

I. The Preservation of the World

● The preservation of the world

In Wildness said Thoreau *is the preservation of the world. Without wilderness*, added David Brower a century or so later, *civilization is a cage*.

My father, a factory worker most of his adult life, was also a hunter and fisherman who from my earliest years taught me what he could about woodcraft and animal lore, boatsmanship and love of nature. He often suggested that the ideal job for me when I grew up would be as a game warden, an obvious expression of what he would have liked for himself.

He was disappointed and puzzled when as a teenager I stopped hunting except with a camera; when I entered college as a physics rather than game management major; when I then switched to history and philosophy; and when a few years later I stopped eating fish or any other flesh. His teachings never left me. The natural world. Which from an early period meant to me not only the visual and tactile beauty of nature and its non-human inhabitants, but its absence of ubiquitous artificial noise and light, its peacefulness and quietude, its sense of sanctity to be found away from normal urban existence.

After dropping out of grad school during the Vietnam psychosis (as an English major focusing on medieval studies and what would later be vaguely known as language theory), and after I returned from the brief acting out of a dream of homesteading in the British Columbia outback, the thought of going back into urban America was insufferable, so I applied first for a job with the California State Parks Department as resident caretaker of the Taoist Joss House historic site in Weaverville and, when I didn't get that (a disappointment), applied to the National Park Service.

After examination, I was offered what seemed to me a fairly high-level GS position with future advancement almost guaranteed. Feeling that my father would be proud of me, I went in for my orientation interview only to find that my first assignment would not be in some gorgeous natural setting but as a guard at the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia and that my first training would be in crowd control and how to handle a sidearm. I declined on the spot.

Reflecting only later that my interviewer might have been putting me on and/or deliberately weeding out undesirables, in a few days I applied for a job as a fire lookout with the US Forest Service. Notified a couple of weeks later that I'd been accepted, I showed up at the Eldorado NF Ranger Station in Placerville, passed the interview with my District Ranger at Pollock Pines (after we came to an understanding that though I would shave my beard I would not cut my hair which, I assured him, was a religious matter), and began some of the most enjoyable years of my life working as a fire lookout and firefighter (for a few years as part of a helitack crew) in California and Arizona and on fires in several states around the West.

It was also a time of intense education, not only in fire science and paramilitary organization, but in ecology. In the late 60s and early 70s, interest in the medicinal and psychoactive properties of plants had led me to start collecting information (reading hardcopy and taking longhand notes: this was a decade or so before the personal computer revolution) to compile an herbal of medicinal plants in the western US. It was during those long days and nights in the towers that what started out as research for an herbal became, first, some 25,000 hand-written mini-index cards arranged under subject headings and then, when typed (pre-computer), twelve thick 3-ring notebooks containing several thousand typewritten pages of a minutely subheaded bibliography of economic botany which I called "A Bibliography Preliminary to a Western Herbal: A Subject Catalog of Titles on the Ecologic and Economic Botany of Terrestrial Western North America." Photocopies of the typescript were made and cataloged by the Arizona State Museum at the

University of Arizona in Tucson (which, thanks to John Baroco had supplied me with much of the research material), and several copies were sent to others in the field.

The projected herbal was never written, but the years of research weren't wasted, and I later saw that what I had been doing, besides learning a lot about plant sciences, was teaching myself the basics of ecology (the new science just at that time coming into its own in politics, resource management, and the popular mind); and (via research on poisonous plants), of pollution. That bibliography was a training manual for my next 25 years of environmental work.

I was lucky to have more or less stumbled upon the University of Arizona as a base for my research. Though I didn't know it at the time, UA was one of the world centers for ecological science. It was there, in association with the USDA Southwest Forest and Range Experiment Station that Forrest Shreve had developed his ecozone theories and where, some years later, David Brown and his colleagues had worked out their widely-accepted systems of plant communities and vegetation classification. I was particularly fortunate to have had the encouragement of Patricia Paylore, director of the UA Office of Arid Lands Studies, herself (like John Baroco) a professional librarian, who had recently published several bibliographies on various aspects of arid lands ecology.

A year or so after I transferred from the Eldorado to the Apache-Sitgreaves, the Forest Service started its RARE II process. RARE stood for Roadless Area Review and Evaluation, a survey that Congress, in the 1964 *Wilderness Act* had required public lands agencies to conduct in order to determine which lands in the public domain (including national forests and BLM lands) fit the statutory definition of wilderness. RARE II was a replacement for the previous RARE I that the courts had agreed with the Sierra Club, Wilderness Society, et al, was botched, and possibly corrupted, and had to be redone. Believing some of the Apache-Sitgreaves land eminently suitable (especially the famous Blue Primitive Area), some other FS employees and I, calling ourselves the Blue Wilderness Committee, started to advocate for those areas to be given high ratings in the RARE II process.

