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April 25
1939

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California

Honorable Harold L. Ickes
Secretary of the Interior
Interior Department Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The enclosed tear sheets of the article, UNCLE SAM - SAVE COSO - is one of the most interesting and vital pieces to appear anywhere. I'm sure that its import will bring home to you the necessary of doing something that will prevent Cose from vanishing from the map of the United States.

It will appear in the July issue of WEST, on sale at all newsstands around May 2nd.

I believe with Mr. MacDowell that it deserves widespread publicity.

Sincerely yours,

Handwritten signature: Leo Margulies
LEO MARGULIES
Editorial Director

By **SYL**
MacDOWELL
WEST'S Exploring Correspondent



Huge caterpillars and shovels gouge raw,

UNCLE SAM—

I KNOW how Jim Bridger felt when he returned, a century ago, from the unexplored wilderness of "Colter's Hell." And won a reputation as the greatest liar of his times, when he truthfully and accurately described the wonders of what we now know as the Yellowstone geyser basins.

Mr. and Mrs. John Citizen are just as skeptical today when a traveler brings them tales of untamed natural wonders of the West. Except for the few who visit Coso Hot Springs, they doubt its existence, thinking it the fertile imag-

ination of some modern wanderer.

In a desert basin, surrounded by lava-capped ranges, since time immemorial the steam-bubbling mudpots of Coso have exerted a magic such as Ponce deLeon sought in his quest for "The Fountain of Youth" in Florida.

Basking in the bright red, yellow and plaster-white muds, and drinking the mineral waters, the First People escaped torments of the flesh. There the sick and ailing came, and were made whole again, leaving the record of their healings chipped with obsidian

First of a New Series on
America's Wonderlands



gaping wounds in the mineral-laden earth

SAVE COSO!

hammers on the lava canyon walls.

The Shoshones named the place Coso, and Coso became their Deity of Mercy.

Today, massive modern machinery is gouging into the heart of the good god Coso, tearing down the rich cinnabar-laden slopes of "Devil's Kitchen," destroying this splendid, isolated spa for a little mercury that drips from their ore-crammed retorts.

A Famous Health Spot

For many years I have traveled dim

and little-known trails of the Western States. I have seen the age of ruthlessness come; forests turned into barren wilderness, pollution-ruined rivers, dried-up lakes, grassy ranges gutted by flood and wind.

But nowhere, in all our land, is there a more appalling present-day example of utter despoliation than the scene being enacted at Coso Hot Springs. Today, NOW! Unless our Government gains ownership and control of this wonder spot, it will soon be another fading memory of the West that Was.

and Untamed Marvels of the United States!