Mike Synar, D-Okla. Synar, chairman of a House Government Operations subcommittee on energy and the environment, made extensive use of Richards' investigations.

The Bureau of Reclamation, builder and operator of the West's irrigation systems, was another regular target of Richards: for providing subsidized water to growers of subsidized crops, for failure to collect sufficient revenues on the Upper Colorado River Storage Project, the Central Arizona Project and others, and for charging unreasonably low interest rates on California's Central Valley Project. Farmers, in each case, benefited from the Bureau's actions.

But Richards, a Republican, allowed that the Democrats' choice of House Natural Resources Committee staff director Dan Beard as new Bureau commissioner could be the right step forward.

"If anybody can push them around, Dan Beard can," Richards said.

Whoever President Clinton chooses to head the National Park Service will find equally serious challenges, Richards believes. His 1989 audit of the Park Service which found that concessionaires pay an average franchise fee of only 2.5 percent, laid the foundation for current concession reform efforts.

"If you ever look at the backside of the Park Service, you see an agency that doesn't account for its funds very well," Richards said. "It has a number of material weaknesses."

Richards inevitably made enemies. Some officials felt ambushed by reports made public without their knowledge. Others felt Richards' insistence on the government getting a full return on its property overlooked the bigger picture.

"They were dealing with dollars, and we were dealing with intrinsic values," the late Park Service director William Penn Mott once said. "I don't think I ever got across to (him) this importance of intrinsic values."

Richards never seemed fazed by the criticism, but he took it into account when he offered his advice to whomever succeeds him as Interior Department inspector general.

"Do your job, keep your head down and don't back off," Richards said.

— Michael Doyle

Michael Doyle is a reporter in the Washington bureau of McClatchy Newspapers.

Helicopters may invade Zion park

While local residents living near Zion National Park in Utah were fending off proposed helicopter flights through Zion Canyon, an entrepreneur slipped into a neighboring county and obtained a helipad license.

Two companies recently tried to get permission to build helicopter landing pads in Washington County just outside Zion, hoping to launch scenic flights over the spectacular red rock cliffs of the canyon. But intense local opposition forced them to back down.

Meanwhile, Backcountry Helicopters of Flagstaff, Ariz., secured a permit from adjacent Kane County, Utah. The move caught local residents, environmentalists and the Park Service off guard.

"The last thing we need is the man-made disturbance of helicopters," says Zion National Park spokesman Denny Davies. "The noise would be tremendous."

Earlier this year, Gary Brogdon, a helicopter operator from Alaska, approached the gateway communities of Springdale and Rockville for a landing-pad permit. Both town councils soundly defeated the request, says Springdale councilman Marcel Rodriguez. Then, in early March, Brogdon tried the Washington County Planning Commission, hoping to stretch the county's agricultural zoning to allow a landing pad.

Angry local residents and people from as far away as Salt Lake City were ready to voice their opposition at a public meeting called to consider the request. But Brogdon never showed. Deon Goheen, Washington County Commission secretary, says they haven't heard from him since.

Nevertheless, helicopters may fly from Kane County. "Technically, helicopters could fly within one foot of the ground in the park without violating any regulations," says Davies. He says the Park Service hopes this is the catalyst that forces Congress or the administration to protect airspace over national parks.

—Ernie Atencio

Ernie Atencio is a former *HCN* intern. He works for the National Park Service on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon.

HOTLINE

Salt Lake Tribune

Green River Mayor Lloyd Halt stands in front of an Athena missile in the town park

Utah boosters welcome missiles

Most of the 200 residents of Green River, Utah, at a public hearing in April welcomed the resumption of missile testing over their area. The Army is considering reactivating a base in Green River to launch missiles that would be shot down over White Sands Missile Range in southern New Mexico. "Any loyal American can see the importance of this testing," said rancher Fred Dunham in the *Moab Times-Independent*. Dunham said he supports this project "100 percent," even though a falling rocket booster killed one of his cows in the early 1970s. While several people cited new jobs in southeastern Utah as a welcome bonus, most supported missile testing out of patriotism. At the Salt Lake City hearing, however, the Army found a cooler reception. "The issue is not about patriotism," said Steve Erickson, of the advocacy group Downwinders. "It's about sound policy-making." Environmentalists called the meeting a sham and claimed the Army had already selected Green River-White Sands from among four alternatives. They also criticized the proposed dropping of rocket boosters over Canyon Rims Recreation Area, 15 miles east of Canyonlands National Park.

Report slams telescope project

A censored report on the University of Arizona's Mt. Graham telescope project questioned the observatory's legality and recommended it halt to avoid conflict with the San Carlos Apaches. The university had commissioned Booz-Allen and Hamilton, an independent consulting firm, to do an objective study of the project in 1991. When the university denied public access to the consultants' report, Robin Silver, a member of the Phoenix Audubon Society, filed both a Freedom of Information Act request and lawsuit against the university. On March 1, Arizona Superior Court Judge Sherry Hutt ruled that the university must make the report public. One deleted section said the bond funding was "possibly illegal"; another said the mountaintop telescopes were "insensitive" to the concerns of Apaches.

HOTLINE

Trees identified as culprit

Cutthroat trout in southern Oregon's Umpqua River can't spawn because of clear-cutting in national forests, say environmentalists in a petition to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In 1946, says the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Department, 1,200 trout were counted, but the numbers have steadily dropped since 1976, when a hatchery program ended. Only 10 trout were counted on the North Fork of the Umpqua in 1991, and none were found in 1992. "The Umpqua cutthroats will submerge into oblivion unless the federal government stops the logging that silts up stream beds and destroys spawning habitat," Jim Kauppila, Umpqua Valley Audubon Society spokesman, told *The Oregonian*. Because dams and commercial fishing aren't major factors in the trout's decline, the culprit is clear, said Andy Kerr of the Oregon Natural Resource Council. "Overcutting our forest has undercut our fish." The petition to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service suggests severely restricting logging on 3,200 square miles of land around southern Oregon watersheds.

Washington and a gold mine

"They take the gold. We keep the cyanide," reads the headline of a full-page advertisement pushing for a moratorium on gold mining using cyanide. The Washington Wilderness Coalition and two other groups ran the ad in Seattle newspapers, *The Spokesman-Review* and the western edition of *The New York Times*, to emphasize the risks and costs of gold mining while urging a one-year delay "until strict controls are on the books." Washington Gov. Mike Lowry supported the groups' call for a moratorium April 15, expressing concern over long-lasting environmental impacts — particularly on water quality. The moratorium would give the state time to establish a task force to study whether state regulations are adequate. The bill to create a task force is currently before the House, spurred by Battle Mountain Gold Corp.'s plans to open Washington's first open-pit cyanide-leach mine by 1994. "I really think it's fair that we ask for a moratorium so we don't repeat the mistakes of other states," said Tom Robinson, executive director of WEC, in *The Spokesman-Review*.

A push for reform

In an attempt to find out what went wrong in the state's worst mining disaster, Colorado Gov. Roy Romer ordered April 6 a criminal investigation of the Summitville gold mine in southern Colorado. He also urged support of a Colorado Mining Reform Bill to try to prevent another Summitville from happening again. When the Summitville Consolidated Mining Co. declared bankruptcy and abandoned its mine last December, a 170-million-gallon tailings pond had leaked cyanide for six years, destroying trout populations and contaminating farm irrigation water 17 miles downstream (*HCN*, 1/25/93). The Environmental Protection Agency's takeover of the mine cleanup has already cost taxpayers $4 million, and that figure may rise as high as $60 million.

Ute Indians return to their homeland

Colorado Historical Society

Ute Indian Chief Ouray, right, and his wife, Chipeta, c. 1880s

In a voice cracking with emotion, white-haired Ute elder Bertha Groves spoke of her visit to sacred places on the land her people had been forced from over 100 years ago.

Seeing the rocks and plants that provide pigment for the Utes' three sacred colors confirmed the reality of Ute legends passed down for generations, Grove said. "We finally know they are here. Take care of our land; it belongs to you but it belongs to everything," she told federal land managers assembled in Glenwood Springs, Colo. They had come for a series of seminars to increase awareness of Ute cultural, historical and sacred sites.

An agreement signed last month between the three Ute nations, the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management aims to protect the Utes' sacred sites throughout western Colorado. The agreement could make the government and private developers change or abandon planned construction or development on public lands. In addition, the Forest Service and BLM pledged increased cooperation with the Utes and stronger efforts to employ and train Native Americans.

Those events highlighted a historic summit meeting April 19-24 where, for the first time since their banishment to reservations in 1887, the three Ute tribes met in their former homeland.

The agreement "is one of the first of its kind in the country," said Karl Siderits, deputy superintendent of the White River National Forest, which endorsed the agreement along with the Routt and Grand Mesa-Uncompahgre-Gunnison national forests. The agreement includes areas sacred to the Southern Ute Tribe, the Ute Mountain Utes whose reservations border southern Colorado and northern New Mexico, and the Uintah Ouray Utes of Utah.

By signing the agreement, Siderits said the Forest Service and BLM are acknowledging that "Native American sacred sites are just as important a resource as wildlife, recreation, timber and other multiple uses" on public lands.

The Utes "aren't interested in saving every arrowhead," said Bill Kight, White River National Forest archaeologist. But when a sacred site is identified, the agreement will assure the Utes are granted the "intellectual copyright" to all the artifacts and the site itself, Kight said. That could mean closing the site to all except the Utes.

Impetus for the agreement came from the discovery of numerous Ute sacred sites and the recognition of the importance of preserving links to the past, said Siderits.

The agreement also stresses improving communication and cooperation, Siderits said. The Forest Service will try to assure that Utes and other Native Americans are employed by the federal government when it documents historically and archaeologically significant sites, thus helping them gain the experience that can lead them into careers in land management, archaeology and geology, he added.

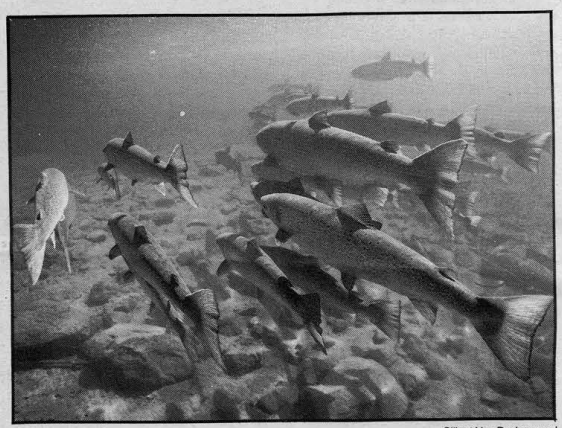
"We can learn a lot from the Utes," said Siderits, both in terms of their unique cultural history and their "great feeling for and trust in the land."