Our advocacy got some attention (not least in the Forest Supervisor's office), and it wasn't long before we were in touch with activists from the Sierra Club and The Wilderness Society, who urged us to work with them on behalf of those areas we all agreed were de facto wilderness. Since I was at the time already much involved with herbicides, smelters and nukes, I figured working with those organizations could help me reach their membership on those issues too.

Deciding to volunteer with the Club was a natural. Not only was it the oldest and largest conservation organization, it really was (unlike most major environmental organizations) grassroots, governed from the rank and file; and it had political clout, a great track record for getting good things done in Washington. Wilderness has always been one of the Club's specialities. After I was no longer working for the Forest Service, during my tenure as conservation chair for the Grand Canyon Chapter of the Club, Arizona Wilderness Coalition members more or less decreed me AWC chair too, a nominal title none of them wanted and that they agreed was appropriate for a greenhorn like me, a title I carried on mapping hikes in Arizona roadless areas and to DC to give my first testimony before Congress—in support of the Arizona Wilderness bill (which the AWC had drafted), a bill that when it became law in 1982 gave wilderness protection to some of the most beautiful areas in the state, including some on the Apache-Sitgreaves the Blue Wilderness Committee had wanted (though, due to rancher opposition, not the Blue, the one conservationists thought the most important on the Forest).

Over the years, I worked with many environmental groups, helping some get started, collaborating with some on specific actions, serving on boards and steering committees of some.

As a volunteer on a variety of committees, task forces and the like, my relationship with the Club was the longest and most varied. It gave me invaluable experience in political theory and practical politics, as well as hands-on understanding of environmental science. Conversely, the grassroots structure of the Club allowed my ideas to be widely heard and sometimes, thankfully, adopted in Club policy and actions. Of all the dedicated, knowledgeable and competent people I worked with in the Club, none was more central than Doris Cellarius, who from the time I first volunteered with the National Hazardous Materials Committee she chaired, until nearly a quarter-century later when I retired after my terms on the Conservation Governance Committee, was always generous with her time and expertise and effective in getting our shared vision expressed and implemented.

*

It wasn't always easy. In the West especially, public lands in general and wilderness preservation in particular were and are fighting words. Some of my own experiences in the mid-to late 70s aren't all that unusual. In those days, environmental organizations didn't yet have the large membership they gained during the desecration of public lands under the end-of-days stewardship of Reagan's born-again Secretary of Interior James Watt, who was committed to the Reagan administration's privatization policy (not so much a giveaway of the lands themselves as a transferring of their resources into private hands via sweetheart deals for public timber, minerals, oil, wildlife and forage), and committed to protection of the lands put into his trust only until the Second Coming of the Lord, which (Watt said) might occur at any moment. *Fundamentalist economics* coupled with *fundamentalist religion*, the two legs of the *fundamentalist politics* obtusely, discounting the intrinsic value of this natural world in light of a supernatural next.

In the part of the state where I worked for the Forest Service, there was no local Club group and the standard attitude toward environmentalists was one of vocal, even visceral, dislike. When Buzz Youens, one of a very few resident Club presences in the area, was found shot dead tied to a tree on Escudilla Peak, one of the areas we wanted to have designated Wilderness, the sheriff said he had probably stumbled on a drug deal, but many suspected something different.

A few weeks later, after my last season working for the FS, I took a job thinning pole timber up in the spruce-fir country of the Gila NF above Reserve, New Mexico, just east of the Blue Primitive Area. In these years many National Forest lands were (like the landmark Gila Wilderness, the first wilderness in the country, designated in the 1964 Act) hotly contested by conflicting claimants—including not only conservationists and preservationists, but the resurgent Sagebrush Rebellion (which some said was born and was still headquartered there in Catron Co.), and (predating all the other claimants) the 100-year-old Land Grant Restitution movement calling for return to the rightful heirs of lands illegally taken from the traditional Indo-Hispano stewards after the Mexican-American War.

One of the pole-cutting crews stood out from the others. It consisted of twenty or so Mexican nationals dressed in huaraches and typical white cotton blouses and pantalones, felling the pole trees with machetes. Their *jefe* was a big man in the prime of life, long-haired, built, usually bare-chested except for necklaces, who was sharing with two young women a small travel trailer parked by the main camp. One morning he didn't show up at the campfire and when I asked about him the story (which I was never able to verify) was that he'd gone into town with some of his men the day before, had tried (in a kind of replay of the well-known Reies Tijerina courthouse raid in Tres Amarillas a decade earlier) to take over the Reserve post office, and had been killed in a shoot out with sheriff's deputies, state police, etc. The trailer remained empty

and we didn't see his women or crew again.

