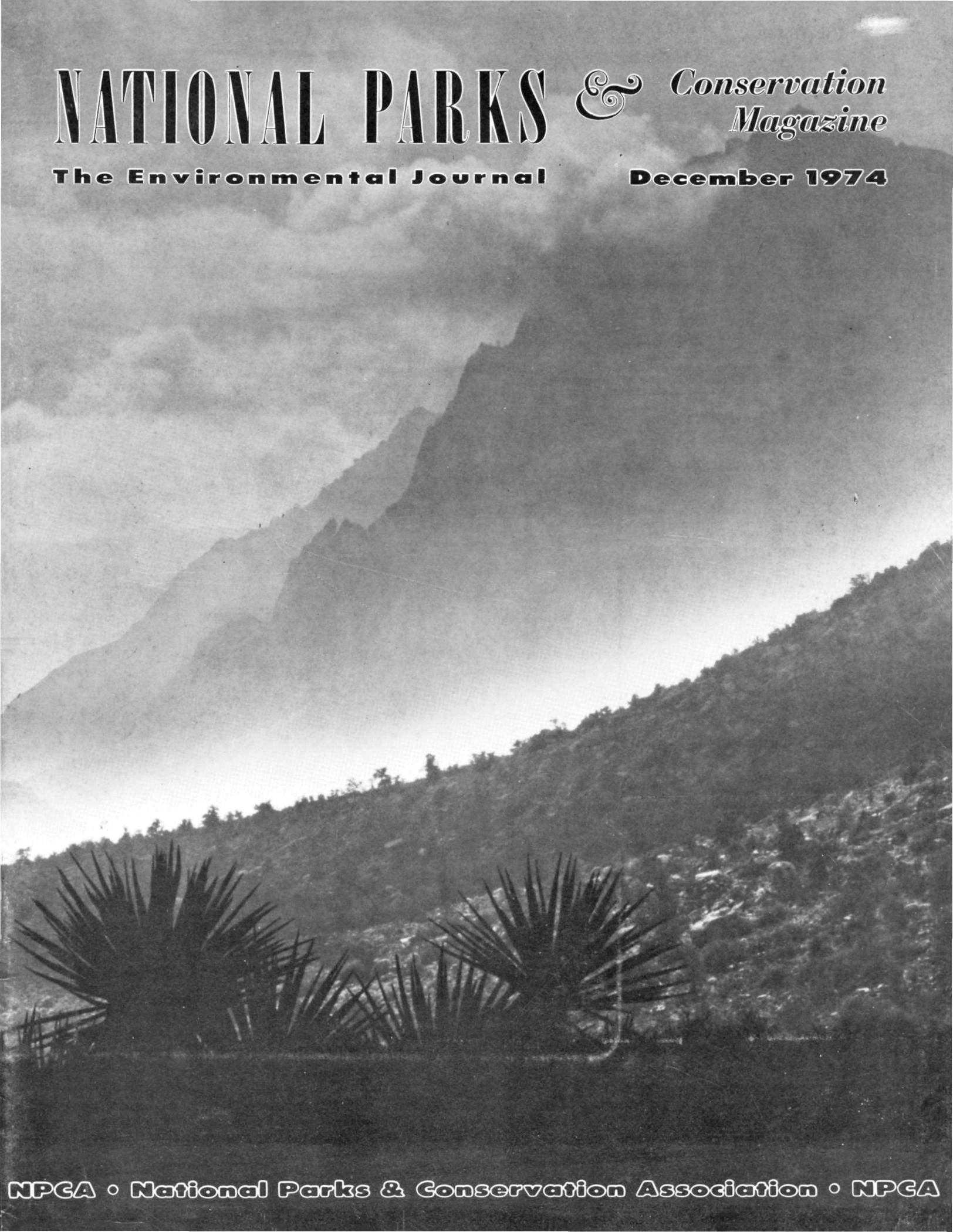


NATIONAL PARKS

*& Conservation
Magazine*

The Environmental Journal

December 1974



The Public Business in the Parks

RECENT PUBLIC DISCLOSURES with respect to awards of contracts and the operation of concessions in the national parks should precipitate a thorough reorganization of National Park Service procedures.

Foremost should be a basic reexamination and reorganization of the park concessioner system.

Early in the history of the National Park Service the policy was established of awarding a concession to one qualified concessioner in each park for the construction of lodges, provision of other facilities, and the operation of visitor accommodations within the park. This system had the merit that it prevented an unseemly clutter of competing businesses in the park, and at the same time avoided government operation of facilities. It was thought that if the standards required of concessioners were high enough, the drawbacks of single-park monopoly could be avoided.

AS IT TURNED OUT, the concessioners tended to acquire substantial political influence and often influenced park management decisions heavily. Features of park management which might tend to draw crowds and bring profits to the concessioner, even though harmful to the basic purposes of the park, in terms of the protection of natural features, might be retained for long years after a widespread public understanding had emerged of their undesirability.

Moreover, as time went on, and as the structure of American business tended toward chain systems, interlocking directorates, conglomerates, and monopolies, combinations of corporations gained control of a number of concessions and achieved even greater influence in park policy determination. The influence was expressed at the offices of Park Superintendents and Regional Directors and also in Congress.

THE CHANGES which ought now to be undertaken in our judgment, include the following:

A strong antimonopoly principle must be imbedded in National Park Service management. No concessioner should be allowed to operate in more than one park. This rule should be enforced by

prohibiting control of operations in more than one park through associated, subsidiary, holding, or conglomerate corporate arrangements. Every concessioner should be required to stand on his own feet and to content himself with his privileges in a single park. This rule would help to prevent the buildup of undue influence within the Park Service and through Congress.

Concessioners should be required by the terms of their concessions to maintain completely open books of account, available for inspection by competitors and the general public. The NPCA brought suit some time ago under the Freedom of Information Act to compel concessioners to open their books to the public. The District Court held that their business records, where competitors might be involved, were confidential and could not be revealed by the National Park Service. The Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the decision, holding that the question of confidentiality is a question of fact to be determined on the basis of an examination of the records to see whether an effect on competition is actually at issue. This litigation will make a little progress toward opening the records, but a requirement should be established that a concessioner maintain open books as a condition of receiving the award.

PROTECTION must be provided against the effects of changes in management, including changes in ownership or other control. The concession contract should contain clauses giving the NPS the option to cancel within an extended period of time in the event of sale or assignment of the concession or changes in managerial control from any cause. The reason is obvious, because a change in management can lead to a wholly new relationship between the NPS and the concessioner, and the result may be highly undesirable in terms of the public interest.

The concession award system should be opened up to public view. Public hearings should be held on all such awards where competitors and the general public will have an opportunity to examine into the qualifications of every bidder and into its connections, background, and viewpoints as to

Continued on page 35

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- 2 The Public Business in the Parks
- 4 Yosemite Valley Railroad: Highway of History, Pathway of Promise
by Alfred Runte
- 10 Cataloochee: A Sense of Place
by Elizabeth D. Powers
- 15 Hidden Treasures on Our Lands
by Darwin Lambert
- 21 Brown Pelican on the Brink
by Georganna Simmons
- 24 Let the Sun Shine in at Christmas
by Gary D. Suttle
- 25 NPCA at Work
- 31 News Notes
- 32 Conservation Docket
- 33 Index to *National Parks & Conservation Magazine*, Volume 48, 1974

COVERS Red Rock Canyon, by David Muench
Spectacular Red Rock Canyon Recreation Lands near Las Vegas, Nevada, epitomizes the scenic treasures—and the problems—of public domain lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management. (See page 15.)

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National Parks & Conservation Association, established in 1919 by Stephen Mather, the first Director of the National Park Service, is an independent, private, nonprofit, public service organization, educational and scientific in character. Its responsibilities relate primarily to protecting the national parks and monuments of America, in which it endeavors to cooperate with the National Park Service while functioning as a constructive critic, and to protecting and restoring the whole environment. Life memberships are \$750. Annual membership dues, including subscription to National Parks & Conservation Magazine, are \$150 sustaining, \$75 supporting, \$25 contributing, and \$12 associate. Student memberships are \$8. Single copies are \$1.50. Contributions and bequests are needed to carry on our work. Dues in excess of \$12 and contributions are deductible from federal taxable income, and gifts and bequests are deductible for federal gift and estate tax purposes. Mail membership dues, correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address, and postmaster notices or undeliverable copies to Association headquarters in Washington. When changing address, allow six weeks' advance notice and send address label from latest issue along with new address. Advertising rates are available on request from headquarters in Washington.

YOSEMITE VALLEY RAILROAD HIGHWAY OF HISTORY, PATHWAY OF PROMISE

Rebuilding the Yosemite Valley Railroad could guarantee Yosemite National Park maximum protection from the private automobile

by ALFRED RUNTE

THE COMPLETION of the Yosemite Valley Railroad in May 1907 was greeted with mixed emotions. "They have built a railroad into the Yosemite," declared Edward H. Hamilton, correspondent for *Cosmopolitan* magazine. Some park enthusiasts, he admitted, had taken the news "very much as if the Black Cavalry of Commerce has been sent out to trample down the fairy rings. In California and the far West," he elaborated, "there are people who insist that hereafter the great valley is to be a mere picnic-ground with dancing-platforms, beery choruses, and couples contorting in the two-step." Such critics, however, were obviously only "nature cranks" and the "athletic rich," those "stout pilgrims with long purses and no ailments." Again he repeated, "there is

the railroad into Yosemite, and all the arguments since Adam and Eve will not put it away."

In actuality, the Yosemite Valley Railroad did not enter the national park itself. Nor were Hamilton's predictions, like his geographical information, free of miscalculation. In 1935 the Yosemite Valley Railroad went bankrupt, victimized by the turmoil of the Great Depression. All but broke for a second time in 1944, the line was sold at auction the following year and immediately scrapped. Today only crumbling embankments and corroding bridges stand as reminders of its former service. So-called "nature cranks," politely known as "purists," were also misguided in their fears about the railway's impact on Yosemite National Park. Opposed to all types of development in and near park areas,

purists failed to realize—as did the more moderate preservationists—that western railroads were in fact among the strongest allies of the scenic reserves. Not only did the lines support the national park idea politically and financially, their trains served the parks safely, comfortably, efficiently, and, of greatest importance, with the least amount of environmental disruption. Indeed, it remained for the private automobile, not the train and motorcoach, to turn popular national parks into classic examples of what author Edward Abbey has called "Industrial Tourism."

Constructed between September 1905 and May 1907, the rail line ran from Merced, its western terminus, to El Portal, approximately seventy-eight miles northeast through the Sierra Nevada. The last two-thirds of

the railway lay through the spectacular recesses of the Merced River Canyon. Denied a right-of-way over Yosemite National Park proper, the railroad transferred passengers to company-owned stagecoaches for the remaining twelve-mile journey to the valley floor. The Yosemite Valley Railroad, not the federal government, provided the access road—now known as the Arch Rock entrance—across the park between El Portal and the valley itself. Nor was it uncommon for other western railroads to undertake similar projects. During the early twentieth century Congress was extremely reluctant to fund the national park idea, regardless of the consequences of such fiscal neglect; western railroads, of course, had sound business reasons for picking up some of the slack.

In spite of its somewhat costly fares, the Yosemite Valley Railroad thrived almost from the beginning of operations. Its only major competitor at the time, the stageline from Merced, fell into disfavor as trains cut the ride to El Portal from a two-day ordeal to a four-hour delight. Staging into Yosemite Valley proper, which added another three or four hours to the journey, likewise was reduced dramatically in 1913 with the introduction of the first motorcoach service. Thereafter only one hour and thirty-five minutes was required to reach the gorge from trackside at El Portal. For travelers arriving on the evening train, in 1907 the Yosemite Valley Railroad constructed a luxurious four-story hotel, the Del Portal, only a short distance from the station. Unfortunately, the Del Portal, truly a rustic

masterpiece, was destroyed by fire after only one decade of service. Today it would have been an attractive alternative to similar but more conspicuous lodges on the valley floor.

Additional benefits for the pleasure and convenience of passengers were introduced in rapid succession. In April 1909 arrangements were completed with the Southern Pacific Railroad for direct sleeping car service to El Portal from Los Angeles, followed the next year by equivalent Pullman accommodations from San Francisco. These contracts enabled a first-class patron in either city to board a train in the evening, retire to the comfort of his berth, and wake up early the next morning at the gateway to Yosemite National Park, all without breaking his slumber to change trains at Merced. For daytime travel the Yosemite Valley Railroad added a parlor-observation car, and, during the summer months, a full-sized diner. Featured dishes on the menu included sirloin steak for those who could afford to pay \$1.25!

This luxurious equipment, coupled with colorful advertising campaigns, steadily contributed to the popularity of the Yosemite Valley Railroad. An important milestone was achieved in 1916, when the line carried 14,251 passengers to waiting motorcoaches at El Portal. Yet the picture for the Yosemite Valley Railroad was not totally bright. Of great significance, 1916 also marked



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The Yosemite Valley Railroad's "Flyer" (far left) travels upgrade along the Merced River approaching the El Portal terminal (left), west of Yosemite National Park. How marvelous it was, reported a noted globe-trotter in 1912, that "one may take a Pullman car at San Francisco or Los Angeles at midnight and at daybreak find himself gliding along the banks of the river in the mountain pass that leads to the valley." Rebuilding the railroad not only would help eliminate the environmental pressures of cars and parking lots in the national park, but would provide the modern-day traveler with the pleasures and conveniences of scenic and leisurely rail transportation.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Before the advent of the car, passengers on the Yosemite Valley Railroad were transported from El Portal to Yosemite by stagecoach (left). In 1916, the motorcoach (below) replaced the stagecoach on the twelve-mile journey to the park. Today, double-decker buses (right) could transport visitors from the railroad to the park as well as provide transportation within the park.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

the first time in the history of Yosemite National Park that more people entered the reserve by automobile than by train. Almost immediately highway travel boomed at the expense of the Yosemite Valley Railroad. During 1917 its ridership to the park plummeted by almost 40 percent to only 8,612 fares. The next year was even worse. Throughout the whole of 1918, fewer than 4,000 people rode up the Merced River Canyon by train, despite a reduction in the round-trip coach fare from \$18.50 to \$15.50 per passenger.

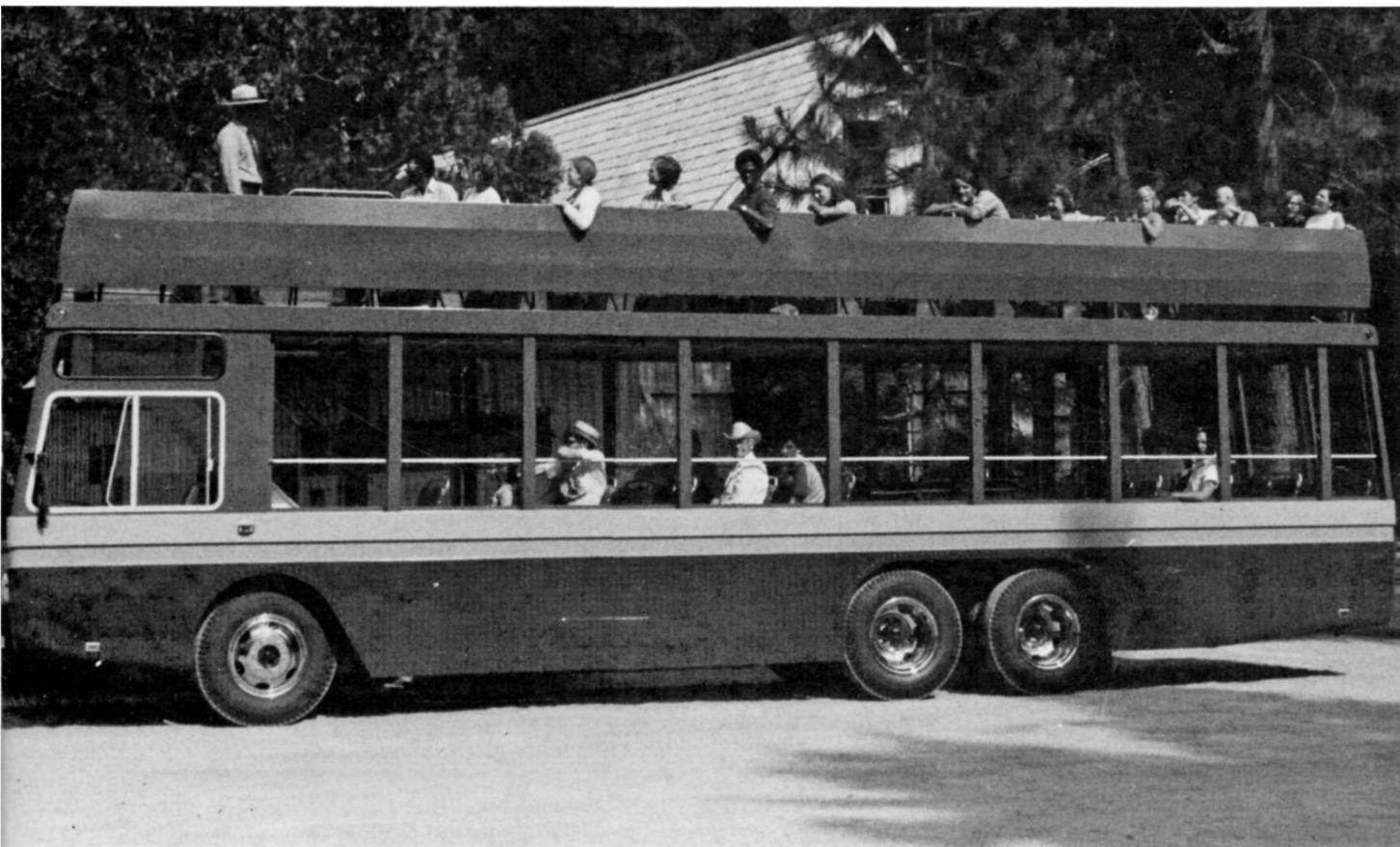
In contrast, that same year 26,669 people entered Yosemite Valley in automobiles, up from 14,527 and 22,456 in 1916 and 1917 respectively. Clearly, the American love affair with the horseless carriage was well under way. Nor did the National Park Service, anxious to encourage greater public use of the reserves, have any intention of cooling the romance—especially in Yosemite Valley, where auto-touring already had become the most popular method of seeing the reserve. “The

fact that the majority of the total number of people entering the park came in private automobiles,” reported the superintendent in 1917, “is evidence that it is this class of travel that must be given the bulk of consideration in future park development work.” This assessment, so obviously incompatible with preservation efforts today, was concluded by an equally revealing statement. To be sure, the superintendent maintained, “roads and public parking places must be given special consideration by the Service, and garage facilities and hotel and camp accommodations which appeal to this class of travel must be maintained by the concessioners.”