For more information on the agreement between the Utes, the Forest Service and BLM, contact Sonny LaSalle, Supervisor, White River National Forest, Box 948, Glenwood Springs, CO 81602 (303/945-2521).

— Jon Klusmire

Jon Klusmire lives in Glenwood Springs, Colo., and is a correspondent for the *Rocky Mountain News*.

Group pushes to 'deconstruct' dams



Gilbert Van Ryckevorsel

Artwork from an Oregon Natural Resources Council ad

Environmentalists have teamed up with a clothing manufacturer to save some of Oregon's wild salmon runs.

In March, Patagonia Inc. and the Oregon Natural Resources Council launched an advertising campaign advocating the removal of abandoned and obsolete dams that block salmon runs on the Rogue River in southern Oregon.

Patagonia environmental programs director Libby Ellis says the groups designed a three-level campaign to address different audiences. Ads in *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker* magazine speak to national lawmakers. Ads in *Fly Fishing* and other leisure magazines target recreational anglers while a third ad runs in local newspapers. Ellis says more than 1,000 people have sent back coupons showing support while opposition has been sparse and unorganized.

Local newspaper ads target three Rogue River dams for removal. One, the Elk Creek Dam, blocks 25 miles of salmon habitat even though it was never finished. Completing Elk Creek Dam would cost an estimated $70 million while its removal would cost $2.5 million, says Jim Middaugh of the Oregon Natural Resources Council.

The ad also highlights Gold Rey Dam, an abandoned hydropower facility in Jackson County, Ore., where squawfish prey on salmon smolts. The third dam, Savage Rapids, blocks nearly 25,000 fish from the upper river, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and could be replaced with irrigation pumps.

Ellis says Patagonia and the ONRC will continue their ad campaign to save salmon and will also work together on other issues. For more information, call Patagonia at 800/336-9090.

— Greg Peterson

Greg Peterson is an *HCN* intern.

Unclassifieds

THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY offers summer adult ecology workshops in the Wind River Mountains of Wyoming. Conservation issues, Native American studies and ecological living tips complement a natural history curriculum. Participants also visit neighboring Grand Teton National Park. "Mountain Ecology" sessions run weekly beginning June 26 through Aug. 8. Classes are taught in the field and emphasize hiking, canoeing and wildlife observation. A "Nature Photography" session is offered June 4-14 and includes visits to Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks. For further information and a free color brochure contact: Registrar, National Audubon Society, 613 Riversville Road, Box H, Greenwich, CT 06831; 203/869-2017. (2x8b)

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"OUTDOOR PEOPLE AD-Venture" lists 60-word descriptions of active, outdoor-oriented singles and trip companions nationwide. $3/issue, $12/ad. Outdoor People-HCN, P.O. Box 600, Gaston, SC 29053. (7x4-eoi)

OUTDOOR SINGLES NETWORK, established bi-monthly newsletter, ages 19-90, no forwarding fees, $35/1-year, $7/trial issue and information. OSN-HCN, P.O. Box 2031, McCall, ID 83638. (6x3-eoi)

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NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY offers its third annual KENYA ECOLOGY WORKSHOP Aug. 19-Sept. 5, 1993. In addition to seeing Africa's classic large mammals, the Audubon tour will place an emphasis on African birds, and on current conservation issues within the parks and preserves. Meet with wardens of the Kenya Wildlife Service, and with researchers working on endangered species. Audubon instructors join carefully selected Kenyan driver/guides from East African Ornithological Safaris to offer expertise, and each participant is guaranteed a window seat during this remarkable Audubon opportunity. The itinerary is designed to visit a wide diversity of habitats in East Africa and includes Mt. Kenya, the Samburu Reserve, Lake Baringo and Lake Nakuru, and an extended stay in the fabled Masai Mara. For further information and registration contact: Registrar, National Audubon Society, 613 Riversville Road, Box H, Greenwich, CT 06831, 203/869-5272. (1x9b)

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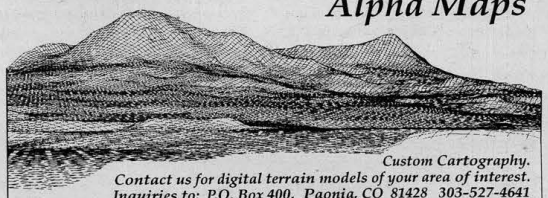

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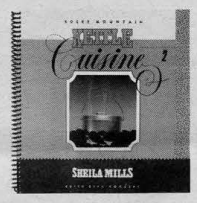

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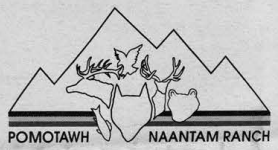

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Bruce Babbitt on Western land use:

by **Jon Christensen**

CARSON CITY, Nev. — Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt took the Clinton administration's campaign for "land-use reform" to the people in late April and early May, hosting crowded town-hall meetings in Bozeman, Mont., Reno, Nev., Grand Junction, Colo., and Albuquerque, N.M.

Although grazing reform was the issue at hand, Babbitt made his broader intentions clear before heading West, in a speech at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. "We are set on creating a new American land ethic," he proclaimed. "This administration is solidly committed to land-use reform, and the question is not if these changes will occur, but how they will occur. We respect the differences of opinion and will do everything we can to consult with, and to listen to, differing voices. But 1993 must be the year of decision."

Babbitt announced an agenda that includes reform of the Mining Law of 1872 and "a new era of water management." But the mining law is the subject of intense congressional wrangling, and changes in water allocation will be determined more by protracted negotiations than by federal fiat.

So Babbitt has set his sights on a land-use policy that he can change administratively: grazing of livestock on 270 million acres of public land in 16 Western states. By holding public hearings in communities that will be affected, Babbitt said that he hoped to build on the April Timber Summit in Portland to establish a model for making natural resource policy in the West.

Judging by the presence of Forest Service officials at his meetings, whatever grazing fee strategy Babbitt comes up with will also apply to that agency's 190 million acres.

In a deep, booming voice liberally accented with Western mannerisms, Babbitt reassured ranchers who fear they could be put out of business by changes in a policy that now allows a cow to feed on the grass on public lands for $1.86 a month. "Anyone familiar with Western ranching knows it is a tough business," Babbitt said. "There simply isn't much profit in ranching. We want to ensure that family ranchers remain on the land."

At the same time, he said, environmental values will guide changes in policy. "The impacts of grazing affect every acre of the range," he said. "The results of overgrazing, invasion of cheat grass and noxious weeds, erosion and riparian destruction are well known.

"The old way of generating plans in a closed shop of BLM employees, the permit holder, and local advisory boards dominated by ranchers will have to give way," he added. "Environmentalists, the public and all other stakeholders can be actively involved in planning the use of their land."

Babbitt acknowledged that he was not sure exactly how to link all of the elements of grazing reform. That was why he agreed to hold public hearings in the West, he said, "to learn and gather information."

An important aspect of the meetings was Babbitt's attempt to change the tone of the debate from the "range wars" of recent years to what he called "a good solid consensus about how all of us live in this extraordinary land of the West." For Babbitt, more than anything else, the meetings were an opportunity to put an understanding face on reforms destined to be attacked from many sides.

RENO, Nev. —

The Reno meeting was run like clockwork by young staffers in khaki, jeans, denim shirts, running shoes and corduroy jackets. Behind-the-scenes organizers were "special assistants" to the secretary of Interior, people who ran the Clinton campaign and are now serving as consultants to the administration.

Each six-hour meeting featured three panels. Local elected officials were invited to start the day. A panel of six experts on range and resource economics followed, and later in the day came another panel on management and stewardship. The panels were divided evenly: ranchers, environmentalists and the administration each got to pick two representatives. Each expert was allowed five minutes and between panels there was time for public comment. Cards were drawn at random from a box and audience members were given two minutes each to express their opinions.

In Reno, some 50 people got to speak out of an audience estimated at 500. The hall at the University of Nevada was awash in cowboy hats. And when it came time to speak, the opposing camps divided predictably, with ranchers outnumbering environmentalists about two to one. Both sides were well organized, with briefing papers, talking points, slick brochures and press kits.

For the most part, the public testimony reiterated familiar arguments, with environmentalists charging that grazing was ruining the land and ranchers responding that reformers were really determined to replace them with condominiums. At times both sides seemed intent on reaching out by acknowledging that there were problems and solutions that could work. At other times, both sides seemed determined to confirm each others' stereotypes.

Ranchers, for instance, roundly booed David Orr, a Sierra Club member from California, who said, "We should look at eliminating red meat from our diet. That would go a long way toward solving our grazing problem." In turn, environmentalists guffawed at Bernie Richter, an eastern California legislator who praised the family ranchers. "These people are valuable not just for the beef they produce but for their values," said Richter. "God let us go back to those values to turn this country around."

Those brief spats, however, were lapses in an otherwise calm day. Participants seemed pleasantly surprised by how cordial the scene remained throughout the day — and in Nevada, no less. The atmosphere would have been much more heated just a year ago, they agreed. Even Chuck Cushman, an excitable wise-use spokesman, was on his best behavior, quietly handing out blue ribbons to signify solidarity with ranching families.

Security was tight, as if trouble were anticipated. Police officers requested that students take down a "grazing reform now" banner at the back of the hall. And at least one environmentalist who put up a stink about his card not being chosen was escorted outside by meeting organizers. But there were no rallies or demonstrations and Babbitt proved himself a master of the Clinton-style gab fest. He was obviously comfortable with both sides of the audience and he kept sessions flowing with an unfailing sense of humor.

It appeared that both ranchers and environmentalists alike left satisfied that they had gotten their messages across.

Babbitt also succeeded in getting out his message:

- Reform is needed and is coming.
- The grazing fee is not the issue, but it will rise. "The grazing issue is more about the condition of the land than the size of the grazing fee."
- Stewardship is key. "Grazing fees and land stewardship should be linked together to create direct incentives for restoring the public lands to good condition."
- Process is important. Again and again, Babbitt stressed that full public participation was the way to build consensus and come to a shared vision of the land on a local level. The model, he said, would be the working groups ranchers and environmentalists have formed to manage various grazing allotments around the West.