One night around the campfire a week or so later, I was talking quietly with the only other pole-cutter still up, a grizzled old-timer cutting trees for the summer ("too damned many trees," he said) to get a grubstake together so he could get back to prospecting in the Superstitions. I was telling him about my interest in wilderness preservation and while I talked he got up, walked around the fire to me, pulled me up by my shirt front, pushed me against a tree, held a knife to my throat and said "I don't want to hear another fucking word about wilderness."

A couple of mornings later, a little before dawn while I was lying awake in my tent getting ready to get up and start the saw, a vehicle stopped on the road by my tent, a gun went off, and a bullet went through the top of my tent. After the vehicle pulled away, I went outside, thought about it a minute or so, then packed up and headed down the mountain for my pay and then home. It's been said there's something about the water in Reserve.

*

It's often noted that the environmental movement grew out of the conservation movement and that the saving of public lands and other components of our natural world, our heritage for future generations, is at the heart of conservation. The concept of wilderness—roughly defined as land not yet trammled by man's commercial and internal combustion mechanisms and by-products—took the notion of conservation a step further, from conservation of resources for human use to preservation in and for themselves, and by so doing—in a world increasingly assaulted by destructive technologies at the command of ruthless ideologies and creeds that exhort believers to unsustainable exploitation of natural resources and faith in absurd theories of unlimited economic growth (with, admittedly, occasional dips in the market)—turned the conservationist ethic into an environmentalist one.

I entered the struggle in that era of transition from conservation to preservation to environmentalism, which is on the one hand, the era when global high-technology capitalism and exponential population growth joined forces and when, on the other, the new science of ecology began to inform a largely mainstream hiker-hunter-fisherman conservationist movement (as well as "resource management" theory) with the ecosystem concept and related ideas, which in turn gave birth to the quasi-religious sometimes passionate Deep Ecology movement with its ideas of universal interrelationship and its intent to reform the environmental movement itself, to turn it from largely anthropocentric toward more utopian (or, said some, more spiritual) concerns, privileging concepts of ecosystem integrity and sustainability over the more traditional emphasis on maximum harvest of selected extractable resources.

Though many environmentalists shied away from the more reverential, animistic and sacramental pretensions of Deep Ecology, many were moved by its extension of ecological principles into a diversity-in-unity/unity-in-diversity monism that restored the spirit they felt had been lost in the hardball political turn the environmental movement had taken. For myself, from my earliest years, aware of and respectful toward the mystery and majesty of nature (*sublimity* the High Romantics called it), I recognized the wild, not the urban, as mankind's natural habitat. Even while I was studying Fred Hoyle's popular books on astronomy in preparation for being an astrophysicist, I knew my heart was with the terrestrial paradise explored by Bartram, Burroughs and Muir, and that preserving it required first and foremost in these critical times not so much mystical sympathy as political engagement.

The 70s were also the period when ecological concepts were being put into national resource management policy. NFMA and FLPMA (the *National Forest Management Act* and *National*

Federal Lands Policy and Management Act) were enacted in 1974 and 1976, respectively, mandating that public lands management be focused on commodity production only insofar as it is compatible with sound ecological science.

In wildness. All dreams may be in vain, but apparently it's impossible not to have them, so why not one like the living dream envisioned in the *Wilderness Act*, NFMA, FLPMA, *Our Common Future* and *Agenda 21*, a vision that offers hope that our grandchildren and their grandchildren will yet have some of the natural world to find themselves in, not only *wilderness* in the sense of pristine (how pristine can anything be when toxic by-products and high-tech surveillance are everywhere in the world?), but *wildness* in the sense of yet untrammelled green and open space of all those lands and waters no longer pristine but still for our individual and collective good well worth saving from more destruction.

Jaguar and jaguarundi
ocelot and antelope
wolf and longtailed weasel
used to roam this valley.
Aplomado falcons
thick-billed parrots, scarlet
ibis used to fly here.
Now that they've gone south
with the topsoil
it's bobcat and coyote
the killers are out to get
with guns and traps and pellets.
We have told the wind
we will kill none of them
rat rabbit or rattlesnake
and we'll keep the cattle off
so wild food can grow again
on this forty at least.

from *The Valley Floor*

Why Wilderness (1978)

Michael Gregory, *Blue Wilderness News* (July 1978)

Federal agencies and financial agents tend to speak of wilderness in commercial terms, as though natural resources have value only insofar as they are commodities. This myopic outlook should not obscure the fact that our primary goal in resource management is to ensure the continual health of the environmental support system in which we live. Without doubt the best form of management the government offers for such protection of our public lands is the Congressionally-designated wilderness as provided for in the 1964 *Wilderness Act*.