Reluctantly, most preservationists were forced to agree. Just before World War I, when cars were first admitted to the national parks, all the reserves suffered from too little tourism instead of too much. In 1902, for example, only 5,000 people made their way to Yosemite Valley during the entire season, a figure that little more than doubled even

with the coming of the railroad. Statistics from other national parks were much the same. It was with justification, therefore, that preservationists feared for the integrity of the entire national park system. They realized that Congress was not about to support an idea of direct benefit to only a small minority of the American people, those wealthy enough to afford expensive railroad tickets and lodging in luxury hotels. To compound the problem, every reserve was in the West, far removed from major population centers in the eastern half of the country. Only the railroads covered the distance swiftly and comfortably, but not at a price within the budget of the average American family.

The horseless carriage promised to democratize long-distance travel, to bring an even larger class of travelers—and hopefully supporters—within range of the national parks. That this process had to be hastened was made evident by the very real presence of powerful commercial attacks on the scenic preserves, led



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

by proponents of irrigation and water-storage projects.

Still, dramatic increases in travel to the national parks during the early 1920s provided the railroads with several more good seasons. In fact, between 1921 and 1925 the Yosemite Valley Railroad averaged well over 20,000 park tickets annually, the greatest in its history. In 1926, however, the completion of a modern paved highway between Merced and El Portal spelled the beginning of the end for rail passenger service. Railway officials countered by reducing fares to the lowest amount yet—only \$10.50 per round-trip ticket—but to no avail. By 1928 ridership on the Yosemite Valley Railroad was down by almost 80 percent. Before the company could attempt a serious comeback, the Great Depression was at hand.

Having lost the bulk of its passenger business, the Yosemite Valley Railroad was forced to rely almost solely on freight operations, which unfortunately were also in decline. The unavoidable outcome was

bankruptcy, for which the line filed in 1935. Soon afterward its attempted recovery was overshadowed by World War II, when brighter days for any truly profitable passenger and freight traffic seemed very far distant indeed.

As a result, in 1944 the owners of the Yosemite Valley Railroad petitioned the Interstate Commerce Commission for permission to abandon the line. Significantly, officials of the National Park Service protested the request, most notably Regional Director O. A. Tomlinson, who termed its rumored approval "a step backward." His viewpoint was strongly shared by Acting Secretary of the Interior Michael W. Straus, who argued to the chairman of the ICC that, "in my opinion, it is doubtful that the present or future public convenience and necessity would be served by the abandonment of the Yosemite Valley Railroad." To the contrary, he concluded, "when the war is over and tourist business is again a principal factor in the economics of the State

of California, the Yosemite Valley Railroad can perform a needed and valuable service in taking care of visitors to Yosemite National Park."

Such arguments were not convincing, however, especially in light of passenger desertions from the Yosemite Valley Railroad during even the best of times in the country. Added protests from the Merced Chamber of Commerce, Yosemite Superintendent Frank A. Kittredge, and the Pacific Coast Railroading Association also were to no avail. In June 1945 the ICC granted the Yosemite Valley Railroad permission to shut down all operations. Its last scheduled run came in late August, after which the line was put up for auction, sold, and immediately torn up for scrap. By the close of 1946 the Yosemite Valley Railroad, once referred to as the "Grand Central of the West," was no more.

CONSIDERING the unprecedented overcrowding of Yosemite National Park during the past three decades, the serious mis-

givings of those opposed to abandoning the Yosemite Valley Railroad have obviously been sustained. In the wake of its destruction, the National Park Service was left with few options but to provide for the increasing demands of more and more motorists—with the result of traffic congestion, proliferation of parking lots and concessioner facilities, pollution, and a decrease in the quality of the national park experience. Indeed, if cars are to remain the primary method of entering Yosemite National Park, only a quota system will guarantee adequate protection of the valley. Yet this in turn might well jeopardize both public and government support of the national park idea. The United States still weighs the success of its institutions by the numbers of people they serve. Even more apparent is widespread

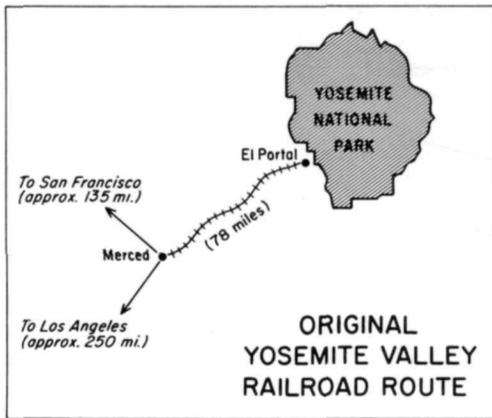
indifference to institutions not readily available for general use.

Given the permanence of such perspectives, mass transit is the obvious answer to keeping Yosemite Valley open to large numbers of visitors without continuing to compromise its fragile beauty. A single railroad track can accommodate as many people over a given period of time as a sixteen-lane expressway, and with only one-sixteenth of the space. When linked to short-haul bus networks, especially of the double-deck variety, no system of transportation yet devised can handle more passengers with greater efficiency and minimum environmental impact.

In a few of the more popular national parks, including Yosemite, the rudiments of such a system already exist. Free double-deck buses

and shuttles are available every few minutes between the more popular gathering points on the valley floor. To hasten public acceptance of the service, roads in the eastern third of the gorge have been closed to regular highway traffic since 1970. Thus restricted to either walking or riding mass transit, most people have gladly chosen the latter alternative.

This subtle but unmistakable coercion already has brought about heartening improvements in the Yosemite Valley experience. For the first time in years visitors may walk along roadways or ride bicycles without being intimidated by long strings of oncoming cars. Equally significant, the shuttles and buses themselves have become very popular now that the public understands the necessity and convenience of their use over the automobile. In



FEDERAL GRAPHICS

The trip through the Merced River Canyon on the way to Yosemite National Park was described by one traveler as "one of the most picturesque series of mountain pictures that nature has fashioned in her whole wide world." As proof that just such scenic rail transportation would appeal to great numbers of people as well as provide an enjoyable and viable alternative to car travel, the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad (below), jointly supported by the states of Colorado and New Mexico, attracts many travelers each year. These travelers have discovered that the rail trip through beautiful countryside saves them the annoyances of car travel and is as much an enjoyable part of their vacation as the destination itself. A new Yosemite Valley Railroad would be a direct link between major metropolitan areas and the park, thus allowing car-weary urbanites easy access to the park without having to drive there. The railroad would also allow travelers from distant places to visit the park without having to rely on the automobile. Energy shortages have made such proposals economically feasible and environmentally desirable.

COURTESY OF CUMBRES AND TOLTEC SCENIC RAILROAD



fact, many visitors state with pride that their car remains idle throughout their entire stay in the valley.

Yet storage space for thousands of cars and recreational vehicles is itself an unacceptable intrusion in any national park. Pavement in Yosemite Valley is especially damaging, because it is little more than ten square miles in area. Few can deny that it would be far more acceptable if all cars and campers could be left outside the reserve in the first place, especially those of day-use visitors. Thus freed of the necessity of even existing parking lots, many portions of the valley could be restored to wildflower meadows and stately woodlands.

Nothing could lead to this objective more effectively than rebuilding the Yosemite Valley Railroad. Nor would its cost to the government be more expensive than constructing and maintaining a short segment of federal highway. According to officials of the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad in New Mexico and Colorado, building mainline track from scratch in mountainous terrain requires between \$80,000 and \$200,000 per mile, depending on right-of-way expenses, number of bridges and culverts, grade, and so forth. Using the higher figure merely for the sake of argument, replacing the tracks of the Yosemite Valley Railroad would require approximately \$16 million. Tripling this amount would cover the purchase of six complete train sets of at least ten cars and two diesels each, more than enough equipment to maintain hourly service in each direction between Merced and El Portal. Another \$10 million would comfortably add trainsheds, stations, sidings, and other necessary facilities. These additions bring a reasonably high estimate for restoring the Yosemite Valley Railroad to roughly \$58 million. By way of comparison, expressways in rural areas cost better than \$1 million per mile, and only two miles through Washington, D.C., recently required almost \$200 million. Indeed, the expense of upgrading all of our nation's major railroads—estimated at \$5 billion—pales into insignificance against the more than \$6 billion spent every year for highway construction by the federal government alone.

Upon completion, the Yosemite Valley Railroad would provide an attractive alternative to private motor vehicles. If owned by the National Park Service, use of the railway might even be required of most visitors, perhaps at a fare comparable to traveling by car an equivalent distance. Granted, express buses are more efficient than automobiles and could be operated over existing highways. Still, over longer distances buses restrict individual mobility during the trip and, more important, lack the carrying capacities and safety records of modern trains. It is therefore highly unlikely that many people would accept mandatory long-distance busing, especially families with children. In contrast, trains make getting there half the fun. Their attractiveness could be heightened by the use of roomy vista-dome coaches and open-air observation cars, all staffed by ranger-historians and naturalists of the National Park Service. In this way visitors could be educated to the natural and human history of the entire Yosemite region—while the beautiful Merced River Canyon opens before their eyes.

Of equal significance, many facilities now so threatening to park features could be moved entirely outside of the valley, perhaps to staging areas as far away as Merced itself. However, without the necessity of thousands of existing parking spaces, it is conceivable that present lodges, cabins, and campgrounds no longer would seem so intrusive after all. Although any new developments should be placed well outside of the park, standing ones might be retained, provided overnight patrons give up their cars for the privilege of staying on the valley floor proper. The feasibility of such trade-offs, of course, would depend on the extension of shuttle service throughout the valley and the provision of connecting motorcoach service to trains at El Portal. It is here that bus transportation would play its most useful and efficient role.

Once in the park, visitors would be encouraged to rent bicycles, camping equipment, and other necessary supplies from concessioners, who in turn might be subsidized to provide these items at low cost. Special bike racks on trains and mo-

torcoaches, in addition to storage compartments, would allow travelers to bring along their own gear for a reasonable charge. The ultimate goal must be an integrated transportation network, one interlocking with all points of interest and all modes. Nor should profit be of overriding concern. Any losses to the federal government would be more than offset by the inestimable savings of protecting Yosemite National Park both now and for the future. A nation that can afford billion-dollar "freeways" certainly can meet the preservation needs of its natural environments.

SINCE THAT TIME more than sixty years ago when opening the national parks to motorists was a necessary and pragmatic decision, population pressures on the scenic reserves have necessitated a reversal of transportation policies. Today we must go back to trains and buses, for longer and shorter distances respectively. Indeed, protracted energy shortages eventually may restrict the cross-country driving of all Americans, making mass transit even more vital if people are to see the national parks at all. One thing is clear: It is pointless to ask Americans to give up their cars until viable alternatives are in place. The popularity of shuttle service in Yosemite Valley is proof that many people are now prepared to make the switch. Rebuilding the Yosemite Valley Railroad would further guarantee the national park maximum protection with maximum visitation, regardless of what the future holds. ■

Alfred Runte, a Ph.D. candidate in American Environmental History at the University of California, Santa Barbara, has written and lectured extensively on the social and cultural significance of the national park idea. His first book on the subject, *National Parks: The American Experience*, will initially appear this winter as his doctoral dissertation. Mr. Runte's other training includes Environmental Studies, in which field he is co-author of a forthcoming textbook, *Man and Land*, to be printed by Hamilton Publishing Company, Santa Barbara. In the wake of the energy crisis, he has been particularly concerned about the history and necessity of restoring rail passenger service to the national parks.

CATALOOCHEE—A SENSE OF PLACE

A pristine valley in Great Smoky Mountains National Park that epitomizes a vanished way of life is threatened by roadbuilding

IN MAGGIE VALLEY, North Carolina, atop Buck Mountain, sprawls a Disneyesque amusement park called Ghost Town, patterned after a Wild West mining town. In season the honky-tonk, tourist-infested valley reverberates day and night with the sound of mock gun battles in front of the Red Dog Saloon. Not many miles farther, just over the Cataloochee Divide in the heart of Great Smoky Mountains National Park is a true ghost town, Cataloochee, reluctantly abandoned when the National Park Service in the early thirties pressured more than ninety-five families to sell out and move from their wild retreat. In order to return the valley to a wilderness state, the Park Service inadvisedly burned most of the fine old log mills, barns, houses, and stores, thus destroying much of the hundred-year civilization of one of the two pioneer settlements within the national park.

But the descendants of the Cataloochee pioneers have never abandoned their sense of place; they return year after year on the second

Sunday of every August to an annual reunion held at Palmer Chapel, the little Methodist church within the valley. The numbers may vary from three hundred to nearly a thousand, with original inhabitants coming from as far away as California and Texas.

The old families mark the occasion with a church service there, lustily singing old hymns, as the joyful sound of the nearby creek nearly drowns out the quieter prayers and the recounting of the recent deaths of original inhabitants. During the service money is collected, for it is the descendants who still maintain the 75-year-old white clapboard church for its once-a-year visitation, despite the fact that it is a building within a national park. They tune the piano, replace broken glass, and paint the exterior—a constant battle in the damp climate of the Smokies.

Those who are unable to crowd into the tiny chapel for the service stand by the creek, skipping stones, exchanging news, and enjoying the glint of sun on the shiny rhododen-

dron leaves. The long permanent picnic tables seem to extend forever along the creek, sagging from the weight of fried chicken, ham, stuffed eggs, potato salad, iced tea, and pies and cakes of every description. The congregation makes a quick exodus after the service in order to demolish this feast. Soon only a few chicken bones and empty jugs remain.

Usually several photographers are about. Some are outsiders who have heard about the famous reunion of pioneer descendants and have come to record the gathering of the clans. Others have come to record their own families, now together for just one day. The toothless oldest sits in a chair, smiling for the camera, with the toothless youngest in his lap.

Soon a knot of young men with guitars and banjos and plaintive mountain voices with that slight nasal twang starts singing "Goin' Down the Road Feelin' Bad, Bad, Bad." One of them is a descendant of Cherokee Indians, the earliest human visitors to Cataloochee Valley. An old man sitting on a cleared picnic table looks up at the sky with

article and photographs by
ELIZABETH POWERS

a beatific expression in his rheumy, blue Anglo-Saxon eyes and begins to pat in time to the music. Under a shade tree a circle of admiring relatives pat for a year-old child to dance, barefoot and ecstatic, in the grass.

On this particular day of the year, the park ranger opens the service gates so that the former inhabitants can make the sentimental journey in jeeps and pickup trucks to the sites of their old homesteads in Big and Little Cataloochee. These areas are almost two distinct settlements within the valley, as they are widely separated by the massif of Noland Mountain, passable only through Davidson's Gap. One rarely sees the remains of this old community without backpacking or going by horseback. Here is a lost civilization of rotting log buildings, which include two churches, a schoolhouse, a mill pond dam, three intact homesteads, and two intact barns—merely the shards of a once-active settlement of several hundred souls. Almost wholly overtaken by the forest, it is interspersed with ram-

bling roses, Spanish bayonets, lilies, and the ornamental, conical evergreens planted by the early settlers. Now only the rattlesnakes and copperheads remain in true dominion, lurking under the puncheon floors of old ruins.