People seem to be expecting "a law from on high" to solve all their problems, Babbitt acknowledged in an interview after the meeting. "But grazing is more site-specific than many issues. You've got to figure it out on the ground. You have to have a process where all the points of view can work together.

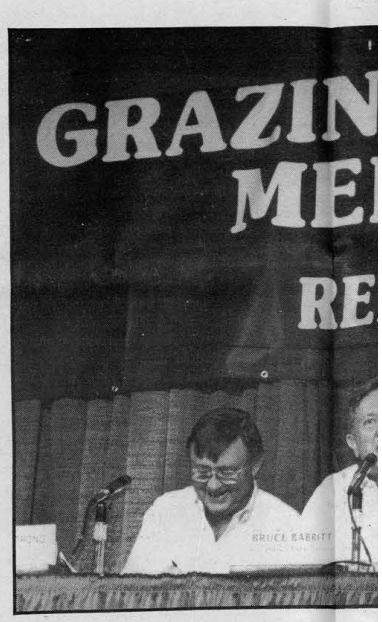
"Unlike 20 years ago," Babbitt said, "there are plenty of success stories on the land now. There are good examples. And we need to spend time looking and listening to figure out how to replicate those so that we can have consistent success stories. But it's got to be local, site specific, and a good process that involves all the stakeholders in setting goals and measuring progress toward those goals."

In his closing remarks in Reno, Babbitt spoke of "taking down fences" and "restoring ecosystems." To the surprise of his staffers, he announced that he would be back in the fall, after taking all of the input from meetings around the West, formulating a policy, and sending it out for public comment some time this summer.

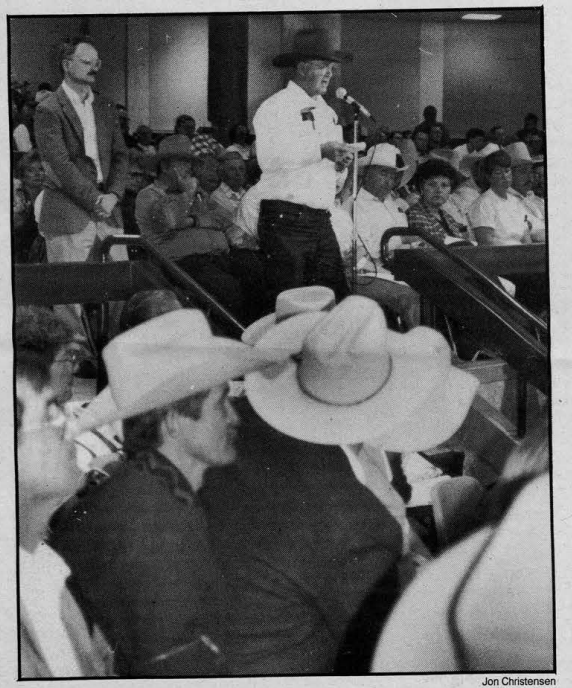
"I'm confident we can put something out this summer that will bring a sense of certainty and community in the future of the West," Babbitt said. "It will be a sensible solution that accommodates diverse values, brings people together, and contributes to a balanced ecosystem." ■

Jon Christensen is Great Basin regional editor for *High Country News.*

Interior Secretary Babbitt is accepting written comments on grazing policy addressed to Lucia Wyman, Office of the Secretary, Interior Department, 1849 C St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.



Bruce Babbitt, center, with Bob Armstrong, assistant secr



Jon Christensen

Rancher Dick Carver from Tonopah, Nev., asks about rights of ranchers on public lands during the grazing meeting in Reno, Nev.

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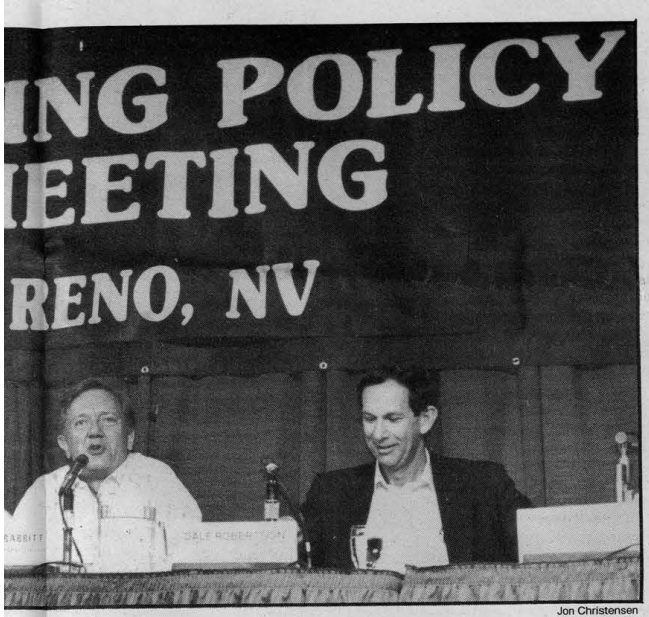


Jon Christensen

, assistant secretary of Interior for lands and minerals, left, and Forest Service Chief Dale Robertson

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. —

A capacity crowd of 850, brimming with ranchers and sprinkled with environmentalists, greeted Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and Govs. Roy Romer of Colorado and Mike Sullivan of Wyoming, May 5.

From the start, some ranchers questioned whether the event was a show to give an air of democracy to policy decisions already made in Washington. Jim Magagna, who owns a sheep ranch near Rock Springs, Wyo., told Babbitt he was concerned that grazing fees would rise substantially no matter what was said. Babbitt, grabbing his microphone, shot back, "This notion that my word is not good is simply false."

Throughout the six-hour meeting, Babbitt displayed formidable skill as a moderator. On one occasion, Waldo Forbes, a rancher from northern Wyoming, elicited an agreeing roar from ranchers when he told Babbitt that the government should go after bigger agricultural subsidies than grazing fees. Otherwise, he said, "you're fishing for the minnow while the shark is eating your lunch." Replied Babbitt, "I like this guy."

When he wasn't working the crowd, Babbitt listened intently to testimony that ranged as widely as cattle looking for grass in the arid West.

Most ranchers reinforced the testimony of Reeves Brown, executive vice president of the Colorado Cattlemen's Association. Brown said 88 percent of Colorado's ranches are family-size businesses that operate close to the edge. He said most ranchers make less than $28,000 a year and a drastic fee hike would force ranchers to either subdivide their land or sell off their water rights.

Environmentalists shared the rancher's concern for preserving open spaces.

"If a fee increase has the effect of driving ranching families off the land on a wholesale basis ... we will lose a critical and irreplaceable piece of the Western land mosaic: private, agricultural open space," said Darrell Knuffke of The Wilderness Society. Knuffke proposed tax breaks for ranchers willing to comply with zoning changes and conservation easements to preserve open space.

But other environmentalists emphasized the degradation to the land caused by grazing. "We are all here today because there is a problem," said June Rain, executive director of the Wyoming Wildlife Federation. Rain said the BLM allows continued overgrazing and ignores damage to the land. "How is this (use) either multiple, sustainable or wise?" Rain asked. "We don't need science; we need applied science."

Scott Groene of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance told Babbitt that the public is largely excluded from grazing decisions on BLM allotments in Utah. "Put the public back in public-land management," he urged. Groene described arroyos in Utah's canyonlands country where cattle had denuded once green banks and accelerated erosion.

For the most part, ranchers defended their grazing practices. Lenny Kinglesmith, a rancher from Meeker, Colo., said the tourists who come to his place always remark on its beauty and abundant wildlife. Kinglesmith drew hoots from the crowd when he told Groene that those arroyos in Utah's canyonlands have "been that way for hundreds of years. I think that's why the tourists come. That's why they call it Canyonlands."

The most radical suggestion from an environmentalist came from Michael Robinson, who heads Sinapu, a Boulder, Colo., group dedicated to returning wolves to Colorado. Robinson, sporting a lavender river runner's cap, said the BLM should only allow grazing in "healthy" allotments that included the presence of wolves and grizzlies.

That suggestion did not sit well with ranchers. But rancher Mel Coleman of Saguache, Colo., took a singular position, too. Coleman said the government should pay ranchers for grazing on public lands because cows improve the condition of the land.

Despite such divergent opinions, the meeting concluded with an understanding that ranchers and environmentalists share common ground in their love of the land. As Jim Hook, an outfitter and guide from Bluff, Utah, said, "Protect the land first and businesses second, or the businesses won't make it anyway."

— Greg Peterson and Peter Mali,
HCN *interns*

BOZEMAN, Mont. —

At the first of his four public meetings in the West, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt began with words of conciliation.

"Ranching is not a windfall economic business," Babbitt told the gathering of 1,000. "This is about people living and working on the margin. I've seen what happens when ranchers are run out of business and the land is split up into speculative properties."

Still, the mood of the hearing began with battle lines drawn. With ranchers wearing green ribbons on their arms to signify solidarity, one observer said the solemn rows of cattlemen "resembled either a wake or the start of a new beginning." Uniformed police stood at the doorways to put down any possible disturbance.

Just days earlier, a report from the U.S. General Accounting Office found that 6 percent of ranchers control 32 percent of national forest grazing lands. Of the 90 million acres of Forest Service lands where grazing is now permitted, the 500 largest cattle and sheep operations control 29 million acres, the GAO found. Environmentalists pointed to the report as evidence that many ranchers could afford a higher grazing fee for their federal permits.

The first 10 citizens who addressed Babbitt were ranchers who opposed major fee increases. The five who followed included ranchers and sportsmen who said the ranching industry needs to clean up its act.

Currently, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service charge $1.86 per animal unit month compared to market rates on private lands ranging from $6.39 in Idaho to $10.13 in North Dakota. At the hearing, University of Montana economist John Duffield testified that he believes $8 per AUM is an equitable fee.

But many ranchers and environmentalists nodded their head in agreement when a rancher from Dillon, Mont., suggested the issue is not fees but the condition of the rangeland that merits reform. "It's flat ridiculous to want to raise fees," added another rancher, Norman Ashcraft from Twin Bridges, Mont.

Rather than suddenly or incrementally raising grazing fees, both the Idaho Conservation League and the National Wildlife Federation have suggested offering incentives for ranchers to be better stewards — especially where riparian wildlife habitat and stream sedimentation have become degraded.

That plan, similar in concept to one forwarded by the BLM last year, would charge ranchers above market value if their federal grazing allotment is deemed to be in poor condition, charge them a rate comparable to market rate, and give them a break, probably below the rate charged on private land, if it is found to be in excellent condition.