Forest service policies alone will not protect our few remaining wildlands. Administrations change every few years; the whims and fancies of local and regional foresters fluctuate with even greater frequency. Primitive Areas, Natural Areas, Research, Wildlife and Botanical Study Areas and their like are all administratively-ordained: only Wilderness Areas have the relative security of an Act of Congress to guarantee their long-range protection.

Wilderness is essential to the health of the human psyche, for only by confronting the untamed otherness of the world can a personality gain the mature perspectives necessary for self-awareness. The inner solitude and psychological health required can be had in the midst of a crowd; but it is highly doubtful that our social sanity can survive the destruction of the last real models of non-human environments within which the psyche was born and raised. If the whole earth is made into our image (as industrialized civilization would have it), what vantage is left from which to see ourselves? What prevents our falling victim to the curse of Midas? It is the unfinished loop that saves our soul; an escape from the cave of pure ego-extension; the antidote to many other forms of over-population sickness.

There is a legitimate concern that Wilderness designation is self-defeating in that the very title is an advertisement bringing people into the area in unprecedented numbers. This concern is more than offset, however, by the inevitable growth of population our region and its wildlands must suffer in the near future: increased backpacker use is by far the lesser evil when compared to the effects of mechanized over-population on roadless areas unprotected by full wilderness management. We can ill-afford to turn over these last wildlands to exploitation by high-technology mining, timber and recreation industries.

Why wilderness? Because we are not above nature but part of it; because we recognize that our own well-being depends on that stability-in-diversity which constitutes a healthy natural environment; because we accept the mature responsibility and constraint that will ensure the continuance of that diversity, that otherness, that untamed source and resource we call the wild.

In Praise of Predators (1979)

Michael Gregory, *Mule Mountain Observer* 2(19)(1979), pp.11,16.

Early morning is my favorite time of day. To wake up in the chilly blue-gray of predawn in time to hear the first tentative chirp of the earliest bird, the watch the stars fade out as the sun turns the rim of the Swisshelms first platinum and then incredible burning gold, is to open fully to the continuing miracle of being alive.

I know no better way to touch the peace that lies within the world than to be working among the damp new life of the garden while the evening primrose are still open and the shadows begin to appear opout of the darkness of the vegetable beds and the first rays of the sun turn the high rimrock of the Mules red. There is a kind of selfless fulfillment in watching families of ravens silhouetted in ragged patterns against the clear sky flap their way toward breakfast somewhere up the valley, one or two of them once in awhile taking time to circle me, checking me out, croaking a good morning before they head off.

Sometimes I'm lucky enough to get up even earlier than usual and find an owl still sitting on the windmill, watching my unexpected approach, flying off in a silent beating of dark and powerful wings when I get too close. As the day grows light his place will be taken by the slow, silent gliding of marsh hawks and the rapid chirring of mourning doves above my head.

The quail seem not to be so cautious in the early light. They take their time between the mounds of mesquite, talking to each other in their low clucks and coos, pecking and scratching and scurrying from one seed to another, until the sun starts to warm things up and they retire to he shade for the day, the males taking their lookout stations and proclaiming territorial rights in long, clear calls.

The other morning as I was watering the new seedbeds, I was startled to hear a coyote begin yapping not sixty feet away from me on top of the dike to the west of the garden. He didn't see me bending behind the elderberry, and for half an hour I watched him yap and chatter on the rim of the hill in that inimitable language only coyotes and their prey understand.

He was a young animal, sleek and thick-furred with a fine pattern of reds and whites and browns mixed among the beige of his coat. At first he would walk a few steps, looking this way and that, yap a few times then stop to see if his weird sounds had scared up a rabbit or two. After a few minutes of that he sat down and yapped away from that position, always checking around after each call, now and then taking time out to scratch behind his left ear at a flea or louse. Finally he seemed to lose interest in the game and decided to lie down, still checking out the surrounding landscape for movement, but evidently willing to give up the hunt for now and enjoy the first warming rays of the sun.

I suppose I'm just as glad he didn't find a jackrabbit that morning to top off his breakfast. The thrill and beauty of the hunt and kill escape me these past twenty years or so since I last took my shotgun into the field.

I should have been sorry to see the terrified jack run down and slaughtered, and I would have recalled, as I always do at such moments, the scream of the last rabbit I shot in a marsh in Ohio one cold winter day long ago.