As I walk down the beautiful mile of road that leads to the old Steve Woody place, I reflect that even an outsider can vicariously acquire a sense of place through the intimacy of such a road leading to such a farmhouse. Like Plymouth Rock, this place does not belong to merely a handful of pioneer descendants who still bear the names of early settlers. This area is the far traveler's own homing place, part of his American heritage. He knows of and identifies with Daniel Boone. And so it is with Cataloochee.

Imagine a mile of road, following Rough Fork, crossing many fords and many moss-covered foot logs, winding through an eloquent hemlock forest carpeted in moss, wood sorrel, and partridgeberry in the shade, and with orange-fringed orchids in the sunny places. All the Woody children used to walk two miles down this road past Hiram Caldwell's barn to school every day, and to church every Sunday. Here Steve Woody rode the great black horse that nobody else could tame. But the life of the family centered around the little mountain farm and the log house in the clearing that extended all the way back to the

steep mountainsides. Apple orchards and cultivated fields are now grown over with pine and sumac and sourwood—all those swift trees that raid old fields. The bones of the old crooked rail fence lie rotting beside the present hikers' trail above the house. Farther up the trail are the Big Hemlocks, an area of virgin forest that was known to my great-great-great grandfather. A sign identifies this spot as a primitive campground. The trail leads on for miles, clinging along a steep gorge of Rough Fork to Poll's Gap where Aunt Polly Moody lost her milch cow when the men were driving the cattle to summer pastures on Ledge Bald.

TO THE EARLY SETTLERS, the singular appeal of Cataloochee lay in its magnificent isolation. The valley was first traversed by buffalo searching out low gaps in the mountains in order to reach good grazing lands. The Cherokees used the buffalo gaps as trails and trading routes, followed closely by long hunter parties of white men who were eager for the prolific game. At the end of the eighteenth century came land speculators who bought up enormous tracts of land at a few cents an acre. Then came herders over the old Indian trails to enjoy the free-ranging privileges for their stock in this paradise of high mountain meadows. The true settlers came late, not until the 1830s and '40s, the valley still being fairly in-



accessible because of the steep mountain walls that surrounded it. So it remained relatively untrammelled until the bitter end of the Civil War when six hundred of Colonel George Kirk's Union Marauders from Tennessee crept through the Mount Sterling Pass to the eastern Smokies, to be met in skirmish by a pitiful remnant of the Cataloochee Home Guard, composed of old men and boys. Shortly afterward, Kirk was swept out of the region by Colonel Will Thomas' famous Cherokee Legion, days before Lee surrendered at Appomattox.

Because they were virtually cut off from civilization for so long, the pioneers established a unique culture. Even today the park ranger has only radio contact with the outside world. Selling out to the Park Service in the early 1930s, the inhabitants of Cataloochee were allowed life-time tenure, but, as they were not allowed to farm or keep cattle, one by one they slowly moved out for lack of livelihood. The last inhabitants became too lonely to stay behind.

The present old road into Cataloochee has undergone as many changes and has taken as many forms as a creekbed that leaps its course at floodtime. First it was an aboriginal Indian trail, then a track blasted and blazed out for early cattleherders who used the high balds in the summertime. After settlement began in earnest, it was a chartered turnpike with a toll gate, which had the ill fortune to be finished just in time for the influx of Union troops during the Civil War.

Nowadays the ascent into the park is a leisurely, sensuous experience. The road begins outside the park at the junction of Jonathan and Cove creeks, where a state historical sign marks the old Cataloochee Indian Trail. It begins in a simple fashion, rather gravelly, always dusty, passing Turkey George's house, which was bought and bodily lifted out of the park by an admirer, but now has been left to crumble again. The road passes the old Howell graveyard and the Suttontown road up to even steeper grades—twisting, turning, everlastingly snaking past plain mountain shacks and more prosperous brick homes, past the ubiquitous

trailers, old log barns, raddled apple houses or root cellars, and wrecks of abandoned cars riddled with gun shot; up to the overgrazed high meadows where cowpaths ream the earth like green-ribbed ottoman and conical cornshucks hang onto the terraces, shadowing as long as tepees in the early light. A gaunt mule forages here and there. Around interminable curves, the road finally reaches the blue and morning sky at Cove Creek Gap where the Bishop Asbury trail of 1810 follows the Cataloochee Divide. (Once I paused there and found a blue gentian hiding in the shade of the evergreens. And here Jody killed a rattler, too.)

Once past the Divide, the road begins its sinuous descent into Cataloochee Valley. Both the road and the flora change radically once inside the park—no longer dusty, but green and shaded, pine needles carpeting much of the way, and trailing arbutus garlanding the ferny banks. Past Sal Patch Gap, named after Sally Hannah, one of the earliest pioneers, one begins to catch glimpses of the majestic ridges that make up the rim of the valley. The forest becomes thicker, taller. Finally, when a section of paved road hurtles through Hell's Half Acre, one is in virgin timber that was once a moonshiner's haven of hemlock statesmen and rhododendrons as tall as trees. The immense hardwoods are fierce with color in the autumn.

Then the north and west walls of this fine fortress of a valley are revealed: Mount Sterling Ridge, a long, solid barrier with natural balds and a prickly ridge silhouette of Canadian-type firs and spruces. The Balsam Mountains rise in the west. Now one plainly sees the spread of the valley below, evoking again the pleasure of the slow, leisurely ascent and descent into the valley where the road now crosses broad Cataloochee Creek for the first time. I always have to stop and lean over the bridge to look at the stream, clear and swift over the slippery, moss-green rocks, with hardwoods and evergreens hanging over it, touching overhead like a proscenium arch out of Orpheus. Here an old gravel road turns off the paved road to recross the creek on its way past Little Cataloochee to Mount Sterling Gap and Tennessee.



Palmer Chapel (above), founded about 1899, is a stark white clapboard church with a traditional steeple and bell. It stands alongside Palmer Creek, a tributary of Cataloochee Creek, a swift-flowing mountain trout stream lined with rhododendrons and hemlocks. It stands rather diffidently with its back to the national park's paved road, for the simple reason that the old settlement road used to go in front of the church. The old settlers' fields of the bottoms (left), contained by split rail fences, surround the chapel, providing an aura of space and light, but the mountains rise steeply on the other side of the stream. The road that leads to "Uncle" Steve Woody's place (below) follows Rough Fork, crossing many moss-covered log bridges and winding through a dark, lush hemlock forest.



As one traverses the intricate road, around the Candy Turn, the Bennett Turn, and other curves, curiosity grows about the early road-builders who forged out this track by hand and pickax. Here pioneer Jonathan Woody died of a heart attack as he labored to build the early turnpike on a cold January day in the 1850s, and another roadbuilder was killed by a mattock wielded by a fellow worker. Here Creighton Bennett cut out ice steps in the road for his horses. There is blood and sweat on these old stones, and tales to freeze the marrow in one's bones. Here the rocks were heated to explode them; here the trees were girdled and grubbed out—a deadening of trees as well as a deadening of workers.

AND NOW there is to be a deadening of the sense of place as the National Park Service proposes to build a wide access road that would mean swift entry into Cataloochee from Interstate 40, a major highway between North Carolina and Tennessee. The old, hidden, winding road that now services about 250 people a day at the height of the season would become obsolete. The new road would bring in as many as 8,000 people a day, the Park Service comments. The number of people visiting the Great Smoky Mountains National Park each year now surpasses the 9 million mark. Even if this new easy-access road brought in only a fraction of this mind-boggling figure for a dehydrated experience—easy-in, easy-out—the intimacy of quiet Cataloochee would be destroyed within a year. The public already has access to a fine example of a restored pioneer community in the broad open expanses of Cades Cove, which lends itself more easily to a large traffic pattern. There is also an excellent restored pioneer homestead with outbuildings at Oconaluftee where some structures were actually taken out of Cataloochee to be installed!

Aside from the controversial access road, the Park Service also proposes to open Cataloochee to even further outrage by putting a loop road through Davidson's Gap to the old pioneer homesteads on Little Cataloochee Creek. The inevitable

will occur. This, too, will become bottlenecked, resulting in further roads being built to propel the masses out of the valley, with never an end to the amoebalike expansion of roads, breaking off only to form another. Small wonder that national conservationists, hikers, and trailriders have become alarmed, preferring the Cataloochee Basin as it is now—with one of the best trail systems in the Smokies—to a huge crush of automobiles in the future.

Amazingly, much of Cataloochee is as it was 150 years ago when my great-grandfather rode through its primeval forests on his way to salt the cattle at the licklogs of Long Bunk Mountain under the shadow of Mount Sterling Ridge. The Park Service today describes the area as primitive, and the forest as pristine. Great virgin stands of timber still live on the slopes of the towering mountains, which are drained by uncounted clear trout streams flowing together to form Cataloochee Creek. Although the buffalo, wolf, elk, otter, and panther no longer roam the once happy hunting grounds of the Cherokee, bears, deer, and other wild game are abundant. Even a golden eagle was sighted in Cataloochee recently. Botanists claim that here, as in much of the Smokies, more species of plant life exist than in any part of Europe.

Even the National Park Service's own environmental review of the proposed new road expressed specific major concerns about air and noise pollution, erosion, sedimentation, destruction of forest, farmland, and wildlife, and acknowledged that the primitive character of Cataloochee would be gone forever. It is difficult to understand why the Park Service proceeded with its plans in view of its own report.

But proceed it did, right up to the point recently when a small band of concerned citizens, naming themselves the Committee to Save Cataloochee, began snowballing—gathering members and contributions for a legal fund to block the road. In a lawsuit to permanently halt the road's construction, the committee has taken the stand that no environmental impact statement has been filed by the National Park Service with the Environmental Protection Agency, as required by law; that no

public hearings on the construction of the road have been held since the early 1960s; and that the road plan is premature inasmuch as no master plan for Great Smoky Mountains National Park has yet been released.

Although the courts have not issued a temporary injunction to halt road construction, the Park Service has agreed not to begin construction until the matter is settled legally. Therefore, in August 1974 when the deadline ran out for awarding a \$1.4 million construction contract for part of the planned access road, the committee scored a partial victory. If the matter is not settled before the end of Fiscal Year 1974-75 (July 1975), the Park Service would lose the funds to pay for a contract.

Far up the steep slopes of Butt Mountain, I imagine I hear the exultant victory cry of Turkey George Palmer which he was wont to give when he overcame one of the 109 bears he felled during his lifetime. The Committee to Save Cataloochee hopes to echo this cry when it has achieved complete victory. ■

Elizabeth Powers is a free-lance writer, photographer, and former art gallery director and conservator of paintings. With Mark Hannah, former Cataloochee native and park ranger, she has written a forthcoming book on Cataloochee. Ms. Powers lives on the Cataloochee Divide most of each year and has backpacked or ridden through most of the area. Her very personal interest in the area stems from her great-great-great grandfathers on two sides having owned land in the Cataloochee Valley even before the actual settlements began.

Help Preserve Cataloochee Valley

Readers can help ensure the primitive beauty of unspoiled Cataloochee Valley by writing the National Park Service to urge strict adherence to public review procedures before proceeding with further road planning, by completing and releasing the park's master plan and wilderness proposal and holding public hearings to give the people a chance to discuss this project and the master plan. Write:

Ronald H. Walker, Director
National Park Service
Washington, D.C. 20240



"Goblin Garden" contains monolithic skulls and other stone "statuary"

Hidden Treasures on *Our* Lands

THE ERA of exploration isn't over yet in the United States. Driving near the Utah-Nevada line not long ago, I noticed in the distance a cluster of odd shapes. Stopping the car, I focused binoculars and was teased into a hot, thirsty hike. The miragelike shapes seemed to recede, but at last, when I felt I could go no farther without water, the desert turned flower-strewn and green, and I drank from a cold spring. Within minutes then, feeling as small as an ant, I was walking among giant monoliths like unfinished statues. One resembled a human skull; another, an elephant; still others, dinosaur-type reptiles. Many were as tall as ten-story buildings. In the nearest town I asked what the amazing rock formations were called. Incredibly, no one knew they existed. No map showed them.

This Goblin Garden is but one among many discoveries made in recent years on our national resource lands, a domain of wide-open spaces far vaster than all our national parks, forests, and wildlife refuges combined. This domain is held in custody for us by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), an Interior Department agency that has

been starved for funds and half-paralyzed by a hodgepodge of outmoded laws and regulations, political tugs of war, and confusing directives. The stepped-up exploration has been but a beginning, a hint that thousands of scenic treasures remain unrecognized, unnamed, and unprotected.

AN ALERT came from sagebrush-root citizens in Nevada, which has the most BLM acreage of any state except Alaska (where the situation is unique, not treated here). Led by Charlie Watson, a young geologist-cartographer, a dozen Nevadans began treasure hunting in 1958. The group soon incorporated as Nevada Outdoor Recreation Association (NORA) and began filling a super sized scrapbook with photographs and factual descriptions of hidden treasures. More people joined to help, and the variety of finds proved almost endless—scenic mountains and waters, mysterious deserts, geologic novelties, startlingly different trees, showy flowers and elusive creatures, earth-messages from the human past, room for us now to relax, to learn, to dream, to play. Within five years the new points of interest discovered in this

YOU can take part in discovering and saving thousands of unprotected scenic treasures on our public lands

by DARWIN LAMBERT

one state totaled 300, and the end wasn't in sight.

Once while studying an aerial photograph of a wild mountain, Watson noted a dark blob. He almost dismissed it as a photo-processing flaw, but at last he dug out the overlapping picture—and found a duplicate blob! Excited, he phoned NORA's spelunker, Alvin McLane, who led the expedition. "It was four-wheel drive, then shank's mare until our shoe leather was almost ground off," Watson remembers. "But our find was sensational—Leviathan Cave!" The picture-window entrance that had caused the blob measured 185 by 100 feet. The front room proved as large as the U.S. Capitol—750 feet long by 200 to 300 feet high. Fantastic formations decorated walls, ceiling, floor. Mysterious passages led deeper into the earth. Moreover, the cave-system's mountain roof supported a forest of bristlecone pine, the species that produces earth's oldest living trees.

In 1965 Watson took the NORA scrapbook, now weighing twenty-five pounds, to Washington. It impressed BLM's small recreational staff and stirred sparks in Congress and elsewhere. *National Parks Mag-*

azine (now *National Parks & Conservation Magazine*) foresaw that "a valuable system of recreational and natural lands" administered by BLM "might well complement the holdings of the national park, forest, and wildlife refuge systems." Thus encouraged, Watson began pulling together a National Public Lands Task Force to extend the treasure hunt beyond Nevada. Others joined the action—Oregon Environmental Council, Colorado-based National Council of Public Land Users, and similar groups and individuals elsewhere.

BLM caught the fever. In 1968 it published an illustrated guide to its lands, describing 121 points of interest in the Southwest, 33 on the Great Plains, 105 in the Great Basin, 106 in the Northwest, 67 in southern and central California (plus 25 in Alaska). The existence of a tremendous, fresh opportunity for now-mostly-urban America could no longer be denied.

WHY WASN'T this opportunity recognized earlier? The answer is entangled in the confusing background of our federal lands. Of a total of nearly two billion acres, more than 300 million have been transferred to states, more than 800 million to private ownership, including 287 million that became homesteads. About 190 million acres have been set aside as national forests, nearly 30 million as wildlife refuges, and almost 30 million as the national park system. The old General Land Office was expected to "work itself out of business," but that goal of total disposition was increasingly questioned. Homesteading and other "give-aways" largely ended in the 1930s when the Grazing Service was created to look after some 200 million acres. Shortly before mid-century the land and grazing offices were consolidated as BLM, the land management concept thus, supposedly, becoming dominant.

Yet the bureau was given little authority. Whereas the U.S. Forest Service was created to conserve the many values of vast forests, the National Park Service to save natural "crown jewels," and the Fish and Wildlife Service to study and save



Red Rock Canyon, Nevada

populations of wild creatures, the BLM was a catch-all agency with no clear mandate. It was handed a grab bag of deserts, mountains, and isolated tracts. The bag was widely believed to contain "wastelands," and the bureau wasn't allowed adequate staff to learn what uses might be served—beyond mineral prospecting and scattered livestock grazing. The managers couldn't guess how long their agency might hold any particular area, and indeed large acreages were often taken away if they began to look valuable. BLM remained weak, disoriented, frequently imposed upon.