Will Snider of the Alliance For the Wild Rockies said at a press conference that livestock should be excluded altogether from some sensitive areas.

No one at the hearing endorsed either of the extreme mantras "Cattle Free By '93" or "Cows Galore in '94." The only radical call came from Troy Mader from the Abundant Wildlife Society. He instructed Babbitt to sell off the public lands in the West and transform them into private ownership.

"Reconciliation may have started," Rep. Pat Williams, D-Mont., told the group, "This is the first hearing on this issue in 14 years that I've sat through that was conciliatory." In the Big Sky state, Williams noted, "cattle is more important to Montana's economy than wheat is to Kansas or oranges are to Florida."

— Todd Wilkinson

The writer is based in Bozeman, Montana.

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. —

Laguna Pueblo rancher David Marmon urged a packed house of 950 ranchers and environmentalists to seek common ground and "not get sideways with each other."

He was one of the first speakers at the May 6 Albuquerque grazing fee hearing. Both sides spent the next six hours ignoring the advice. Even with ranchers outnumbering environmentalists four to one, the hearing was a cacophony of point-counterpoint, with the two sides treating each other like punching bags.

"I saw a bumper sticker this morning that said, 'To protect and care for all His creatures, God created ranchers,' and I had to laugh at the absurdity," testified Santa Fe environmental activist Katherine Bueler. "We know the West has desertified. We know that 25 percent of the perennial streams on BLM land in New Mexico aren't there anymore. We need to build a new West, a West that will stand the test of time."

"Environmentalists seem to think we are the only ones causing the problem," countered Wally Ferguson, a sixth-generation Lincoln County, N.M., rancher. "Every wilderness area I've hunted and fished in, I find Coke cans, beer cans and diapers. Under the Taylor Grazing Act, we have to fence off our land. Consider the problems if you keep us out and we're not out there."

Ranchers warned that grazing fee increases could spell economic apocalypse. They said that to compare higher fees on improved private land with lower fees on unimproved public land is like comparing rents for furnished and unfurnished apartments. They blasted environmentalists as socialists and wrapped themselves around the flag, God and a drug-free lifestyle.

Environmentalists railed against "welfare cowboys." They groused about declines in elk, deer, buffalo, bighorn sheep, antelope and trout streams since the cattle arrived. They complained about seeing cowpies when they went backpacking on public lands. They argued that fishing, hiking and hunting do as much for the rural West's economy as ranching.

"If all the hearings have been as terrible as this one, getting rid of the polarity will be hard," said Lee Otteni, assistant New Mexico state land commissioner. "What I heard was people trying to posture, on both sides."

At the end, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt promised that his planned grazing fee increase would be coupled with a strong statement about ranching's "central role in the West.

"This polarity hurts us badly. It divides us in front of national audiences. The issue is not what happened to the land 100 years ago or that there have been improvements since then. The issue is, where do we go from here?"

— Tony Davis

Tony Davis writes for the Albuquerque *Tribune*.

Fore! in Santa Fe ...

continued from page 1

"Something like an exclusive golf course, which appeals mainly to rich whites, just pours gasoline on the fire."

Nowhere was this antipathy toward the valet parking culture felt more strongly than in a historic community of some 400 families 11 miles south of Santa Fe called La Cienega.

Just west of Interstate 25, within eyesight of the New Mexico State Prison and the Downs of Santa Fe race track, La Cienega ("the marsh") is a rural collection of re- and un-furbished adobes, mobile homes and post-hippie eclecticism. La Cienegans today might be prison workers, potters, welders, attorneys, accountants, teachers.

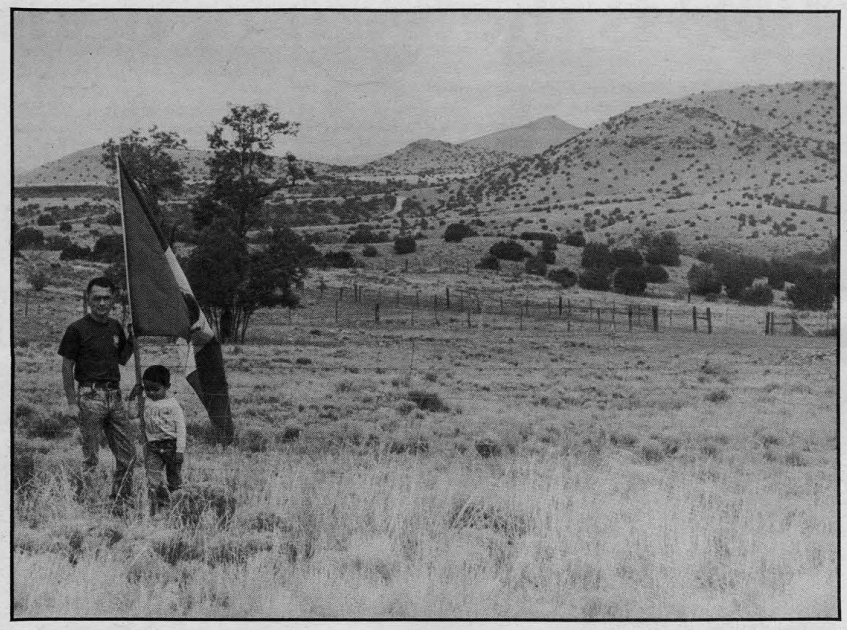
A few of the names on the battered mailboxes are those of the first European explorers in the Southwest: Montaño, Rivera, Romero and the C. de Bacas, after Spanish explorer Cabeza de Vaca, who came through the Southwest in the 1530s. Once largely Hispanic, the community is now about half-Anglo after two decades of word-of-mouth discovery by comfortably transient gringos.

A rust-colored mesa graced with petroglyphs from the 13th century overlooks the village, and rutted dirt roads wind past tiny plots of garlic, chiles and calabacitas, "little pumpkins." While native La Cienegans no longer depend upon agriculture and livestock as their grandparents did, they are still forged from rural Hispanic traditions, foremost of which may be the appreciation and protection of their 300-year-old irrigation ditches called *acequias* (pronounced ah-sáy-key-ahs).

Late one afternoon I found, standing by his mud-caked shovel, Reynaldo Romero, the middle-aged mayordomo of the *Acequia de La Cienega*. A living shrine of water about two feet wide and 18 inches deep, the *acequia* was built in the 1600s by the Spanish to connect springs fed by aquifers under the Sangre de Cristo mountains with farmers and villages below.

Romero, a plumber on weekdays, had spent most of that Sunday afternoon clearing sediment out of the *acequia's* wellhead and tending to his cattle. As the dwindling sun cast dark fingers through the poplars and cottonwoods on the *acequia*'s banks, Romero took me to the top of the mesa, where we set our backs to the plum-colored sunset and contemplated a small ranch about a quarter-mile away.

"Over there," he nodded toward the horizon, over the roofs of his neighbors, past La Cienega's main dirt road to the rolling acres of scrub juniper and piñon. "That's where they're gonna build it. That's where they'll put the golf course."



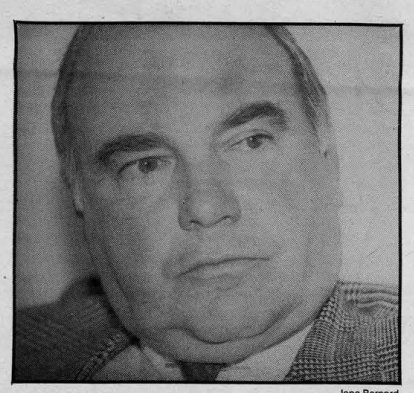
Jane Bernard

Standing on land sold for a golf course, José Villegas and son José Jr. hold a Mexican flag. It symbolizes their family's claim to land which was once owned by his wife's great-great-grandfather.

At first the words don't sink in properly. The golf course? What a seamless blending of lifestyles and cultures — like a yuppie frat house on Walden Pond. How did this happen?

The tale begins in mid-1991, when plans were announced for a 265-acre, $20 million development, which would include a five-story hotel with 75 rooms, 222 houses and townhomes, 40,000 square feet of retail space and a championship golf course. Backing the La Cienega project were Ken Newton, owner of the nearby Downs of Santa Fe race track; Luther H. Hodges Jr., former president of North Carolina National Bank during the 1970s and deputy commerce secretary under Jimmy Carter; Jim Otis Jr., a Chicago architect and developer; and Charles W. Robinson, a former international mining executive and deputy secretary of state under Henry Kissinger.

Opposition to the development came quickly. Outside one county board meeting where citizens spoke against the development well past midnight, pickeeters held signs that said: "Water = Life, Culture = Soul, Golf Course = Greed, No Compromise." Most residents opposed the intrusion of an upper-class golfing lifestyle and its effect on property taxes; others feared that pesticides and the treated wastewater proposed for use on the course could contaminate the community's historic *acequias*.



Jane Bernard

Developer Luther H. Hodges Jr.

"It's not that we make our living off these *acequias* anymore," Rey Romero told me, "but they're part of our culture. We've already lost a lot. In 1960, the *Acequia de La Cienega* flowed at 650 gallons per minute. Today, because of so many wells in the area, it flows at 133."

Although some residents were opposed, community members, including Romero, formed an ad hoc committee to negotiate with the developers in hopes of getting concessions on the size of the project and to ensure protection of the *acequias*. The ad hoc group said negotiation was essential because even if the golf course were stopped, current zoning on the land would still permit an even more disruptive development, such as scores of separate homes with matching wells and septic tanks.

The resulting compromise was, depending on one's perspective, either a model of pragmatism or an act of *vendidos* — sellouts. After months of discussions, developers agreed to eliminate the hotel, the retail space and all but 140 of the residential units, and pay for additional wells to improve the flow of La Cienega's two *acequias*. That apparently suited some in the community, as well as various county commissioners and the local water board. But more than 300 residents signed a petition opposing the project, and its opponents still promise to fight the project's water use plans and its wetlands permit with the Army Corps of Engineers.

"This fight is not over," vows opponent Gloria Mendoza.

The compromise with the developers has divided friends and created suspicion throughout La Cienega. "It's a divide-and-conquer scheme," says resident Frances Perea. Romero, the *acequia* mayordomo, believes he did what was best for the survival of the irrigation ditches. "Maybe these people who are criticizing me," he says, "would rather see 100 mobile homes over there."