I can't say I would have been too unhappy at the coyote winning another meal, though. That's the natural way of the world and I know that without the coyotes and owls and bobcats this

valley I live in and love would soon be overrun with rabbits and rodents and the few bits of grassland the cattle have left us would be wiped out and the few vegetables I try to grow would never make their way to my table. There's a balance between predator and prey, and the whole life cycle depends on it. So even though I don't eat meat and would not kill the jackrabbits who keep the grasslands from returning to the valley, I don't begrudge the coyote his life. I hope that I never have to live to see the time when my nights are not filled with the wonderful cacophony of their cries; and I hope that the pelt collectors and bounty hunters and livestock raisers who would as soon see all coyotes go the way of the grizzlies and wolves never have their will.

The Arizona State Legislature has been considering re-legalizing the use of the cyanide poison known as 1080 for the express purpose of killing coyotes. I hope that you will let your senators and representatives in Phoenix (17 W. Washington 85007; toll-free 800-352-8404) know that the predators should not be exterminated for the questionable benefit of the livestock industry.

Who Administers Federally-owned Land? (1980)

Michael Gregory, *Mule Mountain Observer* 3(1)(10 January 1980): 18-19.

Most federally-owned land in the U.S. is administered (with, of course, varying degrees of success) by either the Department of Agriculture (USDA) or the Department of the Interior (USDI). The USDA, through its many sub-agencies, is charged with protecting our vegetation-based resource and with providing advice and support to the industries—farming, ranching, forestry, *etc.*—dependent on that resource.

In Cochise County the USDA is represented by the Coronado National Forest, Soil Conservation Service, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Agricultural Extension, Agricultural Research Service, Screw-worm Eradication Program, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Quarantine Program, *e tal.*

For the past several years the USDA has been under fire from a number of sources, and since the passing of Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz, revamping of the department has accelerated (so rapidly, in fact, that some of the offices named above may already be out of existence or retitled). One of the more debated proposals for reorganization would place the USDA, or at least its largest division, the Forest Service, within the Department of Interior.

Locally this proposal has affected deliberations on the future of the Cochise Head area of the Chiricahuas. The area was relegated to the Future Planning category in the Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE 2) recently completed by the Forest Service, but inclusion of the area last year in the Omnibus National Parks and Recreation Act has prompted both the Coronado National Forest and the USDI's Chiricahua National Monument to develop plans for administering the area as a National Wilderness.

Most people know the USDI through contact with the National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Geological Survey or Bureau of Indian Affairs; but, as with the USDA, the strength of the department lies in its industry-oriented offices like the Bureau of Mines, Bureau of Land Reclamation, and Bureau of Land Management. The BLM has inherited what used to be known as the Public Domain, and today probably has charge of as much land as most other federal agencies combined.

The USDI has not been without problems. The Bureau of Reclamation has been condemned for years as a vehicle for pork-barreling federal funds into disastrous channelization and dam-building projects. The Bureau of Mines, the BLM and related offices in the department have been assailed by environmentalists for being industry puppets and by industry for being anti-business (a conflict which is currently manifesting in the proposed land grab called the Sagebrush Rebellion or Sagebrush Ripoff depending on who you talk to). The Bureau of Indian Affairs has a long history of incredible mismanagement. The Park Service has been accused with some justice of trying to turn Yellowstone and Yosemite into Disneyland's, and the Fish and Wildlife Service often seems to serve no other purpose than providing a glut of fish and game for the pleasure of weekend anglers and hooters and trappers.

Given these bureaucratic shortcomings, it is nice for a change to be able to congratulate the Department of the Interior. After a long period of study and comment from the public, the National Park Service has released its Final Plan for the Management of the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. Under the plan, motorized travel on the river would be phased out over the next few years, thus eliminating the echoing of motors throughout the Canyon that has disrupted the wilderness experience of visitors to the Park for many years. Letters of

congratulations to the Park Service are in order. Send them to Cecil Andrus, Secretary of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 201410.

Secretary Andrus should also receive letters supporting the Bureau of Land Management's Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness Plan, which would protect 6,670 acres of this spectacular southeast Arizona riparian area. The *Wilderness Act* of 1964 directed both the Forest Service and BLM to study their lands for possible inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. The Forest Service completed RARE 2 last year, and Aravaipa is the first area to be recommended by BLM. Letters should ask that Secretary Andrus pass on the recommendation to Congress for approval, and copies of the letters should be sent to our Senators and Representatives in Washington.

The BLM wilderness study program is well underway, and public comment is being eagerly sought by the agency. To keep up with the program, write State Director, USDI-BLM, 2400 Valley Bank Center, Phoenix, Arizona 85073. Ask to be placed on the Arizona Wilderness mailing list and request maps and information on BLM Wilderness Study Areas. For descriptive literature and action suggestions, write Arizona Wilderness Coalition, 3737 N. Country Club #N-107, Tucson, Arizona 85716.