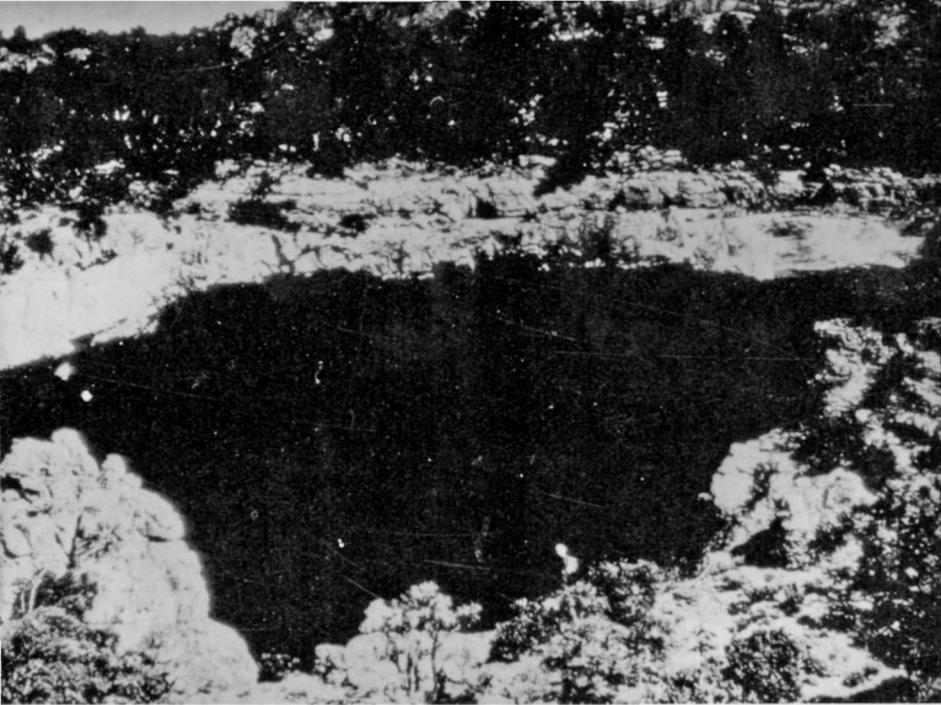
But now, after a decade of reviewing old laws and considering varied facts and opinions, Congress is coming up with ideals that might bring effective management. Concern for ranchers, prospectors, and miners dependent on federal lands, quite rightly, continues. But concern for the greater public values—recreational, inspirational, educational, and ecological—is now growing. The bulk of the national resource domain is to be kept for multiple use in such ways as to protect environmental quality. All citizens, not just the few established users, are invited to participate in decision-making. Suitable areas are to be saved in natural condition, while everywhere a balance consistent with national goals is to be maintained.

Will these ideals save the trea-

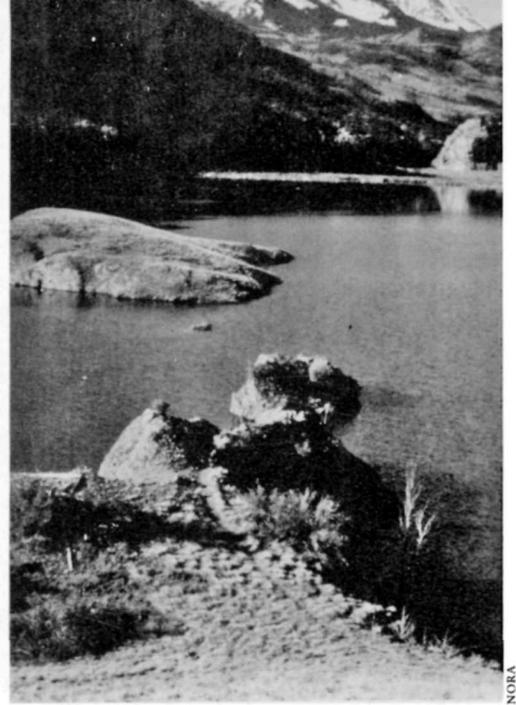
sures, those already known plus those yet to be discovered? We can hope. But the ideals aren't yet worked out in action. Let's examine key situations out on the land.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY. My wife and I have camped in all twelve states with large BLM acreages. In unfrequented parts of the national resource domain we've dispensed with our tent and slept under the bright stars. The yip and howl of coyotes waked us in Oregon, and we lay, surrounded by ghostlike sagebrushes, watching a magic sunrise spread across the sky. A thunderstorm caught us on weird-structured San Rafael Swell in Utah. In Nevada we spread our sleeping bags among pinyons and junipers or among aspens. In Red Rock Canyon not twenty miles from teeming Las Vegas, we slept on a picnic table because snakes were hunting mice on the ground. A bobcat yowled from cliffs.

Red Rock can explain a lot about BLM treasures and troubles. This splendid area was treated by BLM's boss, the Secretary of the Interior, as the cornerstone of a hoped-for recreational system. He called his 1967 designation of 70,000 acres as Red Rock Canyon Recreation Lands "a milestone" in public-land history. His idea was the excellent one underlying our national park system, and indeed Red Rock has the basic



Leviathan Cave, Nevada

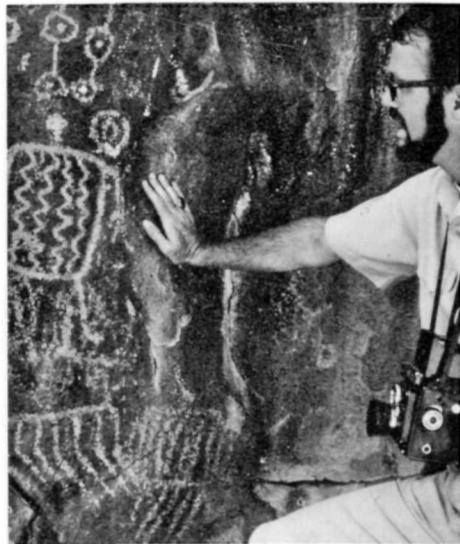


San Cristobal Lake, Colorado

character of a national park. The half-mile-high escarpment of multi-colored stone is scenically superb. Vegetation and wildlife intrigue both scientists and pleasure-seekers. Most striking are cacti, mesquite, yucca, and Joshua tree on the desert floor; cottonwood, willow, ash, and oak in moist draws; juniper, pinyon, and ponderosa pine higher up. Astonishingly, there are elk, desert bighorn, deer, mountain lion, wild burro, grey fox, badger, and other mammals, reptiles, and birds. Evidences of extinct mammoth, bison, and ground sloth relate to finds of human hunting tools dating back 10,000 years.

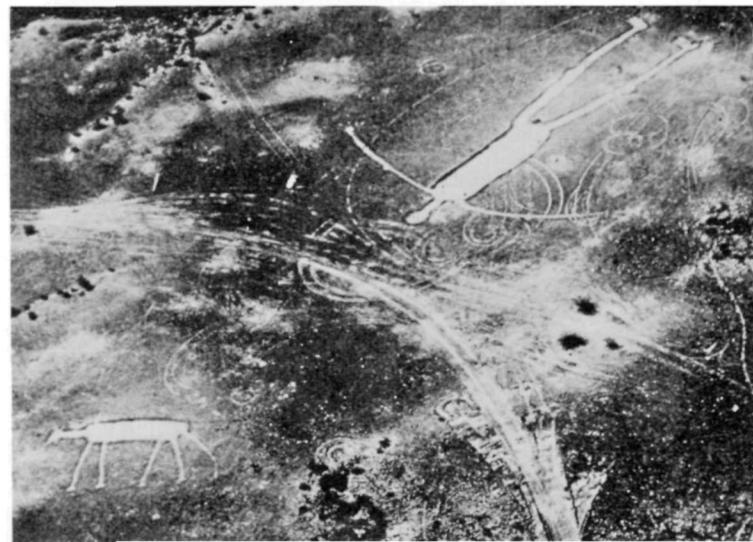
But the fragile desert is being torn by off-road vehicles. Colorful rocks and ancient art have been disfigured by spray paint. Conservationists, both within and outside government, now question whether the attractions (except the high escarpment) can survive large-scale visitation; some believe Red Rock should be protected as wilderness. On the other hand, there is dissatisfaction with the lack of expected development. In 1973 the Nevada legislature "resolved" that BLM would never be able to provide ample recreation facilities. A plan was pushed to transfer Red Rock to the state park system where no part of it could be "locked up" (that is, firmly protected). Such a transfer could doom the area's natural quality and

SCENIC AND RECREATIONAL TREASURES: Red Rock Canyon Recreation Lands was established in 1967 as the splendid cornerstone of a hoped-for BLM recreational system. Leviathan Cave, discovered by the Nevada Outdoor Recreation Association (NORA), has been designated a 3,400-acre natural area; but its location is kept secret for fear of vandalism. Myriad other BLM treasures such as San Cristobal Lake need to be protected.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

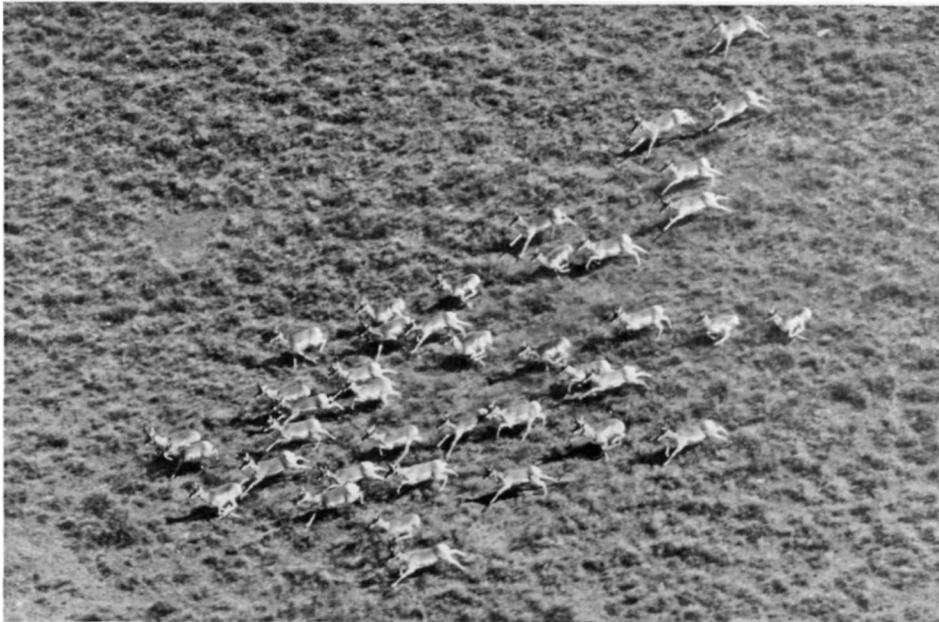
ARCHEOLOGICAL TREASURES: Pictographs and petroglyphs are described by some westerners as "a dime a dozen," but this cultural heritage of prehistoric Indian art—some dating back 5,000 years—is being destroyed on thousands of BLM sites by souvenir hunters and black marketeers with bulldozers and drilling equipment at such a rate as to last perhaps only another fifteen years. At left Ike Eastvold touches an area broken off a petroglyph. Below, unbelievably callous vandals on ORVs have crosscut the rarest type of prehistoric art of the California desert—mysterious giant figures called intaglios, some exceeding 150 feet in length. Such artifacts deserve protection—a tough job for BLM.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

WILDLIFE TREASURES: Golden eagles and prairie falcons nest in the cliffs of BLM's Birds of Prey Natural Area, Idaho (top); and native pronghorn antelope thrive on BLM lands, including San Antonio Mountain, New Mexico, and Sheldon Antelope Range, Nevada. Now BLM is proposing a 32-square-mile preserve in California to protect the desert tortoise, rare in the wild and long persecuted by ORVs. But BLM's allowing the killing of predators such as coyotes and cougars is much criticized. And in spite of the fact that BLM has two preserves for wild horses in Nevada and Montana, the fact that BLM gave permission in January 1973 for a roundup of horses on BLM land that resulted in horrible atrocities to the horses is still in litigation and is widely considered a black mark against the agency.



FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE



MARTIN LITTON

become a precedent emasculating efforts to save BLM treasures for enjoyment by this and future generations.

The bureau, though divided within itself, has refused to abandon its recreational hopes, believing they represent the growing wishes of the American people. Other "Recreation Lands" have been designated—among them 35,000-acre Organ Mountain in southern New Mexico, with impressive rock scenery; 750,000-acre Eastern Mojave in California; and 130,000-acre Deschutes River in eastern Oregon. Yet the BLM "recreational system" remains a fingernail clinger with but spotty support from an inadequately informed public and with repeated sniping from some federal budget-makers and exploitation-oriented members of Congress. It's a brave but puny effort in proportion to the vast opportunity.

EVIDENCES OF MAN'S PAST. More than half the archeological sites on BLM lands may remain unknown, their importance undetermined. Charlie Watson estimates that Utah alone has "more than 2,000 ancient Anasazi and Moki pueblo ruins and cliff dwellings." It's a shame to leave Indian artifacts unprotected, to be defaced or disturbed. The same goes for remnants of the white man's pioneering, such as 1852 inscriptions along old Applegate Trail in remarkable High Rock Canyon, Nevada, or traces of the Oregon Trail thus far well preserved in Owyhee Desert, Idaho.

Vandalism in Red Rock shows that BLM, despite good intentions, can't yet give dependable protection. And here's a disturbing example from California: Ancient intaglios of men and animals, representative of those pictured in the popular movie, "Chariots of the Gods," were fenced by BLM's Riverside District. Off-road vehicle enthusiasts—reported the BLM director for California in April 1974—crashed the fence and deliberately gouged circles around and across the site. Adding insult to damage, an off-road coalition—not, we may hope, representing a majority of the vehicle owners and users—filed suit against BLM's plan to protect such irreplaceable treasures. Clearly, the evidences of

man's past dotting our lands remain endangered.

WILDLIFE. Conservation of wildlife is a long-recognized function of BLM. It may work in cooperation with state governments as at Hatchet Mountain in southern New Mexico, where a remnant herd of desert bighorn is being helped to survive, and at San Antonio Mountain in northern New Mexico, where elk feed in winter and 700 pronghorn antelope now live, having multiplied from 130 released in this former range of the species. Or BLM may work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as in the half-million-acre Sheldon Antelope Refuge and Range of northern Nevada bordering Oregon—where the two Interior bureaus together have suggested adding 277,200 acres to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Along thirty scenic miles of Snake River in Idaho south of Boise, BLM has established the 26,255-acre Birds of Prey Natural Area to protect golden eagles and prairie falcons.

BLM certainly helps wildlife in some situations. Yet the favorable effect hasn't everywhere equaled the adverse effect of other BLM action or lack of action. Many citizens nowadays blame the bureau for going along with near-annihilation of coyote, mountain lion, and other predators. Biologist-conservationist Jim Morgan blames the sad plight of Rocky Mountain bighorn on failure to protect winter range essential to the herds' survival. At least 15 percent of national resource rangeland, he estimates, has been getting worse from year to year, mostly because of overgrazing by domestic stock but in some places because of short-sighted "range improvement" or "range conversion" projects. He and NORA have joined with the Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc., in filing suit to have environmental impact statements accompany all plans that would affect the range. In short, the bureau's wildlife management program, though valuable, could be better.

WILDERNESS. The public's wish to save full-fledged wilderness on BLM lands has gathered nationwide momentum only within the past few years. The Inte-



NORA



NORA

WILDERNESS TREASURES: BLM land contains many unprotected wild places that could qualify for the National Wilderness Preservation System. Some of these candidates are in the Owyhee Desert, Idaho (above), which contains deep canyons, balanced rocks, and sand dunes, and Steens Range, Oregon (right), with its glacial gorges, hanging valleys, and desert panoramas. Establishment of the 50,000 acre King Range Conservation Area (below) authorizes BLM to buy with \$1.5 million of federal funds tracts within the boundary that had been acquired by developers, but the management plan in its present form opens up to clearcutting, road-building, mining, and ORVs areas of superlative natural beauty. Most of BLM's thousands of scenic, recreational, archeological, wildlife, and wilderness treasures remain unprotected—vulnerable to irreparable damage or total loss.



NORA



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

rior Secretary has thus far designated seven primitive areas, all but two quite small; such areas represent the nearest approach to wilderness status that is administratively possible (but subject, like all BLM special areas, to administrative designation).