It is precisely that logic that so angers residents like Charlotte Lowrey, who wrote in the Santa Fe newspaper, *The New Mexican*, that "people feel trapped into having to choose the least destructive path, instead of holding out for what they claim to really want .... How have we become so conditioned to repeatedly accepting the choice between 'no good' and 'awful?' "

Developer Charles Robinson expects bulldozers to begin carving fairways and sandtraps in July, with play on the golf course expected one year later. He acknowledges that his project will likely cause property taxes to rise in La Cienega — they have already — but he suggests that by hiring 50 to 60 people the development may actually "raise the standard of living."

Robinson seems certain that the golf course will be a perfect neighbor. "We will offer the residents memberships at the club," he said brightly, "and we'll probably offer golf scholarships for the local children."

While the bulldozers have not yet begun to roar in La Cienega, they are finished with one new course and working on a second at Santa Fe's largest and most opulent new residential development, Las Campanas.

Ten miles northwest of the downtown plaza, near the Santa Fe Opera, the massive 4,700-acre project is being financed by the billionaire Bass brothers of Fort Worth and Scottsdale-based golf developer Lyle Anderson.

Nearly 20 times the size of the proposed La Cienega development, Las Campanas lures the wealthy retiree and summer-home buyer with views of the Jemez and Sangre de Cristo mountains and "environmentally sensitive" golf.

Such projects are now the rage among golf developers, who are acutely aware of the unsavory reputation both they and their game have among many

environmentalists. Throughout the United States golf course owners have been sued or fined for egregious acts regarding pesticide application, soil and chemical runoff into streams, wetlands destruction and overuse of water, among other misdeeds.

Consequently, the construction of some golf courses has been delayed for years by opponents, while added permitting costs and legal fees now often exceed $1 million per development. Developers like Anderson not only want to preempt those problems before they threaten their investments but are also aware of the distinct marketing advantages of "green" golf courses.

The Las Campanas publicity machine, which has been wickedly parodied in Santa Fe newspaper ads by local satirist David Stafford, portrays their golf courses as being so thoroughly in tune with nature that one can almost imagine Thoreau and Audubon whacking nine-irons across the high desert. According to Las Campanas literature: Reduced chemical use and integrated pest management will be the rule; a $2 million computerized sprinkler system will allow the courses to use about half the water of a comparable desert layout; each residential lot will feature natural areas that must not be disturbed; outdoor lighting will be carefully regulated to protect the clear night views, and even the size, design and location of driveway basketball hoops will be tightly controlled to ensure, well, conformity.

During construction hundreds of trees were uprooted by machinery, but, according to Las Campanas officials, they were "carefully boxed and marked at the original sites for correct orientation to the sun (when they are replanted). In this way, the areas affected by construction will be restored to a nearly natural state."

Surrounding this natural land that has been zoned for 1,800 homes on sites selling between $150,000 and $350,000, Anderson will have two Jack Nicklaus-designed championship courses, commercial, retail and office space, and a "traditional Santa Fe style" clubhouse complex with tennis courts, Olympic-sized swimming pools, a pro shop, locker rooms, saunas and steam baths, plus an equestrian center and perhaps an ice skating rink. (Dorothy Hamill was retained as a consultant.) Las Campanas will be much like Anderson's two other desert developments in Scottsdale — one of which, Desert Mountain, is an 8,000-acre project with three Jack Nicklaus courses. When he's finished in Santa Fe, Anderson plans to develop a 2,000-acre ocean-front property in Hawaii that will feature two more Jack Nicklaus courses.

Such massive projects represent the higher end of what has been one of the largest construction booms in the game's history. During the last two years new golf courses have been opened for business at a rate of nearly one per day (about 700 in 1991 and 1992). Another 2,000 are in the plannng stages, joining the 14,000 U.S. courses already in existence. Land merchants like Anderson, who also happens to be a five-handicap golfer, are delighted to ride the country's current infatuation with golf. They know that lavish homes sell faster when they're attached to golf courses and club memberships, and that access to an exclusive golf course can add from 15 to 50 percent to the list price of a home. A few memberships to Las Campanas were initially offered at $50,000 apiece.

As with virtually every desert development the question of water use is paramount. At Las Campanas residents will have water meters monitoring inside and outside usage, and homeowners will be charged substantially more if they exceed certain limits for water consumption. Irrigation will only be allowed on courtyards and patios, and residents will have to choose plants from an approved list of drought-tolerant vegetation. Showers and faucets will have flow-restricting heads, and toilets must use no more than three-and-a-half gallons of water per flush.

The showpiece of this "conservation" effort, however, is the golf course irrigation system. This past winter course superintendent and agronomist

"We need golf for our kids."

— Santa Fe Mayor Sam Pick

Ron Ruppert drove me around the grunting backhoes and construction stakes to a small trailer where a computer evaluates the temperature, humidity, sun and wind before deciding how much water will be released through some 6,500 sprinkler heads spread around the first course's 105 acres of playable turf. Having that many sprinkler heads — three to five times more than a conventional system — allows pin-point irrigation with less waste and no geysers of water drifting off into sand traps.

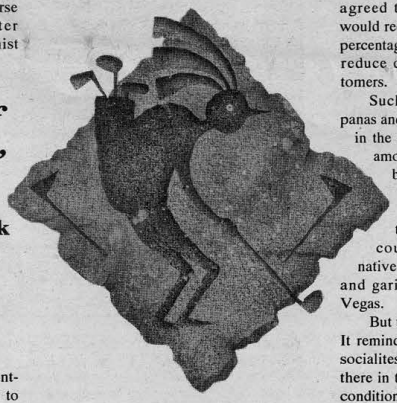
"The Santa Fe climate is just about perfect for golf courses," said Ruppert, as the sun hung over the Sangre de Cristos. "If the temperature and the humidity added together equal 150 you have a good chance for disease in the turf. That only happens in Santa Fe maybe once or twice a year. Dry is good. Stress is good. A little wilt doesn't bother me."

But exactly how much water will Las Campanas need for golf?

A water use budget submitted by engineers to the Santa Fe Metropolitan Water Board states that "the developer estimates" the two golf courses would use during the months of April through October a maximum of about 572 acre-feet of water per year, or roughly 186 million gallons. An acre-foot is about 326,000 gallons and equals the amount of water needed to cover one acre to the depth of one foot.

Based on an average of 110 gallons of water use per person per day, Las Campanas' yearly water use for its two courses alone could supply metropolitan Denver, or about 1.7 million people, for a day. More telling, however, are the "per unit" use figures, which show that by the year 2000, when Las Campanas has about 350 homes completed, the average yearly use of water per home (factoring in golf course usage) will be more than seven times the average residential use in a Santa Fe home.

While the golf courses may indeed use much less water than comparable desert courses in, say, Palm Springs or



Phoenix, such voracious water use by relatively few rich white folks was guaranteed to create controversy in Santa Fe.

Anderson won over some critics by outlining plans to construct five clay-lined lakes to hold water for irrigation and a wastewater treatment plant that by 2023 will produce enough treated effluent to handle much of the course's irrigation needs. Anderson pleased others by agreeing to lease the needed water rights for irrigation of the golf courses from the city of Albuquerque, and to buy permanent water rights for all domestic uses.

"The water at Las Campanas," its sales brochures say, "will come from outside the area. By importing this water supply, Las Campanas is not taking water away from Santa Fe County."

But that is hardly the point, say environmentalists and people like Metropolitan Water Board Commissioner Neva Van Peski, who has done extensive research on the area's water resources.

"I think these golf courses are a foolish use of water in this climate," says Van Peski, a conservative economist who is anything but anti-growth. "We can and will have another serious drought. Do we want to have lots of facilities that if not watered will sustain millions of dollars in damages?"

Van Peski said she once asked the Las Campanas developers if, in the event of a drought, they would be willing to cease watering the golf courses. "They sort of shuddered," she recalls, "and said, well, no." Las Campanas later agreed that in drought conditions it would reduce water demand by the same percentage that water supply companies reduce delivery to other similar customers.

Such developments as Las Campanas and La Cienega illustrate the irony in the new-found environmental ethic among those who feel compelled to build upon undisturbed desert. Yes, Anderson has some impressive water-saving technology, and yes, his golf courses will be surrounded by native vegetation, not the palm trees and garish fountains you find in Las Vegas.

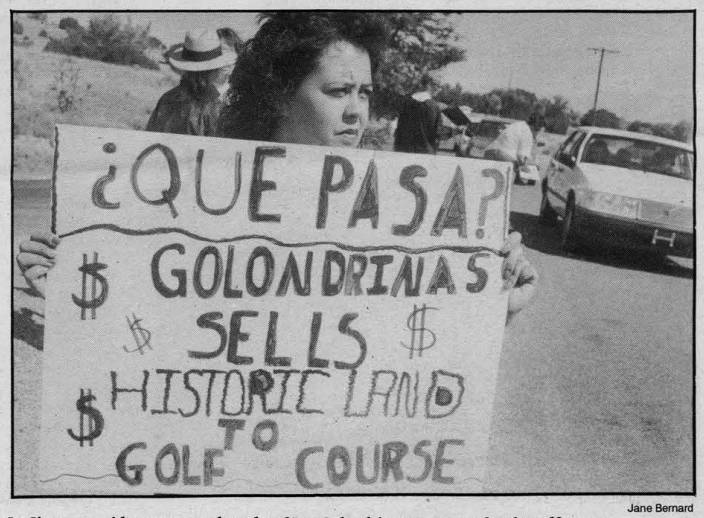
But there is a surreal quality to it all. It reminds me of the stories of Houston socialites who, when I was growing up there in the '60s, would turn on their air conditioners full blast so they could use their new fireplaces. Still, Las Campanas is filling up quite nicely, thank you, and Anderson couldn't be more pleased with his environmental stewardship.

Walking the clover-green fairways last year with a reporter from the glossy *Santa Fean Magazine*, Anderson marveled at his creation: "See how graceful it is, how it blends in and hugs the land. It looks like it was just born there, doesn't it? When we finish, you'll never know that any bulldozers came through."

■

Bruce Selcraig is a writer and guilt-ridden golfer from Austin, Texas.

For more information contact: Gloria Mendoza, an opponent of the La Cienaga project, 505/473-2090; Ken Newton, a partner in the La Cienaga project, 505/471-3311; Las Campanas, 800/237-0088; Sam Hitt, director of Forest Guardians, 505/988-9126.



Jane Bernard

La Cienaga residents protest the sale of Las Golondrinas property for the golf course

OPINION

Can some good come out of the CAP?

by **Tony Davis**

The shadow of financial disaster hangs over the Central Arizona Project with consequences that would reach deeper into Arizona than any injury inflicted by one man's megalomania.