Elections, Environment and the Sagebrush Ripoff (1980)

Michael Gregory, (*Mule Mountain Observer* 3(3)(February 7, 1980)

The key to success in attaining and maintaining environmental quality is effectiveness in the electoral arena. Policy is often set and applied by non-elected bureaucrats in the miscellaneous agencies and offices of government, but legislatures hold the pursestrings, and elected legislators write the laws that policy decisions are based on.

Over a hundred bills that may become law have already been introduced to the Arizona Legislature since it reconvened in January. Bills on a radiation regulatory commission (SB 1005), equal rights for women (SCR 1002), establishment of environmental laboratories (HB 2074), a statewide cancer registry (SB 1056), and development of a comprehensive poison and drug information center (SB 1067) are winding their way through the channels of committees and personalities in the Capitol.

Now is the time to become involved in the writing of the laws we will have to live by. The input of even a few people, especially people whose names are not well known in the marble halls, can have an unusually strong effect on a congressman's votes.

Bills will be sent free of charge if you request them by card or phone from the Arizona State Legislature, 1700 West Washington, Phoenix 85007, toll-free 1-800-352-8404. The same numbers can be used to communicate with our state senators and representatives, and to order the free weekly Legislative Digest which lists all introduced bills and their committee referrals.

Both Houses of the State Legislature have before them bills titled "State Control of Federal Lands" (HB 2001; SB 2012). These are the so-called "Sagebrush Rebellion" bills, corresponding to the "Western Lands Distribution and Regional Lands Equalization Act" legislation currently before the US Congress. The federal bill seeks to turn over US Bureau of Land Management and US Forest Service lands to the states, and is being unshamefacedly sponsored by both Senator Goldwater and Senator DeConcini.

In Arizona, the introduced bills seek the transfer to state control of some 12½ million acres of public lands now managed by the BLM. In effect, this would mean a transfer of public lands to private hands, for in Arizona as in much of the west state-owned lands are notoriously and overwhelmingly controlled by the livestock industry. This control is so rigid throughout our state that it is a commonplace occurrence for ranchers to deny public access to publicly-owned state lands on which they hold grazing permits.

Having little water or other development resources, most of these lands were considered worthless by State and private interests and were left in the public domain after the land grabs of the 19th and early 20th centuries because their management was bound to be a financial liability. That situation has not changed, and assumption of control by the State of Arizona would not only add some thousands of dollars to the cost of running the State Land Department, but would cost Arizona counties over 6½ million dollars in revenue each year from loss of BLM Payment-in-lieu-of-Taxes funds.

Besides being a last-ditch (and likely unconstitutional attempt of livestock and like-minded interests to lock up our public lands, the) Sagebrush Ripoff is a vindictive reaction of the belated attempt by BLM to regulate our rangelands so as to prevent more of the serious deterioration they have suffered under the grazing permit system of the past half-century or so.

As reported at the “Symposium on Rangeland Policies for the Future” held by BLM, the US Forest Service and the President’s Council on Environmental Quality in Tucson a year ago last January, some 84% of our public rangelands nationwide are in fair, poor or bad condition. Acting under the Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976, BLM, like other Federal agencies, has begun to phase out severe overgrazing that slack management has allowed for so long. This is not an issue of states’ rights as proponents would have us believe, but another clear instance of vested interests trying to exploit public resources at the expense of private citizens.

Amendment S.1589 to the US Senate bill (also supported by DeConcini) makes this clear; the amendment would undermine BLM’s ability to correct overgrazing by limiting to 10%/year the number of livestock that could be taken off any rancher’s allotment. I have personally investigated some public lands in Arizona that range scientists say are overstocked 200-300%, and state-owned rangelands are frequently in even worse shape. State ownership of the federal lands would not improve the situation, for there is not the slimmest chance that the Legislature would fund the State Land Department to administer newly-acquired rangeland even to the tune of the inadequate \$19 million BLM presently spends on the task.

A similar bill has been introduced in the US House of Representatives regarding the Forest Service lands being considered by Congress for wilderness status protection. The Foley bill (HR 6070) would eliminate from further study all roadless areas not recommended for immediate wilderness designation by the US Forest Service last year at the end of its Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II). The deceptively-titled National Forest Multiple-Use Management Act of 1980 if passed would release some 36 million roadless acres of Forest Service land to immediate logging, mining and recreational development; put a cut-off date of 1984 on consideration by Congress of the US Forest Service wilderness recommendations and 1987 non areas recommended for further planning; remove protection for Primitive Areas now managed as wilderness; and would effectively eliminate private citizen participation in the National Forest Planning Program now underway.