NORA and other BLM-watchers and treasure hunters are finding sizeable areas, not now protected, in nearly all our western states that could qualify for the National Wilderness Preservation System. Arizona has twenty-one tracts deserving consideration. Nevada and Utah have at least forty each. In northern Washington near Oroville a remarkably wild, 5,000-acre tract survives on national resource lands despite near-liquidation of BLM in that state. This Chopaka Mountain has virgin forests, cliffs almost a mile high, and a lake resembling a fiord. In northern California a primitive, nine-mile stretch of Pacific Coast just could be saved—because Congress has instructed BLM to establish a 50,000-acre King Range Conservation Area. In Idaho, much of the six-million-acre Owyhee Desert remains wild with unbelievably balanced rocks, sand dunes, and brush flats cut by surprisingly deep canyons.

Advances have been made, through the volunteer leadership of Russell Pengelly, in establishing a Desert Trail with BLM wild places strung along it like giant gems. The hiking route traverses, in southeastern Oregon, the Malheur refuge where snow geese and other waterfowl swarm, the weird Diamond Craters lava field, and Steens Mountain, rich in glacier-carved gorges, hanging valleys with tiny lakes, and viewpoints with panoramic desert thousands of feet below. It would continue southward at least as far as the NORA-proposed Blue Lake primitive areas in Nevada. Watson calls Blue Lake "a Shangri-La, a mirage that proved real." Having picked up a vague clue from a Basque sheepman, he persisted until he found the sky-and-cliff-reflecting lake occupying a glacial cirque high in a chaos of heights rising from Black Rock Desert. The two primitive tracts, totaling 27,000 acres, would continue as home for mountain lion, deer, antelope, and prairie

falcon. One would save a virgin forest of whitebark pine, unknown elsewhere this far south.

BLM land men see many wilderness possibilities. But the bureau, vulnerable to antiwilderness pressures—such as from some state governments (most notably now Nevada and Wyoming) or from certain members of Congress—handles primitive-area proposals like hot potatoes. It discourages extension of the Wilderness Act of 1964 to include its roadless lands for study and tract-recommendations to be acted on by Congress. BLM seems unlikely to earn, on its own steam, a passing grade in wilderness preservation.

WHAT TO DO. Hard-pressed in many ways on many fronts, the bureau has been forming the needed plans, and programs, while hastily using parts of them in the struggle to cope. On the most massively threatened front of all, the 16-million-acre desert of southeastern California, nearly three million acres have been designated as special areas. For the first time anywhere BLM has hired rangers (though with too-limited authority) to guard both natural and archeological treasures—and thus maintain the land's "greatest resource—its social value as a resting place from the pace of urban life."

So—what do all these complications mean? That thousands of treasures valuable to the people of the United States for recreation-related purposes really do exist on lands held for us by BLM. And that many of these treasures are in danger of irreparable damage or total loss. What must be done to save them?

I think we must recognize that action by both citizens and government is urgent and that a simple hands-off type of conservation won't work. We want beef, minerals, and energy that the lands can help produce. Fine. But we also want—and must insist on saving—the great too long neglected public and social values that these lands hold. The commodity interests, oldtimers with BLM, can be depended on to emphasize the material values. If balance is to prevail, the general citizenry must show real concern for the

scenic, natural, and historic values. We can discourage vandalism and destructive exploitation. We might devote vacations to treasure hunting and report findings, with photographs, to newspapers and broadcasters, to BLM officials, and to others in positions of influence and authority. We might combine social persuasion and land exploration with active support of appropriate environmental organizations.

Specifically, we must aim our efforts toward the absolutely crucial goal of policy confirmations or changes, with realistic estimates for funding, that will enable BLM (1) to complete promptly a thorough inventory of the resources and treasures, including wilderness, with detailed studies where relative values can't quickly be judged; (2) to set up and maintain a ranger force capable of protecting those treasures; (3) to manage potentially destructive uses, including active recreation, grazing, prospecting, claim-staking, and mining, in such ways as to allow maximum feasible freedom while also securing the long-term advantage of the American people; (4) to avoid being "robbed" of lands not better suited, beyond reasonable doubt, for administration by other federal agencies or for other ownership—state, municipal, corporate, or individual; and (5) to create and maintain modest camp and picnic facilities at appropriate places. Such are the basics for a BLM functioning effectively in the public interest.

These lands are *our* lands; they're vast; many uses are possible—with exercise of considerable freedom by responsible people. We can all benefit. The treasures that have for so long stayed hidden in the "waste-lands" are points of contact with our heritage. Through finding and saving them, we of today and our children of coming tomorrows may connect with the life-giving current of the American earth and feel it pulsing strongly, joyfully, in our blood. ■

Darwin Lambert grew up surrounded by BLM lands and has explored them widely. On those vast "open spaces" he has herded livestock, prospected and mined, jeeped, hiked, and tented. He studies man-nature relationships and has authored many articles and six books, including *The Earth-Man Story*.

BROWN PELICAN ON THE BRINK

Brown pelicans may be saved from extinction—depending on man's actions in the next decade

by GEORGINNA SIMMONS



A mother has no rest while her chicks need up to 3 pounds of fish a day.

THE BROWN PELICAN (*Pelicanus occidentalis*), one of the seven species of pelicaniformes that exist in the world today, has been brought to the brink of extinction by mankind during the past quarter-century. Survival of the species depends upon what humans do, or refrain from doing, during the next decade. Protection of nesting sites, limitations in the use of pesticides, and intelligent disposal of litter can all contribute to the preservation of the brown pelican.

The natural range of the brown pelican includes the Pacific, Gulf, and Atlantic coasts of the United States and Mexico; the Caribbean; and the coasts of Chile, Equador, and Peru. After the species nearly disappeared from California, Texas, and Louisiana, the U.S. Department of the Interior declared it an endangered species.

The brown pelican has been studied extensively in lower California and in Florida, where more than twenty breeding areas may hold the

key to the species' future. Largest of these sites is Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge, near Sebastian, Florida. It was the nation's first national refuge, designated by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903. The refuge comprises 4,359 acres, mostly bottomlands and islands in the Indian River, an estuary on Florida's east coast. Pelican Island itself can be reached only by boat, and only in the company of the refuge manager, Lawrence Wineland.

In 1963 the refuge was designated a National Historical Landmark; seven years later it was made part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. Thousands of water birds in the refuge area are protected from human molestation. Hundreds of pelicans share their nesting grounds with as many as twelve other species, including the grey ibis, Louisiana heron, anhinga, double-crested cormorant, and egret. Approximately eight thousand birds roost there each evening.

The pelicans' peak nesting period

is in April and May. The male picks out a nest site in the stunted red and black mangroves that cling to the islands. His courtship display of figure-eight sideways head movements supposedly attracts the smaller female. After mating, the male pelican flies off to begin the long, arduous task of finding materials with which the female builds a nest. It may take the pair as long as two weeks to complete the task. Branches, twigs, and grasses are all acceptable to the female. At the height of their construction frenzy, a new piece may be woven into the nest every two minutes for as long as an hour.

Usually three eggs twice the size of chicken eggs are laid twenty-four to forty-eight hours apart. Incubation takes about thirty days, with one parent always on the nest. Lacking brood patches on their breasts, pelicans incubate eggs with their feet. By ten days of age, the chicks begin to beg for food. Because of asynchronous hatching, the third chick is at a disadvantage. If there isn't enough food to go around, the older, larger chicks will get it all.

Newborn chicks are naked, wobbly, and unable to regulate their body temperatures. They must be constantly shaded by a parent and fed regurgitated dribbles of fish. When they are older and more coordinated, they poke into their parents' pouches for meals. The adults are silent birds. Only when the young are being raised does the pelican colony become raucous with chicks' shrieks.

If all goes well, the chicks will eat 30 to 40 percent of their body weight each day. When ready to fledge, at about ten to eleven weeks, they are eating two to three pounds of fish a day. At this critical point their parents stop feeding them. With no lessons from the adults, they must begin their own fishing trips. They are at first unsuccessful on almost 75 percent of their dives. It is thought that many young pelicans starve to death because of their initially poor fishing abilities.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s brown pelicans were nearly eradicated from California and the upper Gulf region. It seems that pesticides were the most important factor in the population declines. More speci-

fically, the chlorinated hydrocarbons—DDT, DDE, benzene hexachloride, heptachlor, toxaphene, chlordane, aldrin, and dieldrin—were suspected.

Nearly half the two billion pounds of "hard" pesticides (pesticides that remain in the environment for years) produced in the United States between 1960 and 1966 was in the form of DDT. Pesticide residues run off the land, enter groundwater, and eventually wind up in the world's oceans. Once there, they are absorbed and concentrated in food chains. The higher the level, the higher the concentration. Pelicans perch at the top of one food chain. Man is at the top of another.

In pelicans the high pesticide levels cause an upset in calcium metabolism. The birds' eggshells become thinner and thinner. In the past two decades, eggs were crushed upon laying, or when the parents attempted incubation. Eggs were found that were little more than chalk-covered membranes.

As each year fewer and fewer chicks survived, populations decreased. In 1968 a census revealed only thirteen pelicans and four nests on the entire Texas coast. Fifty years previous, there had been around 65,000 pelicans in residence from Key West to the Texas-Mexico border.

It was also noted in 1968 that the usual brown pelican nesting activity was absent from the islands off California. A survey the following year was led by Dr. Robert Risebrough of the University of California. He suggested chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides as the probable cause for the pelicans' decline.

The same circumstances led to the species' disappearance from the Gulf coasts of Mexico, Texas, and Louisiana. The last recorded nesting activity in Louisiana, the Pelican State, had been in 1962.

By this time ornithologists on the east coast of the United States were alerted and became concerned for the brown pelican populations in that part of the country.

Aerial surveys of peninsular Florida nesting sites were begun in 1966 by the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. A conservative estimate revealed approximately twenty-four active colonies

with around 6,715 nests in 1968. These nests were located on coastal islands and in the Keys between the Marquesas and the Suwannee River on the west coast, and Daytona Beach on the Atlantic side. Since that time additional surveys and Florida Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts have indicated a stable population of adult birds in Florida.

This would be a good omen for the birds' survival if it were not for the fact that the Florida population, too, evidences eggshell thinning. Dr. Risebrough has found both eggs and tissues of Florida pelicans to be contaminated by pesticides. A slight decrease in the number of eggs hatched since 1969 has also been recorded. Crushed and thin-shelled eggs have been found in Florida pelican nests. Because the birds have a twenty-five-year to thirty-year life span, gradual changes in their reproduction rates will not be apparent for several years.

During the summer of 1968, staff of the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission captured a group of nestling pelicans, nine to twelve weeks old, and transported them to a seventy-five-acre island off the Louisiana coast. The fledglings were individually color-marked with patagial streamers and banded to indicate their ages. A near 100 percent survival rate was recorded. In 1971, when this group was three years old, thirteen nests were found on a low reef in the mouth of the Barataria Bay ships' channel, south of New Orleans.

More fledgling Florida pelicans were sent to Louisiana in 1969, 1970, and 1971. They also apparently nested for the first time at three years of age. In July 1974 the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission reported an estimated 450 nesting birds on Grand Terre, an island in the Barataria Bay.

In addition, more than 2,500 nestlings have been color-banded since 1968 by Dr. Ralph Schreiber of the University of South Florida, the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, and the South Carolina Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge. The colored plastic streamer placed on a wing or one leg is more visible than the small aluminum band around a leg. Birds in different

geographic locations are marked with different colors. The bands are stamped with numbers, and records indicate where and when that number was placed on a bird and the bird's approximate age at banding time. Knowledge of the longevity, plumage changes, and young bird dispersal and migratory patterns of pelicans is increased by this project.

More than one thousand sightings have been reported. Most of them are from large urban centers; but it is unclear whether this is because more people are there or because the birds congregate near humans. It appears, however, that the Florida pelicans are separated into east and west coast populations, with mixing occurring only in the Keys.

The possibility of the survival of the brown pelican was greatly enhanced by a 1972 ban on the use of DDT by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. However, with reduced numbers of young being produced each year, protection of nestlings from human intruders is now as important as protecting the birds from the indiscriminate use of insecticides. Nesting sites must remain undisturbed until the young fledge and are able to fend for themselves.

UNLIKE SOME SPECIES that protect their young, adult pelicans leave their nests when intruders appear. Under a blazing sun, eggs and young chicks can boil and die within a few minutes. Fish crows and western gulls are also predators on pelican eggs, diving into unattended nests. If a nest with older nestlings is approached, the baby birds may try to escape, falling to the ground. Once there, the parent birds ignore them.

Additional disturbance of roosting sites by boat traffic may also have detrimental effects on the species. Pelicans favor small islets and sand spits for both day and night rest. Although the bird colonies are known to shift nesting sites—more often where there are many islands—the destruction of such areas for human habitations would have a deleterious effect on the brown pelican.

Finally, the latest threats from mankind to the species are plastic

six-pack rings and fishermen's gear. If a bird's bill becomes ensnared in the plastic rings, it can starve to death. The rings should be cut apart when disposed of, even in trash containers, as seabirds are well-known scavengers of coastal dumps and garbage cans.

Fishermen need to become aware of the dangers of their monofilament lines and hooks to the birds. A pelican entangled in fishing line can starve or lose a foot. If the ensnared bird flies to a tree to roost, it may become trapped. In the past three years Dr. Schreiber has found more than one hundred dead pelicans hanging by monolines from mangrove trees. Tangled fishing lines also should be cut up and disposed of safely.

An accidentally hooked pelican can be reeled in and the hook can be removed without danger to the fisherman. Although the bird's bill is sharp, it has little closing strength. If grasped by the beak, the bird usually calms down, and the hook can be removed easily. Dr. Schreiber estimates that 80 to 85 percent of the live pelicans he has handled in recent years had scars from being caught or had a hook or a line still attached.

Unfortunately, brown pelicans haven't learned to avoid hooks and lines when foraging around fishermen. They can't discriminate between pesticide-laden menhaden, which form about 90 percent of their diet, and fish without high concentrations of lethal chemicals. The birds can't rebel against their natural instinct to leave their nests when disturbed by humans. It is now man's responsibility to undo the damage he has inflicted thus far on the brown pelican.

If man can reduce and control the use of pesticides, refrain from disturbing breeding birds, and use recreational material intelligently, the species may have a chance for survival. ■

Georganna Simmons writes free-lance articles on wildlife, conservation, and the natural sciences. She has been visiting Florida, perhaps the last refuge for the brown pelican, since 1948 and has lived there for the past 4½ years.



Pelican injured by fishhook

What You Can Do To Help

Readers concerned about the fate of the brown pelican can do several things to help it. First of all, you can support the Office of Endangered Species, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, in its continuing efforts to protect the brown pelican.

Be sure to cut apart each ring of plastic six-pack rings, and cut up tangled fishing lines before discarding them. If you accidentally hook a pelican, reel it in carefully and remove the hook.

If you sight a color-marked brown pelican, report it to the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, 2606 N.E. 17th Terrace, Gainesville, Florida 32601. Reports should include color of the streamer; its location on the bird; date of sighting; whether the bird was an adult or juvenile; location of the bird; its condition (apparently healthy, sick, injured, or dead); name of the person reporting; and any other information that might be useful.

Ornithologist Dr. Ralph Schreiber has founded Seabird Research, Inc., 11008 Teegreen Drive, Tampa, Florida 33612, to further research on the brown pelican and help save it. Write for more information.

Additional detailed, accurate information on pelicans can be obtained from *The Wonders of the Pelican World*, by Joseph J. Cook and Ralph W. Schreiber, published by Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1974.



Exploring Earthman's World

Exploring Earthman's World is a series of essays, co-edited by Darwin Lambert and the editors and published intermittently, which is intended to foster the kind of man-earth relationship that will lead to creative ecological harmony.

Let the Sun Shine in at Christmas

by GARY D. SUTTLE

THE CHRISTMAS SEASON arrives earlier every year. Ornaments, cards, and other holiday paraphernalia used to appear in stores after Thanksgiving; now they show up after Labor Day. More and more people feel that the true meaning of Christmas is being smothered by commercialism. Many regard Christmas as a colossal exploitation of the environment because the superfluous consumption of countless unnecessary items depletes scarce resources and adds to pollution. What is the true significance of Christmas, and how can we celebrate this joyful season in keeping with its meaning?

Much of the meaning of the holiday season can be traced to man's close relationship with nature in antiquity. Thousands of years before Christ, so-called pagans worshiped the sun as a god. When winter approached, the sun dipped lower and lower in the sky each day. It seemed to the people that their god was forsaking them. The shortest day of the year came around December 21 (winter solstice). Several days later it became evident that the sun was coming back. By December 25, the people were sure the sun was returning, so a great celebration called the Brumalia began. Brumalia means "birthday" or "rebirth" of the sun.

Many of our Christmas holiday customs evolved from the sun-god celebrations. On the eve of Brumalia—corresponding to our Christmas eve—people exchanged gifts, sang songs, played games, and feasted. They kissed under mistletoe, which was considered sacred to the sun-god and thought to have miraculous healing qualities. Holly berries were also considered sacred. Holly wreaths, round like the sun, de-

corated houses and places of worship during Brumalia.