Just as Charles Keating came to symbolize the Greed Decade, the $3.8 billion Central Arizona Project expresses most purely the values and beliefs that drive the Sun Belt. Its purpose is to water a civilization that has nothing in common with its environment except shared land space.

The CAP has been gospel and those who challenged it, insisting the books would never balance, were treated like apostates. For every mile of concrete and steel laid during CAP's long construction, miles of native waterways withered as their water was bled off for other uses (*HCN*, 8/10/92).

Now CAP is complete, but it turns out the critics were right. The project is sucking financial wind, and the remedies are sour. CAP could mean a huge financial burden on the people of Arizona, the loss of water to some other state, or loan defaults to match Charlie Keating's savings and loan larceny.

One of the key players in the game of financial rescue could be Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, in a role he couldn't have dreamed of a decade ago. He was the Arizona governor who brought home the federal bacon for CAP in the 1970s and 1980s. More recently, he was president of the League of Conservation Voters before going to work for Bill Clinton. But as governor he was a cautious conservationist.

He wrote an essay in those days about how he spent his days groping to accommodate the state's hordes of newcomers "without destroying the values that brought us here in the first place." Now he has a chance to bail out CAP's mess and protect some of the values he treasured a decade ago.

He could look, for instance, at the San Pedro River, one of Arizona's most beloved streams. It's a rare ribbon of summertime green in a parched state, the spot where Father Eusebio Kino introduced cattle to the state in the 1600s. But even as the debt-drowned CAP canal searches for help, the San Pedro needs its own rescue.

It is hearing footsteps of growth, threatened by groundwater pumping by the boom town of Sierra Vista lying a few miles west. If environmentalists get their way, the survival of these two water courses may be linked.

Last of the big water projects, CAP was to be guarantor of Arizona's future. The state's farmers and cities spent decades pumping out groundwater as if it would never disappear and prayed CAP would bail them out before it did.

They got what they wanted: 330 miles of steel and concrete from the Colorado River to Tucson. But when the water started rolling down the ditch in the 1980s, it turned out CAP was based on a flawed premise.

As planned, cotton farmers were to take most of the water in the early years, then turn it over to fast-growing cities. Now those same farmers are in no position to use CAP because they're being driven into bankruptcy by low cotton prices, high CAP water prices and $80 an acre property taxes levied to pay for a network of smaller distribution canals.

If the farmers drop out, the federal government and Arizona citizens will be stuck with loan defaults or higher city water bills. With hundreds of millions of dollars at stake, a governor's task force is meeting regularly in Phoenix to try to solve these problems.

A spectator at one of the Phoenix water meetings has a different interest in CAP. The gray-haired, gray-sweatered man seated at the meeting room's rear is Dale Pontius, a former Tucson lawyer who was Babbitt's chief of staff at a crucial point in CAP's history.

It was 14 years ago when then-Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus warned Babbitt that the feds would not give CAP another penny unless Arizona reformed its groundwater laws. The state complied, passing laws to reduce pumping that was creating earth fissures so big they could be seen in satellite photos.

Now, Pontius wears another hat. He's executive director of American Rivers, a non-profit conservation group. Pontius wants Babbitt to play the role of Andrus, by making federal help for CAP contingent on the adoption of tough state laws to protect Arizona's rivers from being pumped, grazed, dammed or diverted into nothingness.

In 1992, a bill that would have carried out Pontius' goal died in the Legislature under attack from ranchers, farmers and wise-use advocates. They worry that river protection will put them out of business.

"There are unjustified fears about how (protecting streams) will affect private property rights and development rights," Pontius contends. "The future of tourism depends on having water in rivers. Our value systems are changing. It's more important to have free flowing streams rather than sucking them dry."

But river lovers knew they were in trouble last year when their bill went before legislative hearings. The first question asked was: "Which is more important, plants or people?"

Nobody asked that question in the late 1800s, when timber-cutters, fur trappers, farmers and others settled along the Salt, Gila, Santa Cruz, Rillito and other water courses. Today, it shows.

These places are dead ditches, with lush cottonwoods replaced by salt cedar, great blue herons replaced by crows and water running only during floods. Tales of native rivers are like legends of lost continents, places where tomatoes grew as easily as weeds, where flaming yellow orioles and warblers buzzed around thick leafy trees and people swam and lolled in the shade.

Now, some experts say, 90 percent of the Southwest's rivers have been destroyed or seriously damaged. The wise-use advocates argue that the numbers are exaggerated by environmentalists looking for excuses to regulate. No one knows what Bruce Babbitt thinks about these arguments. He was never CAP's pivot man in Arizona. Former Democratic Rep. Mo Udall, now lying near death, played that role. Yet Babbitt symbolized the contradictions that marked Arizona during CAP's gestation period.

Babbitt had hiked, rafted, written and lectured about the Colorado River. He knew the Law of the River so well that his former top aide, George Britton, has said, "You couldn't (slip) anything by him about the Colorado River. If it was wrong, he would catch you, he'd know it."

Yet he never openly challenged CAP's premises, never uttered a public word in protest against state-approved private loans and federal loans made to CAP's farmers. He was, above all, a compromiser whose chief tactic was to not let warring interest groups out of a locked room until they had cut a deal.

I remember the day in 1985 Babbitt spent five minutes explaining to my newspaper's editorial board why he supported a dam that would flood bald eagle nests on the Verde River northeast of Phoenix. That came only a few minutes after he explained why a polluting copper smelter in Douglas had to be closed because its "gray cloud is a millstone around the neck" of the local economy.

Today, at least, it's clear that his perspective on CAP has shifted. In a telephone interview a year ago, the ex-governor acknowledged that officials never looked seriously at the debt-repayment issues while Congress was sending CAP pork to Arizona every year.

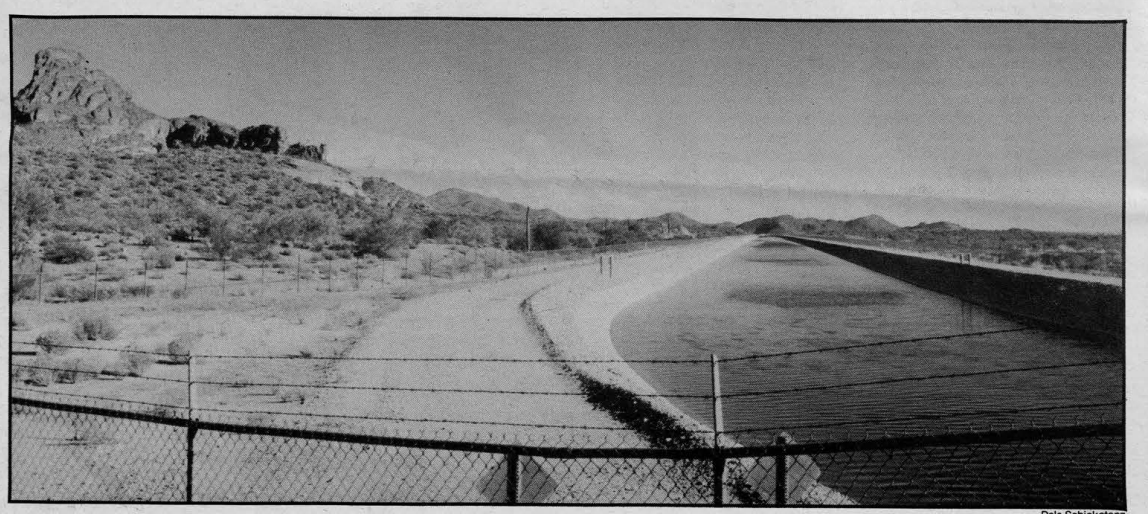
"It was just sort of an article of faith that we'd do whatever is necessary to get and use the water," Babbitt said. "The premise of reclamation was that you sign now and worry about economics later."

CAP back then was Arizona's identity, symbolizing growth that was invading the state like a cancer cell. It was a necessary evil, a project that would cost too much for water that wouldn't taste very good, but that the state couldn't live without unless it stopped growing.

Arizona's identity today is the legacy of Keating, busted savings and loans and fallen bankers and utility executives. Talk of another real estate boom is hitting the Phoenix newspapers, and many wonder if the next boom can be kinder and gentler to the landscape than the last one. CAP may tell us.

Today, even some of CAP's supporters call the once-beloved project "Arizona's religion." They acknowledge that its adherents got so caught up in the faith that they closed their eyes to the flaws. Now, saving the San Pedro and a dozen streams like it could be CAP's penance. ■

Tony Davis is a reporter for the *Albuquerque Tribune*. This essay appeared in the *Tucson Weekly*.



Dale Schicketanz

The Central Arizona Project near Phoenix

BULLETIN BOARD

HOT GLASS

The Department of Energy said on March 19 that it wants to turn 61 million gallons of nuclear bomb waste into glass. The waste is stored at Hanford Nuclear Preservation in south-central Washington. But a March 8 report from the General Accounting Office criticizes the waste-into-glass proposal as impractical and undefined. Department of Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary said she will carry through with plans to build a $1.3 billion conversion facility at Hanford as part of a 30-year, $57 billion cleanup. Liquid wastes will be mixed with cement, the radioactive remainder will combine with molten glass, and the "glass logs" will then be buried over a 100-year period. Rep. Mike Synar, D-Okla., who requested the GAO report, told the *Idaho Falls Post-Register* that it "tells us that DOE is simply not ready to proceed." Jim Harding, acting director of Washington's Energy Department office, responded, "You don't want the perfect to be the enemy of the good." The report, *Nuclear Waste: Hanford Tank Waste Program Needs Cost, Schedule, and Management Changes*, is available from the U.S. General Accounting Office, P.O. Box 6015, Gaithersburg, MD 20884-6015.

A STUDY TO MATCH THE SCENERY

An elegantly designed 25-page report by the Liz Claiborne and Art Ortenberg Foundation, *Montana: Steady State in Transition*, examines the hopes and worries of Montana citizens in a changing economy. The foundation initiated the study out of concern for the "potential of change to diminish Montana's rich natural heritage and displace the cultural values and community structure." Graphs, a map displaying economic and demographic trends in each county, and quotes from focus group participants demonstrate the state's continuing dependence on natural resource-based industries. Although a rise in service industries in the last decade increased employment, income growth has not kept pace with jobs.

The report is available from the Liz Claiborne and Art Ortenberg Foundation, Tranquility Ranch, 2041 Star Route, Seeley Lake, MT 59868 (212/333-2536).