Clearly, our elected officials should be persuaded to stop passage of these bills. Senators Goldwater and DeConcini can be reached at the Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510. State Legislators can be reached at the Phoenix numbers given earlier in this article. Sierra Vista residents will especially want to talk to State Representative Bill English who sits on the Counties and Municipalities Committee which has first review of the bill and the first chance to kill it.

People who live in the eastern half of Cochise County will want to discuss the issues with Rep. Joe Lane of Wilcox, who introduced the measure to the House.

Forest Planning in Arizona (1980)

Michael Gregory, *Citizens National Forest Coalition Southwest Newsletter* (15 November 1980)

Five National Forests in Arizona have begun their Land and Resource Management Planning with issuance of a booklet on "Issues, Concerns and Opportunities." The five are the Apache-Sitgreaves, Coconino, Kaibab, Prescott and Tonto. To make sure that the real issues and concerns are heard, get a copy of the booklet free from your local NF and reply to the questions. Below are some general comments that may help your own thoughts while replying to the FS.

Recreation In a very real sense our Forests have been recreated nearly to death. The main cause is the same as for most other forms of forest deterioration: urban leisure class/time energy overpopulating the public lands. There should be a moratorium on the development of campgrounds, roads, trails, recreation sites, etc. on all National Forests. Undeveloped recreation should be emphasized: hikers are preferred to Winnebagoes. USFS recreation personnel should patrol on horseback rather than in petroleum-powered vehicles. Stocking of fish and game should be ended in all Forest waters, except for stocking of natural predators for control of unnatural pest populations; the rule of thumb is that natural diversified ecosystems should be the goal of recreational as well as all other phases of Forest management.

Wilderness

The recent giveaways of public lands by the USDI and the federal court decision to open BLM Wilderness Study Areas to mining exploration, enhances our sense of urgency in wilderness protection. *All RARE II further planning areas and other de facto wilderness areas of the National Forests should be designated wilderness by Congress and Protected as wilderness by Forest administrators until Congress so acts.* Mining exploration and extractive industries altogether should not be permitted in wilderness preserves. Livestock should be rapidly phased out of all wilderness areas and all livestock-related developments allowed to self-destruct or be removed. No more trails should be built in wilderness areas, no chemical pesticides should be used there, and no advertising or promotion of wilderness areas should be condoned. Where possible, native plants and animals should be re-introduced to wildernesses.

Fish and Wildlife

Fish and game stocking of public lands should be ended at once. Not only is stocking a form of legalized murder by the State, but it results in destruction of our few riparian areas by campsite development, trampling and general problems of overpopulation. Animal communities ought to be encouraged to return to states of natural diversity rather than being weakened and destroyed by unnatural monocultures of game animals. Vegetation manipulation for so-called "enhancement" should be prohibited. Trapping of animals by leg traps and baiting with poisons and shooting them from the air should be ended on all National Forests.

Range

The subsidizing of the livestock industry by the USFS has led to some of the most serious problems with the ecological balance of our forests. Livestock grazing fees should be doubled or tripled in the near future. Fines for overstocking should be similarly increased. Livestock should be excluded from wilderness areas, recreation sites, sensitive riparian and other botanically significant areas. Vegetative manipulation (type conversion, seeding, etc.), especially chemical

use (fertilizers, pesticides, etc.) should be prohibited in range management.

Timber

The basis of the ecological disasters associated with the timber industry is the ridiculously low prices the FS sets on our national timber resource. The cost at the stump of all National Forest timber should be at least doubled. Timber quotas should be revised sharply downward and so-called marginal areas should be exempted from harvest plans. Timber cut should never be allowed to exceed regrowth rates, as is now done routinely. Silvicultural practices should emphasize keeping the forest in a state of healthy diversity, which means uneven-aged rotation, selective cutting, non-plantation style planting, natural re-seeding, etc. Chemical pesticides should be replaced by bio-controls or manual labor in all phases of timber management.

Minerals and Energy

Federal permits should be withdrawn from all out-of-date claims and all claims on which assessment requirements have not been set. All mining and energy developments must follow NEPA guidelines, including full Environmental Impact Statement process prior to ground-breaking.

Human and Community Development

The USFS should stop subsidizing forest products industries through low prices, poor enforcement of regulations, and other incentives, but should instead encourage development of locally-staffed, highly-activated forest work crews to perform Forest maintenance functions on a contract basis—thus replacing our dependence on energy-intensive and environmentally-disruptive methods.