The Christmas tree is another pagan carry-over. Evergreen fir trees symbolized survival and eternal life. People decorated these trees with round, egg-shaped ornaments. Eggs were a symbol of fertility, and the ornaments symbolized the fertility given to the people by their sun-god. The word "yule" is derived from an ancient term used to describe winter sun-worship festivals. Burning "yule" logs and candles as a part of Christian ceremony reflects a continuation of pagan custom. These symbols of warmth and lasting life were lit to hasten the "old" sun's waning and the "new" sun's rebirth during the winter solstice.

The word Christmas means "mass of Christ" or in a shortened form "Christ-mass." It came to non-Christians and Protestants from the Roman Catholic Church, which absorbed the Brumalian rituals around 350 A.D. Biblical scholars suggest that the birth of Christ as "Light of the World" was made comparable to the pagan's "Rebirth of the Sun." This fusion of Christian precepts with pagan festivals encouraged conversions to the new faith. In the fifth century the church ordered Christmas to be celebrated forever on the Brumalia, December 25, inasmuch as no certain knowledge of Christ's birthday existed. Thus the true significance of Christmas goes even beyond the celebration of Christ's birthday to ancient pagan sun-worshipping practices.

Sun-worship was tied to primitive man's close affinity with natural forces. Early people's dependence on the sun, rain, soil, and other natural elements was direct and readily apparent. Today we are no less de-

pendent on nature than our primitive forebears, but modern technology causes us to be less aware of our dependency.

Widespread environmental deterioration has begun to rekindle our awareness of the interrelationships between man and nature. With this awareness comes a realization that fundamental changes in our life styles are necessary if we hope to maintain a healthy environment. The Christmas season offers an excellent opportunity to begin remodeling parts of our life style.

Potted living Christmas trees, recycled Christmas cards, homemade ornaments and gifts, books and creative kits for children instead of gimmicky toys that quickly become part of the solid waste disposal problem—these are some of the ways in which we can minimize impact on the environment while keeping, or even enhancing, the spirit of the holiday season. Perhaps someday the joy of gathering together with family and friends to celebrate Christmas may largely supplant the need for material expressions of our feelings.

At Christmas, after all, we ostensibly honor one who criticized excessive material possessions and encouraged simple ways of life. Our holiday activities should focus on these ideals. And our yuletide festivities could encompass the beliefs of forebears whose sun-god symbolized life and dependence upon the earth; we should recall their ancient wisdom when we celebrate Christmas. ■

Gary Suttle recently received an M.A. in geography from San Diego State University. His major interests include man's relationship with nature, ecological values, wildlife, and nature preservation.

NPCA at work

The announcement of who will be the new National Park Service Director is one that has been waited for anxiously. With the resignation of Ronald H. Walker, effective January 1, 1975, Secretary of the Interior Rogers Morton must recommend a new director to the White House. But at press time no word had come out of the Interior Department as to who might be advanced for the job.

NPCA President A. W. Smith submitted a series of the Association's recommendations and criteria to the Secretary for guidance in selecting a new director, including recommendations that the directorship of the National Park Service should be a Civil Service position, that the director's appointment should be subject to confirmation by the Senate, and that a director-designate should be able to demonstrate some professional experience relating to the National Park Service.

As a primary test of fitness, NPCA emphasized, a new director for the Park Service should also show a record of adherence to the basic mandate of the National Park Service; namely, an unwavering stand on protecting the natural values of the National Park System and a policy of ensuring that all uses of units in the system shall be compatible with this first priority of preservation.

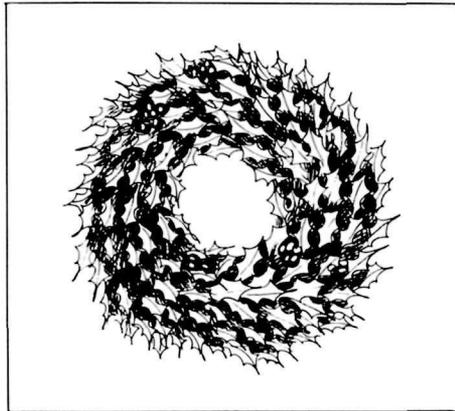
NPCA also urged that a potential director be able to demonstrate sensitivity to the need for acceptable public transit systems running out to, into, and within the limits of the National Park System, for the dual purpose of providing the public with a desirable alternative to private automobiles and reducing traffic and automobile-related facilities inside park units.

"The one thing," NPCA concluded, "which must be avoided at all costs in making this choice is a political appointment." NPCA expressed the hope that the appointment of a suitable candidate would restore public confidence in good management of our parks.

"Man and the Biosphere" (MAB) is a continuing program of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) which has set as its difficult goal the improvement of man's partnership with the en-

vironment. NPCA recently participated in the third session of the International Coordinating Council of the MAB program.

MAB's environmental goals depend on research and intergovernmental cooperation and action. Thirteen project areas are currently being implemented, each oriented toward actual management problems arising from the interactions between human activities and natural systems.



Although NPCA is interested in all the project areas, of particular significance was the announcement by the United States that it has designated twenty "biosphere reserves" representing different vegetational regions of the country in relation to MAB project 8. The U.S. delegation made this announcement pursuant to a previously signed Joint U.S.-USSR Communiqué on environmental protection.

The biosphere reserves are all areas presently protected by the federal government. Included are: nine national parks—Olympic, Great Smoky Mountains, Mount McKinley, Rocky Mountains, Yellowstone, Glacier, Virgin Islands, Big Bend, and Everglades national parks; Organ Pipe National Monument; four experimental forests; the Three Sisters Wilderness Area; the Pawnee National Grassland and the Central Plains Experiment Station; the Jornada Experimental Range; and Amchitka Island and the Noatak Arctic Range in Alaska. These reserves will be experimental areas for the study of living, changing plant and animal systems, how they relate to each other, and how man's activities offset and are affected by

them. They will also be used as reservoirs for preserving wild plants and animals to assure that the genetic material they represent will not be lost.

Among MAB's thirteen major project areas there are studies of the effects of human activity on: 1) tropical and subtropical ecosystems; 2) temperate and Mediterranean forest landscapes; 3) grazing lands, savannas, and grasslands; 4) arid and semiarid ecosystems and the effects of irrigation; 5) lakes, marshes, rivers, deltas, estuaries, and coastal zones; 6) mountain and tundra ecosystems; and 7) island ecosystems. Additional subjects include: 8) conservation of natural areas and of the genetic material they contain (the biosphere reserves project); 9) an ecological assessment of pest management and fertilizer use on terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems; 10) the effects of major engineering works on man and his environment; 11) ecological aspects of urban systems emphasizing energy utilization; 12) interactions between environmental transformations and the adaptive, demographic, and genetic structure of human populations; and 13) the perception of environmental quality.

NPCA's pilot American chestnut program, as introduced and described in the August and September issues of *National Parks and Conservation Magazine*, has received outstanding cooperation from NPCA members and others who are interested in helping restore this endangered tree species that was once common to our eastern hardwood forests.

We received the help of several reporters who took the initiative to cover the project in their newspapers, further enhancing our efforts to secure seed samples of possible blight-resistant American chestnuts. Among these reporters were: John Harrigan of the *New Hampshire Sunday News*, Manchester, New Hampshire; Bill Dutcher of the *Reston Times*, Reston, Virginia; Ann Johnson of the *Skyline News*, which circulates throughout the Shenandoah region of the East; Otto Knauth of the *Des Moines Register*, Des Moines, Iowa; and Joan Faust of the *New York Times*. In addition many other newspapers publicized our project, and television and radio coverage by James Kilpatrick kept NPCA's telephones ringing for several days.

NPCA's volunteer consultant on the

chestnuts, Leo Pahl, inspected seed samples and planted seeds in a small nursery in Maryland. Mr. Pahl has been awarded complimentary life membership in NPCA. Because considerable confusion exists about how to properly identify the American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*), Leo has written a comprehensive description of the American chestnut as compared with similar species of the genus. This report is available to members on request, either from NPCA's Washington office or from Mr. Pahl, who resides at 8136 Ventnor Road, Pasadena, Maryland 21122.

In proposing new procedures for endangered species permits under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, the National Marine Fisheries Service recently published the procedures for public comment. These rules represent proposals for the consideration of applications and issuance of permits for "taking" (killing) or importing only those endangered species that are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Commerce. NPCA has contacted NMFS Director Robert W. Schoning with our comments on the regulations.

The proposed changes would revise the regulations entitled "Permits for scientific purposes or to enhance the propagation or survival of the affected endangered species" as well as related regulations. These regulations are directed to those certain cases in which some manipulative scientific research may be necessary in order to ensure the survival of a species. For instance, it may be necessary to transport wildlife in order to establish populations removed from the threat of destruction. In general NPCA has no objections to the majority of the regulations. However, NPCA described several loopholes in the regulations that could facilitate unjustified killing or inappropriate importing of endangered species or other harmful actions. We therefore recommended the following changes in order to prevent abuses of the Endangered Species Act:

1) In listing the information that would be required to be submitted with an application for a "scientific permit," the proposal also has a provision that would allow the NMFS director to "waive any requirement for information." NPCA stated that this waiver should be deleted because it would allow the director to publish applications that did not contain adequate information to allow public and private agencies (in-

cluding NPCA) to make informed comments about such applications.

2) In setting up criteria for issuing a permit, one standard quoted is that the granting of a permit "will not operate to the disadvantage of the endangered species." This standard is inadequate and inconsistent with the policy of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, which would allow only those actions that unquestionably *enhance* the propagation or survival of endangered species. NPCA urged that the inconsistent standard be eliminated from several places in the proposed regulations.



RONALD T. ANDREWS

3) Under the proposed procedures for issuing permits, whenever a permit application is deemed "sufficient" by the NMFS director, the director would publish a notice in the *Federal Register*. The public then could request a hearing. If the director granted a hearing, a "summary" record of the hearing would be kept and the director would make a final decision about whether to grant the permit. NPCA stated that the wording should be changed to require a "complete" record of the hearing, which would be necessary to allow an orderly review of the hearing.

4) NPCA stated that a section entitled "Recall and amendments of permits by NMFS" should be examined closely because of the potential for abuse of the Endangered Species Act. In that section, NMFS "reserves the right to recall and amend the provisions of a permit for just cause at any time during its term. . . ." The section is quite vague. It does not indicate clearly who in NMFS has authority to recall a permit, whether or not the scope or details of a permit can be enlarged by amendment, and what constitutes a "just cause"—the basic criterion for recall. This section could be used to allow any permit holder to ob-

tain a greatly expanded and, in effect, a new permit through an act of a sympathetic person in NMFS. The permit holder would only have to convince his benefactor that there is "just cause" for his request, and the whole operation could proceed in relative secrecy because of a lack of public notice requirements. NPCA urged that this section be eliminated entirely, and suggested an addition to the regulations that would allow permit modifications that were compatible with the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

Joining NPCA in making recommendations geared to ensuring that the proposed NMFS regulations leave no room for violating the Endangered Species Act were these organizations: American Littoral Society; Animal Welfare Institute; Humane Society of the United States; Let Live, Inc.; and Defenders of Wildlife.

NPCA has urged EPA to assume a strong leadership role in establishing national air quality standards concerning "significant deterioration." In reviewing recently proposed EPA regulations, NPCA noted that the agency sidestepped the intent of the Clean Air Act by allowing the states to decide for themselves the amount of significant deterioration of air quality they will permit within their borders.

NPCA's comments on the regulations focused on our contention that the federal government should set standards that promote uniform air quality controls and thus avoid conflicts among states and localities. High standards would create incentives for development and use by industry of improved pollution control devices.

NPCA also stressed that EPA policy should include protection or improvement (when necessary) of the pristine air quality *within* and *surrounding* national parks, national forests, national wildlife refuges, national wild and scenic rivers, and other nationally protected areas.

If EPA-proposed regulations are adopted, states that set high clean air standards could be penalized as industries tend to migrate to areas having lax standards. At the discretion of state or local governments, pristine areas may be classified as Class III, a classification that allows air pollution levels to rise to the national secondary standard. Such a policy would result in air pollution of once-pristine areas as industries moved to the outlying areas where they could

rely on the outdated "pollution dilution" approach, rather than being responsible for pollution control. Industry must, NPCA's comments stressed, bear responsibility for maintaining clean air. Adequate technology is available and can be further improved. High standards would prevent pollution but would not hinder industrial growth.

Under the regulations, deterioration to national secondary standards can be justified by non-air quality factors—social and economic ones. NPCA believes that only air quality should be used to justify "significant deterioration."

EPA has deleted direct air quality monitoring from the regulations as being unreliable and will depend instead on predicting the amount of pollution from sources before their construction. Measurement of pollution levels after construction and enforcement procedures are neglected in the proposed regulations.

NPCA urged that EPA comply with the mandate of the public and the courts in its definition and administration of "significant deterioration" standards.

Environmental safeguards are not inflationary. This fact was substantiated for NPCA and other environmental groups at recent meetings with Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Russell Train and Council on Environmental Quality Chairman Russell Peterson. Discussions at these meetings refuted recent charges made by certain business and industrial spokesmen who claim that the widespread application of strict environmental standards (in areas such as air and water pollution, disposal of toxic substances, and other health-related issues) has been a major cause of the nation's economic ills. In light of public statements made by spokesmen for some "big business" factions during recent regional economic summit conferences called by the federal government, it seems that many of these voices will not rest unless environmental, occupational health and safety, and consumer protection laws and regulations are abolished or seriously weakened.

Both CEQ and EPA, on the other hand, with the strong backing of NPCA and all other major environmental groups, have argued forcefully that environmental laws and standards have contributed less than one-half of 1 percent to the inflation rate, and indeed must be maintained and strengthened if our society is to continue its present

high standard of living while improving the quality of life in this country.

Concessioner operations in Yosemite National Park continue to threaten the environment of that great natural area. As reported in the November Magazine, MCA-Universal, principal owner of the park's concessions, has penetrated the planning process for the park with its own set of elaborate development plans that, if implemented, would sacrifice the environmental integrity of Yosemite for the purpose of private profit.

At press time public hearings on Yosemite National Park Master Plan, which was expected to present the development proposals as "alternatives," had been delayed and it looked as though these hearings might even be deferred until 1975.

Citing the problem at Yosemite as just one example of the mismanagement of the National Park System during the incumbency of NPS Director Ronald Walker, NPCA carried its protest directly to the Secretary of the Interior, Rogers Morton, calling for the Secretary's acceptance of Walker's resignation before the previously announced date of January 1, 1975. NPCA also pointed to a proposal by Anheuser-Busch for a new road interchange in the Colonial National Historical Park in Virginia—a proposal based on the commercial motive of providing access to a Busch housing development—as providing further evidence of how NPS is allowing large corporations to use and influence the national parks. In addition the Association made reference to the recent controversy over the contract award for campsite reservations in the parks.

NPCA stressed that operations such as those of MCA are a violation of National Park Service policy, as established by the National Park Service Act. NPCA

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recognizes the commitment of the Interior Department to protect the natural values of the National Park System, and told Secretary Morton that the public needs a reconfirmation of this goal, recommending that the Secretary also "refresh the morale within the National Park Service itself by a public statement that you intend to enforce the letter and spirit of the National Park Service Act in the future administration of the National Park System."

The deepest gorge on the North American continent, Hells Canyon on the Snake River in the Northwest, would be designated a national recreation area if the House acts on a bill that many observers say has a possibility of passage this year. In September Senate passage of this legislation, the Hells Canyon National Recreational Area bill, indicated that a controversy of some twenty years' duration over the status of the region could be in its closing stages.

The Senate bill calls for establishing a Hells Canyon National Recreation Area in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. The 101-mile segment of the Snake River between Hells Canyon Dam in Idaho and Asotin, Washington, is designated as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. No further dams would be allowed on this segment of river, and the Asotin Dam in Washington would be deauthorized.

The new recreation area, as delineated by the Senate, would cover about 700,000 acres, including approximately 270,000 acres of wilderness classification for the land between the rims of Hells Canyon. In addition, the bill directs the Secretary of Agriculture to review certain other areas within the recreation area, on the Oregon side, for their wilderness potential. Although these areas are specified in the bill, the Secretary is not precluded from recommending other areas within the recreation area for wilderness designation.

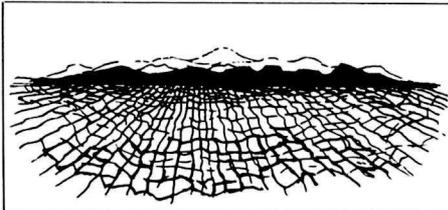
The Hells Canyon bill as passed by the Senate contained many provisions supported by NPCA in testimony presented on invitation at House Interior Committee hearings last summer. These include immediate designation of the Hells Canyon Wilderness, deauthorization of the Asotin Dam, an emphasis on preservation, and Wild and Scenic River provisions for both the Snake and Rapid rivers.