— Peter Mali

MOUNTAINFILM 15

The 15th annual Mountainfilm in Telluride, Colo., features four days of high-altitude films, videos, picnics and seminars from May 28-31. A "moving mountains" seminar May 28 features guest of honor David Brower, founder of Friends of the Earth and Earth Island Institute, who leads the exploration of this year's themes: tourism as an extractive industry and finding the carrying capacity of mountain towns. Speakers include Kevin Williams of the Western Colorado Congress, geomorphologist Jack Ives, and *High Country News'* publisher Ed Marston. For more information, write to Mountainfilm, Box 1088, Telluride, CO 81435 (303/728-4123).

JACKSON MOUNTAIN BIKING

A well-known winter resort town hopes to lure fat-tire riders to its backcountry. Bikecentennial, a non-profit cycling organization, and the Bridger-Teton National Forest have produced a mountain biking map of Jackson Hole, Wyo. It features complete descriptions, riding times and difficulty ratings for nearly two dozen of the area's best rides. The map also provides information and advice on local campsites, trail etiquette, safety tips, weather, wildlife and equipment. And it informs riders how to reach many of the uncharted rides in Jackson's 600,000 acres of non-wilderness terrain. Jackson Hole "is not yet as 'discovered' by mountain bike enthusiasts as the popular meccas of Crested Butte, Colo., and Moab, Utah ... but it has every bit as much to offer," says Michael McCoy, Bikecentennial program director. Bikecentennial, formed in 1974, is the country's largest recreational bicycling organization. The group produces several bicycling maps and publications including *BikeReport* magazine and the *CycloSource Catalog*. For Bikecentennial information, call 406/721-1776. To order the Jackson Hole Map, BC-004, call 800/933-1116.

DOING IT THEMSELVES

Tired of playing catch-up behind federal agencies, the Colorado Environmental Coalition has published its own management recommendations for the Arapaho/Roosevelt National Forest northwest of Denver. Unveiled at an April 18 press conference, the "Citizens' Management Alternative" was hailed as the first of its kind in the nation. The present Arapaho/Roosevelt Forest Plan is almost a decade old and up for revision in 1994. The citizens' alternative rejects traditional, commodities-based forest management, focusing instead on biodiversity and ecosystem management. It calls for wolf reintroduction, road closures in wildlife migration corridors and restrictions on grazing allotments. At stake are over 1 million Rocky Mountain acres, including spruce/fir old-growth, remote mountain lakes, several wilderness areas and the headwaters of the Colorado River. The coalition's multidisciplinary effort departs from past efforts to influence federal land-use policy through comment and appeal. The coalition also plans to develop alternatives for two other Colorado forests — the Routt National Forest near Steamboat Springs and the Rio Grande National Forest near Alamosa. For a copy of the Citizens' Management Alternative, send $5 to the Colorado Environmental Coalition, Attention Rocky Smith, 777 Grant St., #606, Denver, CO 80203-3518 (303/837-8704).

— Geoffrey Elliott

DESERT TORTOISE PLAN RELEASED

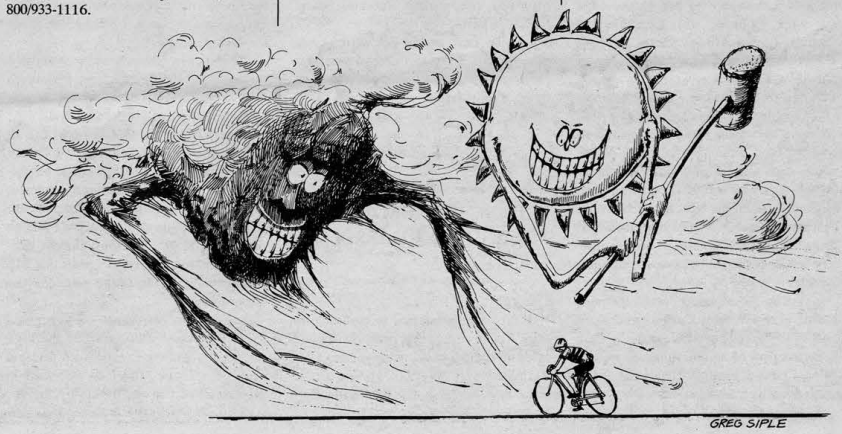
After three years of work by scientists from federal agencies and several universities, a recovery strategy for the Mojave population of the desert tortoise calls for establishing 14 wildlife management areas. Areas may fence out livestock, remove wild burros, create highway underpasses for the tortoises and increase law enforcement. The objective of the recovery plan is to remove the species from the endangered list. "I was very happy to see how tough the draft was," said Steve Johnson, a consultant with Native Ecosystems Inc. in Tucson, Ariz. Listed as threatened in 1990, desert tortoise populations have declined as livestock have overgrazed and trampled their food source and people have built or farmed where they live. The animals range throughout the Sonoran and Mojave deserts from southwestern Utah to northern Mexico, and from southern Nevada east to Arizona. Public comments are welcomed until June 1; for copies of the draft, write: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Nevada Ecological Services, 4600 Kietzke Lane, C-125, Reno, NV 89502.

— Peter Mali

Kathy Bogan

NOT ANOTHER YELLOWSTONE

Should Hells Canyon become the country's newest national park? *Not Another Yellowstone*, a new study released by the Hells Canyon Preservation Council, argues that giving the current National Recreation Area and adjoining areas national park status would boost the local economy by encouraging a broader economic foundation. The study charts a decline in jobs related to extractive industries and a rise in service industry jobs in counties in west-central Idaho, northeastern Oregon, and southeastern Washington. Baker County, Ore., exemplified this trend. Wood products employment fell by 8.3 percent between 1976 and 1991, but total employment increased 9 percent. Park designation would encourage a diversified economy by creating more jobs in the service industry, the report asserts. The report, prepared by graduate students in University of Montana's Environmental Studies Clinic, was developed with funding from the University of Montana. Those interested in receiving a copy should contact the Environmental Studies Clinic, Department of Environmental Studies, University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812.



GREG SIPLE

OPINION

We're in this fight together

by **T.H. Watkins**

For nearly 30 years, I have been a card-carrying extreme environmentalist. There should be no uncertainty as to my prejudices, then, when I tell you that sometimes I find myself driven to stratospheric levels of irritation by the bashing the so-called "mainstream" environmental organizations like The Wilderness Society are getting these days. It is not that I think we should be above criticism, or even cheap sniping. It is perfectly healthy to be reminded from time to time that there are cracks in the armor of our righteousness.

But some of the traditional criticism is both specious and malevolent. It paints environmentalists as elitist backpackers who would just as quickly lie to the public as buy an expensive laptop computer.

"Eco-group leaders," wise-use maven Ron Arnold claims, "don't pay the slightest attention to inconvenient realities. The illusion of crisis is the basis of their fund-raising. They don't let facts stand in their way. Or people. Eco-groups want everything for themselves, nothing for you ..."

These profoundly cynical arguments manage to malign the integrity and motives of an entire agglomeration of people and at the same time ignore the fact that environmentalism as a cause began to cross most lines of class, politics, age and geography around the time of the first Earth Day in 1970, if not earlier.

A related charge is not so easily dismissed. It comes not only from people like Ron Arnold, but too often from our allies in the field — grass-roots organizations and individuals struggling to survive in the heat and smoke of the battlefield. Plagued by limited budgets and insufficient staffs and often hammered by their neighbors because of what they do, grass-roots people sometimes look at us "mainstreamers" and see a little of what Ron Arnold might see — too much bloat and torpor, too much money, too little contact with the real world, too much reliance on arcane litigation and the cunning sarabands of legislative compromise, too little recognition of the local needs of the local people among whom, after all, the grass-roots people must live and work.

There is, I suppose, a certain inevitability about the complaint. The national conservation organizations have grown larger in membership, staff and budgets (though most have shrunk in all three categories over the past couple of years), and Americans tend to mistrust bigness.

But I do not think that grass-roots environmentalists should accept uncritically the notion that merely because of their size and their centrality the mainstream organizations have forgotten what made them and makes them. Grass-roots workers have been and always will be the heart of the conservation movement. Any national organization that does not derive both spirit and force from that core of dedication will end up dim and dessicated — and deservedly abandoned by those it needs the most.

At the same time, the need of the grass-roots for the national organizations — particularly those in Washington — is no less profound. The plunderers, after all, have no compunctions about bigness. They use bigness, organize bigness — celebrate bigness.

> Slogging around in the dreadful minutiae of government takes a god-awful lot of drudgery.

To a very real extent, then, it takes bigness to fight bigness. So long as we remain a nation of laws, it is in law that grass-roots and mainstreamers alike must place their faith, and it is still in Washington where most of that law is going to be crafted and promoted. Dealing with environmental legislation, analyzing resource data, challenging official claptrap, taking the agencies to court, and slogging around in the dreadful minutiae of government takes a god-awful lot of drudgery and the kind of inspired nitpicking and informed expertise that only a decently financed, well-staffed, experienced and centralized mainstream conservation organization can exercise over the long haul.

And it is almost *always* a long haul. Sweating out the intricacies of the pending California Desert Protection Act, for example, has sapped the energies of entire teams of legislative specialists from the conservation movement (including plenty of grass-roots people) and Congress alike for nearly seven years now. Maps have been drawn and redrawn; revisions argued, rejected, accepted; economic studies analyzed, biological imperatives documented, legal moves outlined, testimony crafted, and articles, press releases and reports ground out; tempers have flared into furies of incoherence; chits have been called in and arms twisted — and yes, compromises reached. When and if a California Desert Protection Act gets passed this session of Congress, it will be imperfect; it also will be the very best that could have been achieved — and it will have existed only because so many people worked so hard for so long with such obsessive concentration over every single line in it.

It was the same combination of grass-roots activism in the field and relentless mainstream moil in Washington that produced the Arizona Wilderness Act of 1991, that got legislation ordering the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to start restoring the natural systems of the Florida Everglades, that has kept the Endangered Species Act from crippling amendments, and that so far has managed to protect the last remnants of ancient forest from the chainsaws of the Pacific Northwest.

If Montana or Idaho ever get acceptable wilderness bills, if Native American sacred sites are ever protected, if the powers that be ever start talking seriously about BLM wilderness in Utah, if the General Mining Law of 1872 ever gets reformed, if Western salmon populations are ever kept from slipping into the night of extinction — if any of these and a hundred other environmental tasks ever get done in the West and elsewhere, it is only going to be because the mainstreamers and the grass-roots people joined hearts and hands and put aside questions of size or who among us is or is not legitimate, committed and environmentally "correct."