The acreage provided in the bill, 700,000 acres, is less than the 834,000-

acre national recreation area supported by NPCA, but the exclusion came primarily from the Rapid River drainage in Idaho, and this deletion was partially offset by wild river designation for the Rapid River.

In the long run "energy self-sufficiency" is a goal that the United States can pursue only if the ecological costs of using energy are factored into our National Energy Policy, NPCA recently advised the Federal Energy Office (FEO).

In conjunction with recent FEO hearings on the formation of the National Energy Policy, NPCA expressed concern about the principles behind "Project Independence." According to FEO, the goal of Project Independence is to develop a policy that will enable the nation to attain a higher degree of energy self-sufficiency by the 1980s, while reducing our increasing reliance on external energy sources. Although NPCA agrees with the concept of an energy self-sufficient nation, the Association pointed out how government economists have neglected or minimized the importance of ecological restraints on energy development.



Rapid economic growth is possible only so long as there are unlimited resources to exploit. However, we are faced with a situation of limited resources, and the system of rapid growth must be changed to one of steady-state.

The wise and self-sufficient nation is one that maximizes its energy efficiency from all sources and devotes this energy only to the essential needs of society. Destroying habitat and natural wildlands in the name of developing costly technology for producing energy (that requires other energy forms to sustain it) and eliminating waste (that could easily be recycled) constitutes our most serious environmental offense.

We must first consider the global environmental impact of our energy policy; the misuse of nuclear technology and materials and the danger to ocean life through oil pollution may have terrifying environmental consequences. NPCA questions that the United States can continue to develop resources at

such an accelerated pace without irrevocable damage to the nation's health and environment.

It is inadvisable to undertake massive projects to develop offshore oil resources, oil shale, and surface-mined coal without first exploring the alternatives that have less environmental impact. Accordingly, NPCA recommended consideration of the following energy-related goals for our nation:

- A rapid shift to solar energy to pick up a substantial part, not all, of the load. Solar energy technology for heating and cooling buildings is already available.
- A substantial return to coal for the time being, and a temporary return to natural gas, but subject to severe environmental and mine-safety restrictions, and to the ultimate need to reduce chemical combustion in terms of carbon dioxide.
- Long-term planning for future energy sources, giving close attention to potential sources such as nuclear fusion.
- The imposition of severe environmental standards on the automobile and oil industries, so that production and distribution can be carried on without severe ecological damage.
- The phasing out of the private car from the congested areas of big cities, and the substitution of clean, comfortable, and speedy public transit.
- The revision of national transportation policy to favor a much enlarged and publicly managed railroad network, with reduced emphasis on high-energy modes, air and highway transportation.
- The inversion of utility rate schedules to impose increasing costs on the larger consumers, with lower prices for the smaller customers.
- A shift to land irrigation systems, as contrasted with high-energy chemical methods, for tertiary treatment of municipal waste water.
- A no-nonsense solid-waste recycling program to conserve production energy and raw materials and cut down on the rubbish.
- A shift from plastics and synthetics, which use petroleum as a raw material with high production energy demands and much pollution, to products made from natural substances.
- A changeover from chemical pesticides, which have high fossil-fuel materials requirements, to organic and integrated pest control. This should be accomplished as rapidly as possible for both ecological and economic reasons.
- Composting of sewage sludge, using garbage for the production of organic fertilizer, as contrasted with high-energy incineration accompanied by atmo-

spheric pollution. This would bring about a reduction in fossil-fuel-based, high-production-energy, high-pollution chemical fertilizers.

- The progressive elimination of those other energy guzzlers, the centrally overheated, overcooled, hermetically air-conditioned office and apartment buildings, with their artificially lighted and ventilated underground parking.

- The development of policies on land use and industrial plant size and location that are geared to reducing daily and weekend commuting in favor of stable communities.

- Reorganization of the federal-industrial budget to reduce expenditures on big roads, big dams, and, as international agreement permits, armaments, as well as on misdirected research and development, while giving favor in the budget to socially and ecologically sound public-private investment.

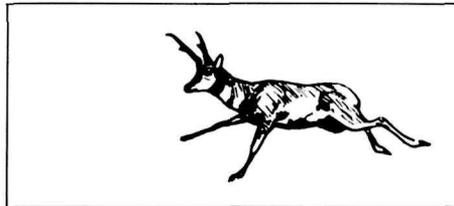
- A fundamental revision of the mass-production, mass-distribution industrial structure to reduce the one-way dumping of containers and the cross-hauling of raw materials and products.

Conservationists are hopeful that more wilderness areas in the eastern national forests will be designated this year, but at press time it appeared that the eastern wilderness issue would be a cliff-hanger in Congress.

The House Subcommittee on Public Lands finally took some visible action on the Eastern Wilderness Areas bill in September by opening hearings on the issue again, as NPCA had suggested. NPCA testified on invitation, expressing pleasure that hearings were being continued, but noting with concern that the subcommittee had omitted from its consideration a number of proposed wilderness areas and areas to be studied for their wilderness potential. A former version of HR 13455 contained nineteen areas for immediate wilderness designation and forty wilderness study areas. However, the Public Lands Subcommittee omitted proposals for the Irish Wilderness in Missouri, the Glades (Hercules) Wilderness in Missouri, and the Big Island Wilderness in Michigan from the list for immediate designation. In addition, their hearings covered only twelve of the forty study areas. NPCA stated that even before the subcommittee omitted these areas, the bill had represented what could be considered a minimum wilderness allowance for satisfying the need for wilderness of people residing in the eastern half of the United States. Although the bulk of the Ameri-

can people resides in that part of the country, Congress has designated very few areas in the eastern national forests for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

NPCA urged the subcommittee to schedule a second hearing for the purpose of reviewing the remaining areas contained in the former version of HR 13455, in the Senate-passed S 3433, and in related bills. Carrying out a comprehensive review of various eastern wilderness candidates is necessary for several reasons. First of all, there is an obvious need to assure adequate public input. A second reason is to permit a better consideration of the accessibility factor, realizing that the quality of some areas to eventually be designated as wildernesses could be impaired by overuse resulting from a deficient wilderness



supply. HR 13455 would allow time for reviews of the proposed study areas; NPCA pointed out that this would ensure that qualified areas are not overlooked, or, by the same token, that unqualified areas are not designated.

A third reason for giving adequate and comprehensive consideration to all the proposed wilderness and study areas contained in HR 13455 is that wilderness should ideally include samples of vegetative ecosystems and topography either unique to or representative of the various geographical regions of the country. One example is the karst topography of the proposed Irish Wilderness Area in the Mark Twain National Forest in Missouri.

The proposed extension of Interstate Highway 66 from the Potomac River at Washington, D.C., across Virginia to the Shenandoah Valley recently elicited NPCA opposition on several fronts where construction could begin soon pending decisions at the federal and state levels.

In communications with Department of Transportation Secretary Claude S. Brinegar, NPCA emphasized the national implications of his upcoming decision about whether to approve construction of the segment of I-66 from the Potomac River to the Capital Belt-

way (I-495). This section, cutting across dense residential areas, is opposed by every local jurisdiction through which it passes, and would also destroy much valuable park and open-space land in northern Virginia including portions of the Spout Run National Parkway. A viable alternative, the so-called Mass-Transit Option, would save time, money, and energy as well as scarce open-space land, and should be approved, NPCA told Secretary Brinegar.

Construction of this segment of I-66 would virtually necessitate the proposed Three Sisters Bridge across the Potomac and the proposed South Leg Freeway, entailing a tunnel under the Lincoln Memorial and an open-trench, six-lane highway along the length of the historic Mall in Washington. These proposals come at a time when a rapid-transit system for the District of Columbia metropolitan area is already under construction, when the District government is considering a ban on street parking for commuters, and when the city is preparing for the 1976 Bicentennial.

In related action, at a recent hearing on the section of I-66 that would run from Gainesville to Front Royal in Virginia, NPCA again opposed construction of this highway, citing adverse impacts the road would have on Shenandoah National Park, the Appalachian Trail, and other nearby national and state forests and parklands.

This highway construction would greatly increase the accessibility of the Shenandoah region, bringing industrial decentralization, metropolitan expansion, and the inevitable further suburbanization of outlying rural counties.

The Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972 is the only federal law providing for the establishment and management of areas specifically as marine preserves, thus filling an important gap in the existing programs of the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Under Title III of the act marine sanctuaries will be established for the purpose of protecting the marine environment in outstanding coastal areas. These sanctuaries will be managed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), an arm of the Department of Commerce. Although no sanctuaries have been established yet, several are under consideration.

The Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences (VIMS) recently conducted a

series of public meetings, under the direction of NOAA, to measure public reaction to a potential marine sanctuary on Chincoteague Bay on the Maryland and Virginia coasts. This is the first outstanding natural area to be considered.

NPCA testified in October in support of marine sanctuary designation for Chincoteague Bay. Protection of the bay, which is adjacent to Assateague National Seashore, is the key to protection of the natural values of Assateague. For instance, a marine sanctuary in this location would reduce the chances for intrusions by private shoreline developers and the Corps of Engineers, projects which would seriously degrade the national seashore.

Emphasis in managing marine sanctuaries would be on preservation of water quality. Title III permits multiple uses of an area as long as each given use does not interfere with the basic preservation of the area. Commercial and sport fishing would be allowed, as long as the harvest does not exceed the sustained yield of the natural populations, but dredging and filling would not be allowed.

The commercial fishing interests around Chincoteague Bay are strongly opposed to sanctuary designation for their fishing grounds. Despite assurances that a sanctuary would not interfere with fishing, the watermen remain distrustful of a new federal program.

Following nomination of the bay (by any citizens' group) as a marine sanctuary, NOAA will conduct full public hearings and a recommendation will be sent to the Secretary of Commerce.

The Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 is a new planning law intended to serve as a vehicle for more effective administration of forest and rangeland policies.

On invitation from Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, NPCA recently made preliminary recommendations to the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry as to what key guidelines should be followed in terms of drawing up the rules and regulations that will implement the act. PL 93-398 is not intended to serve as a mandate for new policy directions, but rather as a vehicle facilitating policy-making through various inventories and assessments and through opening up the planning process to Congress and the public. It was with this understanding that NPCA supported the enactment of the law back in

November of 1973 at subcommittee hearings, and also welcomed Senator Humphrey's recent invitation.

PL 93-398 rightly points out the interrelationship of the various goods and services inherent to or to be derived from our nation's forests and rangelands. However, NPCA emphasized that, in order to make the law's planning apparatus operative, balanced funding and adequate personnel levels are mandatory.

In the case of timber management, for example, decisions on funding and manpower levels for the administration of timber sales cannot be made independently of (or at the expense of) similar decisions for reforestation, timber stand improvement, wildlife habitat, recreation, and so forth. Inadequate funding for one part of the system could upset the balanced program of multiple uses of resources that planning should achieve. Budget alterations imposed on the Forest Service by the Office of Management and Budget of the executive branch or impoundments of funds would likely result in the loss of productivity and pose environmental risks as well. Therefore, Congressional oversight in

the formulation of a budget, both within and outside USFS, is essential.

In certain program areas, training programs or recruitment policies may be needed in order to attain program objectives. For example, NPCA stated, the inventory and protection of the nation's endangered or threatened species of flora and fauna requires special expertise on the part of field personnel. The same holds true for identifying representative samples of forest and range vegetative cover types in order to establish a nationwide network of research natural areas and gene-pool reserves.

Another important implementation "vehicle" is assurance of a formal organizational structure designed to meet contemporary and future resource management needs. (An example of pressing need is the manpower deficiency in the Office of International Forestry, a deficiency that exists despite the critical importance of soil and water conservation to international agriculture.)

Development of innovative measures by USFS for meaningful citizen input throughout the planning process would probably prove to be the most effective implementation vehicle.

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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete: *Crenell Mulkey, Acting Business Manager*

news notes

Glacier National Park administrators have authorized corrective measures to be taken on the Logan Pass boardwalk. Several years ago this boardwalk was ill-advisedly imposed on fragile alpine meadows at awesome Logan Pass, and was constructed of chemically treated (creosote) wood. Research results have indicated that alpine vegetation adjacent to this boardwalk has been subjected to lethal fumigations. Rain and melting snow apparently caused leaching of the creosote chemicals from the boardwalk; in water solution these chemicals are harmful to plants. The new park superintendent, Mr. Phillip Iversen, has stopped the use of these chemically treated planks anywhere in the park.

On another front, current park administrators at Glacier have faced recent public disapproval of a plan to construct a sewage treatment facility, including a large sprayfield, on a low floodplain area adjacent to McDonald Creek where there is an annual fall concentration of American bald eagles. The proposed site has been used as a horse pasture, but has every potential of being restored to its original forested condition and becoming a part of the area used by the eagles. To observers at a recent public meeting on the problem, it seemed that the expediency of an engineer's solution leaves little room for esthetics or preservation of fundamental park values.

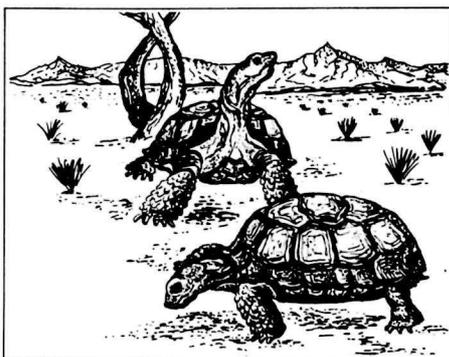
The BLM and concerned citizens are proposing a preserve for the desert tortoise in the Mojave Desert of California. This preserve would protect the finest known populations of the desert tortoise. According to the BLM Bakersfield district office, it has proposed for the preserve a 32-square-mile area with unusually high densities of tortoises. Perhaps the population here can be attributed to the excellent forage; more than 100 species of annual wildflowers carpet the area each spring.

The proposed preserve land falls in a checkerboard pattern including approximately twenty square miles of BLM land and twelve square miles of private land. Most private owners have agreed to protect the desert tortoise, and BLM hopes to acquire private lands through exchange, purchase, and donation over a period of years. BLM lands are now posted and closed to all vehicles, and the

agency's desert rangers patrol often to enforce laws and regulations. Eventually the proposed preserve could be designated a BLM natural area.

The desert tortoise is the state reptile of California. It is fully protected by state law and may not be harmed or removed from the wild. Tortoises already in captivity may be kept; in fact, they should *not* be released into the wild for several reasons. These reasons include the poor survival rate of captives in the wild, as well as the fact that they often carry diseases to wild tortoises.

The desert tortoise is not officially listed as endangered or threatened by the Department of the Interior because so many live in captivity. This species has a wide range but usually very low densi-



ties. The desert tortoise is rare in the wild, and NPCA and various herpetologists consider it endangered. Its populations are diminishing throughout the desert; in some places the tortoise has disappeared. Collecting, shooting, and habitat degradation all take their toll on the desert tortoise. Mining, livestock grazing, development of desert lands for agriculture, subdivisions, and motorcycle races cause habitat losses.

A private organization, the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, is trying to raise money to fence the preserve in the Mojave Desert, to buy private in-holdings, to promote the preserve, and to educate the public. For more information, write P.O. Box 453, Ridgecrest, California 93555.

Many miners and stockmen are arguing in favor of giving BLM exclusive jurisdiction over five national wildlife ranges in the West, rather than continuing the present system of joint management of the lands by BLM and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). Some of the same private interests also contend that none of the five million acres of public land involved should be designated for protection as wilderness or closed to

mining. Meanwhile various conservationists charge the BLM with management practices that are detrimental to wildlife on the ranges.

The future of the following ranges depends on forthcoming decisions about management and wilderness status: Kofa and Cabeza Prieta Game Ranges in Arizona, Desert Wildlife Refuge and Charles Sheldon Antelope Range in Nevada, and Charles M. Russell Wildlife Range in Montana.

The wildlife ranges were established in the 1930s in response to public pressure for preserving habitat vital to desert bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelopes, peregrine falcons, and other desert species. FWS was given management authority over wildlife and other natural resources, while BLM was put in charge of mining and grazing, the latter use designated for lands not needed by native wildlife. Over the years disputes inevitably arose concerning conflicting management goals of the two agencies. An obvious example has been the overgrazing on the Kofa and Russell ranges. Over the objections of FWS scientists, BLM has allowed livestock to compete with desert wildlife for food and water and to otherwise upset the ecological balance. In September the BLM itself released a field report criticizing its management of grazing in the West; the report is available to the public.