The process that gets things done — crude, complex, maddening, and often disappointing — has not changed, not yet. Maybe it will someday. Maybe the faith we mainstreamers have in the system of law will someday be betrayed. But when and if the time comes that legislation and litigation prove incapable of protecting what must be protected, among those strapping themselves to trees and chaining themselves to rocks will be plenty of mainstream refugees from Washington, D.C. Until then, these patient trench warriors will slog on — tired, determined, and, in my opinion, demonstrating their own species of bravery. ■

T.H. Watkins is a vice president of The Wilderness Society, editor of its quarterly magazine, *Wilderness*, and author of several books, most recently *Righteous Pilgrim: The Life and Times of Harold L. Ickes, 1874-1952*. **Portions of this article first appeared in the fall 1992 issue of *Wilderness*.**

LETTERS

LOOK BEYOND THOSE STEREOTYPES

Dear *HCN*,

I am as loath as the next scribbler to give up hardy clichés, even the ones about the state I have adopted until I can find a way back West. But when the subject is "Small Towns Under Siege" (*HCN*, 4/5/93) where you warn that population growth will make the West "New Jersey with bumps and fissures," I draw the line.

Your good readers should know that 10 years ago, New Jersey took a million acres of land, amounting to a fifth of the whole state and two-thirds of it privately owned, to create a no-development forest sanctuary called the New Jersey National Pinelands Reserve. Within the Pinelands, growth is directed to compact border clusters that defy the kind of sprawl you warn against.

During those same 10 years, the people of many Western states have been unable to agree about designating even a poor fraction of an unimaginable wealth of public land, let alone 20 percent of the state, as wilderness preserves.

So, for the inspiration of your readers, I offer New Jersey: one-fifth of Colorado would put everything west of Glenwood Springs (and including Paonia) beyond reach of the bulldozer and the ranchette, everything west of Butte in Montana, everything south of Grand County in Utah.

To be fair, we're not without our chauvinisms here, too. When we see a project we don't like, we say, "Whaddaya tryin' ta do — turn us into New York?"

Iver Peterson
Lawrenceville, New Jersey

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON DARREL SHORT

Dear *HCN*,

This is in reference to an article in *High Country News* by Adam Duerk and titled "BLM Manager in Wyoming Gets Trampled" (*HCN*, 2/22/93). The article states that Darrel Short, BLM's Kemmerer Resource Area manager, said his removal from the Cumberland allotment grazing decision was "politically motivated" because of his outspokenness about poor range conditions. It also said Mr. Short's statements about putting the Cumberland users out of business was in reference to another issue. I would like to set the record straight.

First, Mr. Short's acknowledged threat to put the Cumberland permittees out of business was made when the permittees challenged his policy of allowing all users of the Cumberland to run in common on the adjacent Rock House Allotment. This resulted in cattle permitted to graze on the Cumberland Allotment only to be removed from the Rock House Allotment. While this issue isn't related directly to range conditions, it does indicate the adversarial relationship that Mr. Short has with the range users in the Cumberland.

Secondly, Mr. Short was removed from the decision because of the high probability that the Cumberland decision may be appealed, and I do not want to provide an opportunity for claims that the decision is designed to put anyone out of business. If there is an appeal, it should be on the merits of the decision, not on an inappropriate comment by a BLM employee.

Everyone in BLM, including myself, has agreed with Mr. Short's assessment of range conditions in the Cumberland allotment. Representatives of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, the Rock Springs Grazing Advisory Board, the Wyoming State Grazing Board, the National Wildlife Federation, and the University of Wyoming have also agreed that much of the Cumberland, primarily the riparian areas, is overgrazed and in need of management changes. The initial Cumberland decision has been issued by the Rock Springs District manager and any future decisions will be handled by the district manager in a professional way.

Ray Brubaker
Cheyenne, Wyoming

The writer is state director in Wyoming of the Bureau of Land Management.

A mountain goat nanny and kid with a puff of hair in its mouth

Jerg Kroener

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Let nature fill the niche

Jean Dresden

Opinion by **Tom Skeele**

In the 1940s, federal, state and private wolfers finished their job of killing off enough wolves — virtually all wolves — in the western United States to make the range safe for the livestock industry.

That process took more than 50 years. Although widespread anti-wolf sentiment was both real and representative of the nation's attitude at the onset of the extermination campaign, attitudes changed over the decades.

The West was tamed for the most part, and the wolf no longer threatened the livestock industry. The last wolfers continued to kill wolves because they and the people who hired them could not let go of the belief that had justified their actions from the start: The belief that the only good wolf was a dead one.

Today, we may shake our heads over those people who were blinded to changing realities. But decades from now our descendants may think the same thing about today's wolf advocates.

For years, most wolf advocates have rallied around the strategy of reintroducing wolves into Yellowstone National Park under an "experimental, non-essential population" designation. This designation was established in a 1982 amendment to the Endangered Species Act.

Such an approach would allow for "greater management flexibility" in dealing with wolves that prey on livestock by lessening protection otherwise afforded endangered wolf populations listed under the act. Wolf advocates have supported this strategy because they believed that it was the most feasible way to meet two goals: to appease the anti-wolf forces and to return wolves to the Yellowstone region in a timely manner.

This strategy has been formalized as one of the five alternatives in the Gray Wolf Environmental Impact Statement. Although other wolf advocates have tried to build support for letting wolves return to the Yellowstone region with the full protection afforded them under the act, the experimental, non-essential contingent has so far set the agenda accepted by most Americans.

Recent events have brought about a change in circumstances, and it's now time to reconsider this strategy. Those events include:

• The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service confirmed in March that an animal killed just south of Yellowstone National Park last October was a true wolf, related to wolves in northwest Montana.

• There have been other tantalizing sightings in the Yellowstone region in the last few years. Most wolf biologists who viewed the film of a dark canid in Hayden Valley last summer thought it was probably a wolf, judging from its behavior and appearance.

• In the aftermath of these sightings, biological and legal experts have spoken out in recent weeks regarding the hazards of pushing through a wolf reintroduction program.

First, the biology. Wolf expert Bob Ream has long held that wolves could recolonize the Yellowstone region on their own. He contends that the confirmation of a wolf killed near the park is proof not only that wolves can, but are, making their way back (*HCN*, 4/5/93). Government officials like U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist Joe Fontaine have dismissed the appearance of the wolf as showing "... what we already know — wolves are great dispersers." And some wolf activists have said that "one wolf does not a population make."

While these statements do not seem to refute the fact that what we are witnessing is natural wolf ecology, the underlying message is that long-range dispersal will not lead to natural recolonization in the Yellowstone region.

While this recolonization may never happen, or happen fast enough to please wolf partisans, we should not deny the possibility that wolves are doing in the Yellowstone area what they've done in Glacier National Park, the Ninemile Valley, the northwest corner of Montana, and are beginning to do in central Idaho, the Rocky Mountain Front and the north Cascades.

Second, the law. Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund attorney Doug Honnold, in a recent *Jackson Hole Guide* article, said the appearance of a wolf near Yellowstone Park last fall may disallow the option of using an experimental population designation for reintroduced wolves. Under Section 10 (J) of the act, where the experimental designation is provided for and discussed, two criteria are established.

First, the area for reintroduction must be "outside of the current range" of the species. Second, the newly introduced population must be "wholly separate geographically from the non-experimental populations of the same species."

Even though some people may dispute the fact that Yellowstone is (or may soon be) part of the "current range" of wolves, the appearance of wolves in the region makes it difficult to argue that the area is geographically isolated from other gray wolf populations. To proceed with the reintroduction of an experimental population at this point would not only lessen the protections afforded those resident or naturally recolonizing wolves in the region, it would also set a terrible — and illegal — precedent for the Endangered Species Act.

All wolf advocates now have an opportunity to broaden the range of discussion on wolf recovery for the Yellowstone ecosystem. While the imperative for a swift restoration remains, the conservation community needs to realize that we cannot stay the course of experimental, non-essential reintroduction and simultaneously preserve the integrity of the law and respect the animal we are trying so hard to protect.

As wolf advocates, we need now, more than ever before, to insist that the federal agencies responsible for wolf recovery cease their head-long dive into a scenario of experimental, non-essential reintroduction. Agencies should instead conduct prompt and thorough field surveys before proceeding with any plans for the Yellowstone region. If this means we have to wait two more years for a decision, then so be it. The consequences of rushing ahead could be much more costly ecologically.

If a survey confirms either wolf presence or geographical continuity between the Yellowstone region and wolf populations elsewhere, then we have lost the opportunity to use the experimental designation. However, we still have the option of population augmentation (one of the five alternatives proposed in the Gray Wolf EIS). Wolves introduced in this manner would have no less protection than naturally occurring wolves elsewhere, and the Endangered Specis Act would remain intact.

As for the political feasibility of this strategy, wolf activists have known for a long time that public support for wolf recovery is tremendous. Last summer 35,000 Yellowstone National Park visitors said "yes" to wolves in a Defenders of Wildlife poll. One survey after another shows a majority of the public wants wolves back. With the loss in Montana of one of wolfdom's most fervent enemies, Rep. Ron Marlenee, and an administration in Washington more favorable than the last to environmental protection, we can afford to take a more ambitious stance.

Let's not forget the two primary reasons given for pursuing an experimental, non-essential population designation: Wolf recovery would be more palatable to ranchers, and such a designation allows for wolves to be "controlled" more easily. The livestock industry has wavered little from its "no wolves, no way" stance from the beginning, despite being all but promised the experimental, non-essential designation as a compromise and despite talk of allowing ranchers to shoot wolves themselves under certain conditions.

The fact is, wolves are already "controlled" quite easily and readily where they already exist in the contiguous United States and where they supposedly enjoy full protection as an endangered species. When wolves do finally return to the Yellowstone region in large enough numbers to satisfy the most ardent critic, they will be controlled outside of Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks to protect livestock. We don't need to sanction that by weakening the law.

Let's have the imagination and the boldness to move with a changing natural world. We should take this opportunity to move away from a strategy based on the political power of the livestock industry, and instead develop one based on the ecological needs of the wolf and the Yellowstone region. ■

Wolf advocate Tom Skeele is founder and president of Predator Project, a grass-roots group that can be reached at Box 6733, Bozeman, MT 59771.