This year the Fish and Wildlife Service proposed that it be put in sole charge of the Kofa and the Cabeza Prieta Game Ranges. (FWS was already given sole jurisdiction over the Desert Wildlife range in 1966.) At one point, the Interior Department also proposed banning future mineral entries in these ranges, but this met with much opposition from miners and stockmen at the public hearings. Patented mining claims exist in both the Kofa and Cabeza Prieta.

In related matters, decisions about whether to designate wilderness areas in the five ranges have been stalled. President Nixon's wilderness message to Congress last June included the results of wilderness studies on the Cabeza Prieta and Desert ranges. Although "surface lands" were deemed suitable for wilderness, the message urged Congress to defer action on these areas pending mineral surveys, which would be made at government expense. A similar message about wilderness studies on the Kofa, Russell, and Sheldon Antelope ranges was expected from a wilderness message that was overdue at press time.

conservation docket

BLM Organic Act: HR 16800, the Public Land Policy and Management Act now before the full House Interior Committee for markup, is so significantly different from the already passed Senate version, S 424, that it seems unlikely that a compromise could be worked out this year even if the House were to pass it. The House bill differs from the Senate version in a number of ways. HR 16800 attempts to combine the National Forest System and the Bureau of Land Management lands under a single multiple-use, sustained yield management concept. However, this bill would allow the Interior Secretary to exclude lands from mining only if Congress did not object, while the mining companies could locate claims and obtain title to public lands without restriction. Provision is made for selling national forest land to private owners, giving first preference to present loggers, miners, and grazers. HR 16800 would also allow unlimited acreages of BLM recreation land to be given to state and local agencies, including the specific giveaway of the 62,000-acre Red Rock

Recreation Lands to Nevada. In addition, this act would indirectly repeal the provisions of the Endangered Species Act that require that federal agency actions do not jeopardize endangered or threatened species.

Kaweah Dam: Pending before the Senate is Senate Joint Resolution 237 to authorize the continued use of lands within Sequoia National Park for the Kaweah hydroelectric dam project of Southern California Edison Company. The resolution would allow continued operation of the existing facilities in Sequoia for at least the next twenty to thirty years without allowing any consideration for phasing out these operations. A similar resolution, H.J. Res. 444, passed the House in October 1974.

Ocean Fisheries: S 1988 would extend the U.S. contiguous fishery zone to a 200-mile limit on an interim basis pending international agreement on the issue at the UN Law of the Sea Conference. The bill was reported adversely out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee by a 9-8 vote in September. (The Senate Commerce Committee had favorably reported the measure earlier.) In the most recent development, the Senate Armed Services Committee requested and subsequently received referral of the bill to review the national

security implications of any unilateral action by the United States in enacting S 1988. A similar bill, HR 8665, is also pending in the House and probably will receive hearings this month. Although debate is expected to be vigorous in both the House and Senate during the waning hours of the 93rd Congress, final passage seems unlikely.

Strip Mining: Having failed to reach agreement before the election recess, the conferees who are to resolve differences between House and Senate versions of the strip mine bill will have an even more limited time to make a compromise during the current Lame Duck session. Thus far conferees have agreed to prohibit strip mining in national forests, but to permit it on national grasslands and, under most circumstances, in alluvial valley floors. They also agreed to language that would require states to designate as unsuitable for strip mining any area that cannot be adequately reclaimed, and to a provision placing a 35-cent-per-ton fee on stripped coal to be used for reclamation of abandoned strip mined lands. Still undecided, however, is the question of whether to require the surface owner's consent before stripping can occur, even though he does not control the mineral rights, as is the case in much of the West.

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A

Allegretto, Michael: 1,13
apples, poison: 2,22
animal beggars: 1,9
Apostle Islands National Lakeshore (Wisc.): 7,4
auto, in British parks: 1,16

B

bat, Hawaiian hoary: 2,10
Beecher, Hal A.: 9,14
beggars and bums, animal: 1,9
Big Thicket (Tex.): 1,4
Biscayne National Monument (Fla.): 7,10
bison, Yellowstone's: 5,9
Blatnik, John A.: 9,4
BLM: *See* Bureau of Land Management
Branson, Branley Allan: 1,21
Browder, Joan: 2,22
Brown, Larry N.: 7,10
Bryan, J. Y.: 4,5; 8,5
budgeting, federal, for natural resources: 5,27; 8,2 (edit.)
Bureau of Land Management, recreation-related treasures: 12,15
Butcher, Russell D.: 3,13
butterfly, swallowtail: 7,10

C

Canal, Cross-Florida Barge: 9,14
Cape Cod National Seashore (Mass.): 3,16
Cape Hatteras National Seashore (N.C.): 6,9
Carlsbad Caverns National Park (N.M.): 6,21
Cataloochee Valley, Great Smokies (N.C.): 12,10
chestnut, American: 8,23; 9,8
Chihuahuan Desert (Tex.): 10,4
Christmas, ecological practices for: 12,24
cloud seeding: 2,14

concessions, threat to park quality: 3,25; 11,2 (edit.); 12,2 (edit.)
Conservation Docket: 1,33; 2,33; 3,33; 4,33; 5,33; 6,33; 7,33; 8,33; 9,33; 10,33; 11,33; 12,32
coot, Hawaiian: 4,10
Corson, James W.: 4,23
Cranston, Alan: 10,10
Cross-Florida Barge Canal: 9,14
Cottam, Clarence: 6,26
crowded planet (edit.): 7,2
Cuyahoga Valley (Ohio): 5,4

D

Death Valley National Monument (Calif.): 2,5
Dolan, Robert: 6,9
dune management, new NPS policy: 6,9

E

endangered species: *See* wildlife, endangered, *and* plants, endangered
energy: 2,2; 10,2
solar: 1,13; 10,10
environment and geography: 1,20
Exploring Earthman's World (series): 1,20; 4,22; 12,24

F

Fielder, Mildred: 10,20
fisheries, oceanic (edit.): 5,2
forestry
clearcutting: 8,13; 10,14
destruction of redwoods: 8,13; 10,14
diseases, American chestnut blight: 9,8
ecological: 9,2 (edit.)
natural stand: 9,2 (edit.)
Fowler, Charles B.: 9,20
Franklin, Rosalie Stuart: 11,14

G

Gagnon, John: 10,21

geography, environmental: 1,20
Glacier National Park (Mont.): 2,18; 6,4
Glen Echo Park (Md.): 9,20
goats, at Glacier National Park: 2,18
gorilla: 11,9
Grand Canyon National Park (Ariz.): 3,4; 3,9
Graves, John: 10,14
Great Smoky Mountains National Park (N.C.): 12,10
Greiff, Frances: 8,13
Guadalupe Mountains National Park (Tex.): 10,4

H

Harris, Herbert S., Jr.: 3,22
Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, hoary bat of: 2,10
Hawaii, wildlife of: 2,10; 4,10
Hay, Edwards: 6,21
Hay, John: 3,16
Hayden, Bruce: 6,9
Henderson, D. S.: 5,15
hollygrape, creeping: 10,20
hunting, lead shot poisoning and: 11,22
International Convention for Prevention of Pollution from Ships (edit.): 1,2
Joshua Tree National Monument (Calif.): 11,4

K

Kanaha Pond Waterfowl Sanctuary (Hawaii): 4,10
Kings Canyon National Park (Calif.): 4,5
Konigssee Nature Reserve (Bavaria): 3,13

L

LaBastille, Anne: 1,9
Lake Mead Recreation Area, addition to Grand Canyon: 3,4

Lambert, Darwin: 4,22; 12,15
Law of the Sea Conference: 5,2; 9,32
lead shot poisoning: 11,22
Lynn, Isabelle: 2,14

M

man and nature: 1,20; 4,22; 12,24
manchineel tree, poisonous: 2,22
Marsh, Alton K.: 8,18
marshes, salt: 3,16
McNeil, Richard: 1,9
Meagher, Mary: 5,9
Medders, Stanley: 7,20; 11,17

N

Nading, Lee: 6,15
national park system, U.S.: *See* name of NPS area
national parks
 concessions in: 3,25; 11,2 (edit.); 12,2 (edit.)
 new hope for (edit.): 11,2
 prospects for (edit.): 3,2
 public business in (edit.): 12,2
 transportation alternatives for: 3,2 (edit.); 4,14; 12,4
national parks, foreign
 Bavaria: 3,13
 Britain: 1,16
natural resource agencies in trouble: 5,27
nature, love of (edit.): 4,2
Nemuras, Kenneth T.: 6,17
New Cave, Carlsbad Caverns (N.M.): 6,21
News Notes: 1,30; 2,29; 3,32; 4,30; 5,31; 6,30; 7,30; 9,31; 10,28; 11,32; 12,31
NOAMTRAC: 6,15
Nowak, Ron: 8,9
NPCA AT Work: 1,24; 2,25; 3,27; 4,25; 5,24; 6,25; 7,25; 8,24; 9,25; 10,24; 11,25; 12,25
Nyerges, Christopher J.: 6,4; 11,4

O

Office of Management and Budget, detrimental practices of: 5,27; 8,2 (edit.)
oil, shortage of (edit.): 2,2
Oldendorph, O. F.: 3,9
OMB: *See* Office of Management and Budget
oryx, Arabian: 5,15

P

paddlefish, American: 1,21
Parent, Annette Richards: 10,4
parks, urban: 9,20; *see also* national parks
pelican, brown: 12,21
Peterburs, William B., Jr.: 11,22

Petrified Forest National Parks (Ariz.): 8,5

plants

chestnut, American: 8,23; 9,8
desert: 11,4
edible: 6,4; 11,4
endangered
 chestnut, American: 8,23; 9,8
 hollygrape, creeping: 10,20
 manchineel, poisonous: 2,22
 snow plant: 5,22
See also redwood trees and *Sequoia gigantea*

Pole, Nicholas: 1,16

pollution from ships, prevention of (edit.): 1,2

population (edit.): 6,2; 7,2; 10,2

Powers, Elizabeth: 12,10

Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park (Calif.): 8,13

prospects for parks (edit.): 3,2

public lands, BLM: 12,15

R

railroads and national parks: 3,2 (edit.); 4,14; 12,4

rattlesnake, ridge-nosed: 3,22

Reader Comment: 6,32; 8,32; 10,32

Red River Gorge (Ky.): 8,18

Redwood National Park (Calif.): 10,14

redwood trees, need for protection: 8,13; 10,14

Rideout, Chester B.: 2,18

river basins

 Red River Gorge (Ky.): 8,18

See Cross-Florida Barge Canal

Rock, Maxine A.: 11,9

Rocky Mountain National Park (Colo.): 10,21

Runte, Alfred: 4,14; 12,4

S

San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge: 7,20

San Juan Mountains (Colo.): 7,14

Santa Cruz (Calif.): 11,17

Sayers, Wilson B.: 9,8

seashores, NPS policy on: 6,9

Seiberling, John F.: 5,4

Sequoia gigantea: 4,5

Sequoia National Park (Calif.): 4,5

Sequoia sempervirens: 8,13; 10,14

Simmons, Georganna: 12,21

Simmons, Robert S.: 3,22

Simmons, Virginia McConnell: 7,14

Smith, Brad: 5,22

snow plants: 5,22

solar energy: 1,13; 10,10

space for life (edit.): 6,2

springtime (edit.): 4,2

stabilization (edit.): 10,2

Stephens, Jack: 4,10

stilt, Hawaiian: 4,10

Stucker, Gilbert F.: 7,4

Suttle, Gary D.: 12,24

T

Tomich, P. Quentin: 2,10

trail system, continental: 6,15

transportation alternatives for national parks: 3,2 (edit.); 4,14; 12,4

trout, greenback cutthroat: 10,21

Tumacacori National Monument (Ariz.): 11,14

turtle, bog: 6,17

Tveten, John L.: 1,4

U

urban parks: 9,20

urban renovation: 11,17

V

Volunteers in the Parks: 4,23

Voyageurs National Park (Minn.): 9,4

W

weather modification: 2,14

Weaver, James A.: 6,17

Webster, Iris R.: 3,4

Wheeler Geological Area (Colo.): 7,14

wild foods: 6,4; 11,4

wildlife

 bison, wild: 5,9

 endangered

 bat, Hawaiian hoary: 2,10

 butterfly, swallowtail: 7,10

 coot, Hawaiian: 4,10

 gorilla: 11,9

 oryx, Arabian: 5,15

 paddlefish, American: 1,21

 pelican, brown: 12,21

 rattlesnake, New Mexican ridge-nosed: 3,22

 stilt, Hawaiian: 4,10

 trout, greenback cutthroat: 10,21

 wolf, red: 8,9

 feeding of, artificial: 1,9

 goats, mountain: 2,18

 poisoning of, from lead shot: 11,22

 salt marsh: 3,16

 San Francisco Bay area: 7,20

Wilhelm, Gene, Jr.: 1,20

wolf, red: 8,9

Wood, Harold Wm., Jr.: 2,5

Y

Yellowstone National Park, bison in: 5,9

Yosemite National Park (Calif.): 11,2; 12,4

Yosemite Valley Railroad: 12,4



Continued from page 2

park protection policy. The award should be made to the lowest responsible bidder undertaking to guarantee compliance with park protection policy, and not on the basis of special or private negotiations.

THE OPEN BIDDING, award, and accounting procedures recommended for concessions should be applicable equally, above a very low minimum contract amount, to all contractors (not merely concessioners) providing goods or services to the parks. Educational and conference programs which have in the past been awarded to nonprofit organizations and others on an individual award basis should be offered only on a competitive public award basis. Managerial contracts such as that given recently to Park Reservations Systems, and later revoked, should above all be granted only on a public competitive bidding procedure to the lowest qualified bidder, with high and rigid standards for the establishment of such qualifications. Such contractors should in all cases be bonded, and the bonding requirements should be strictly enforced by the NPS.

RELATED IS the question of the abandonment of concessions or of lodges and comparable facilities in the parks where they become a burden to the concessioner. Situations of this kind may arise rather often in the future as inflation boosts operating costs, and as the expense of travel may even reduce visitation.

Where the relinquishment of concessions is proposed, the NPS should be prepared to renegotiate on terms more protective to natural conditions in the parks and incorporating safeguards of the kind now proposed. It should also be prepared to purchase facilities which have become burdensome to the concessioner and to lease them thereafter on an open competitive bidding basis for relatively short terms.

THE BASIC STRATEGY of management for concessioners and lessees should be to remove their operations to locations outside the public lands. External, not internal, concessions should be granted. The substance of the grant would be the privilege of operating public transit systems into the parks on a basis providing utility-type monopoly transportation into the park. Several external concessioners might operate from several

entrances. The concession would include a guarantee that the NPS would not expand facilities within the park, whether for lodges and the like, or in the form of roads and parking lots, thus providing a stable business foundation for the external lodges and public transit system. Concessions would also include schedules for the phasing down, but not the phasing out, of private automobile transportation into and within the park.

Such external concessions should be offered first to consortiums or cooperatives consisting of and open to local recreational businesses in the nearby communities. Thereafter they should be offered to well-financed and well-managed business corporations active in the recreation field, but subject to the antimonopoly restrictions we recommend.

THE AWARDS of all concessions and leases should be subject to the constraints of master plans, short-term plans, wilderness protection plans, and standards for the protection of natural conditions within the parks. They should be subject as well to programs for the establishment of public transit systems within, into, and out to the parks. Concessioners and lessees must be required by the imposition of such controls to subject themselves to public policy within the parks, and to recognize that they are not the masters, but the hired caretakers, of the public property within which they have the privilege to carry on their businesses.

We would note in conclusion, as we have noted time and time again over the years, to little avail, that the National Park System cannot be protected without a comprehensive public policy whereby all the federal departments and agencies would be compelled to integrate their land use planning at the Presidential or Cabinet level of the federal government. The purpose would be to provide ample outdoor recreational opportunity for everyone, while at the same time preserving natural conditions within the parks and protecting park visitors from the traffic. The management system thus established must include the national forests, wildlife refuges, and public domain, as well as the National Park System. By means of the planning and approval features of the Land and Water Conservation Fund system of grants to the states, state and local forests and parks should also be brought within the comprehensive program. This system could be established tomorrow by Presidential order.

—Anthony Wayne Smith



HELP PROTECT YOUR PUBLIC LANDS

In addition to NPCA's primary concern with protecting the national parks, NPCA is concerned also with the management, preservation, and use of the vast national resource lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management. The Association has continuously maintained that public lands should not be dominated by private economic interests. NPCA advocates enforcing regulations and developing new management policies that will effectively control mining and grazing, protect wild-

life, apply different standards for predator control from those operating on private lands, provide for recreation, establish wilderness areas, and otherwise properly administer **your** public lands. (See page 15.)

NPCA needs your continued help. Christmas gift memberships in NPCA will bring **your** friends pleasure and information through the magazine all year long—and the satisfaction of knowing that they are an important part of NPCA's vital conservation efforts.

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