Protection

What the forest most needs protection from is us. Forest management must set natural forest conditions as the primary goal. Natural fires should be allowed to burn in all cases where such would not result in an unnatural holocaust or where prior chemical spraying of the area would result in chemical contamination by by-products.. In areas unsafe for natural fires, controlled burns should be used to return forests to natural conditions. Forest pests should be controlled only when necessary to prevent clearly unreasonable loss due to unnatural conditions. Natural cycles of population must be considered in all Forest productivity analyses and control measures should be based on long- and short-term pest population cycles rather than unnatural optimum or managed conditions. Chemical pest control should be dropped from all management plans and replaced by alternative methods available through Integrated Pest Management approaches. As always, the goal is not commodity production but a healthy forest environment which ensures a sustained yield of natural products

Soils

Soil vegetation maps of all National Forests should be completed for use in all other aspects of Forest planning. Soil loss and stream sedimentation should be prevented through stricter control of the extractive livestock, timber and mining industries. Stabilization of depleted soils should employ native plants and manual labor.

Facilities

No new administrative sites, campsites, dams, or roads should be built on the National Forests for at least 10 years. Existing facilities should be maintained to the minimum extent necessary. Wherever possible, existing roads and facilities should be allowed to revert to nature or be removed. Transmission lines, rights-of-way, etc. should be permitted as seldom as possible. Airstrips and helicopter spots should be eliminated wherever possible, and air traffic over wilderness areas should be limited to emergencies. No more forest roads should be paved.

Herbicides, Overgrazing and the Coronado (1983)

Canyon Echo 19(3)(April 1983)

The following quotations are some of the conclusions drawn in the 1981 Analysis of the Management Situation concerning range management in the Forest:

- Adjustment in numbers of livestock, length of grazing season, to improved management systems are necessary to improve the productivity and condition of these ranges.
- Current direction calls for Level D (intensive) range management on approximately 1.12 million acres of the Coronado.
- Projected accomplishments are predicated on a widespread use of approved herbicides.
- The use of chemicals is presently confined to research projects and to control aquatic weeds in fishing lakes.
- Public resistance to the use of chemicals is growing.
- It would seem that a higher percentage of our efforts should be devoted to non-chemical plant control efforts.

In December, 1982, the Forest Service issued a 50-year management plan based on this AMS, and has been requesting public input. In the Plan, the Forest Service considers six alternative management packages. The alternative preferred by the FS, called the Proposed Action, would make livestock and fuelwood production the two main goals of resources management on the Coronado, and would attempt to achieve its goals through vegetation manipulations of rangeland.

In the Plan, over 1,000,000 acres of the Coronado (over 65% of the total Forest) would be subject to Level D livestock management, meaning the use of bulldozers, root-cutting tractors, fire, and herbicides to convert native shrubbery and woodlands to grass for cattle forage.

According to the FS, over 50% of allotments on the Coronado are in "less than fair" condition due to overgrazing. Overgrazed land means an increase in soil loss due to erosion, wasted water that runs off bare ground rather than being soaked in, a reduction in good habitat for wildlife, and a general depletion of all forest resources, including the capacity of the land to support cattle.

Under the proposed action, cattle would be maintained at the present unnaturally high levels—levels so high they can only be maintained by expensive manipulations of the land to create artificial, non-typical forage production units that can only be maintained by repeated expensive manipulations. And under this expensive, chemical-laden Plan, overgrazing would not be ended on the Coronado for at least 60 years.

There is an obvious, reasonable alternative. The Coronado Plan calls it Alternative B. This alternative would emphasize recreational uses of the Forest and non-game wildlife, and would end overgrazing 30 to 40 years sooner than the Proposed Action. And end it without the use of

herbicides or other disruptive manipulations. How? By the simple, inexpensive method of reducing the number of cattle so that the rangelands can restore themselves through natural regrowth. Once the land is restored, the number of grazing cattle can be increased again.

The period for public comment ended April 1, 1983; however, this issue needs to be closely followed. For further developments, contact the office of R.B. Tippeconic, Forest Supervisor, Coronado National Forest, 301 W. Congress St., Tucson, Arizona 85701.

No Road to Progress (1985)

Michael Gregory, *Bisbee Review/Sierra Vista Herald* (10 November 1985)

You don't usually get to meet many people out on Davis Road, or you didn't used to, but the other day I came across 20 or 25 between McNeal and Tombstone. Most of them were driving the heavy earthmoving equipment being used to transform the road into a paved artery.

I voted against the bond that's paying for paving Davis Road. But like just about everything else people call progress around here, it was a more or less foregone conclusion that they'd build it. A few miles is already done, and they're rapidly completing the rest.

There are already too many people driving too fast around here. Davis Road was one of the last long stretches you could drive without being forced into superhighway pace. A good, reasonable country road, passable at decent speeds in most weather, and maintainable at low, labor-intensive costs. One of those roads where you don't have to feel odd about driving too slow to run over a jackrabbit or rattlesnake; a road with enough of its own eccentricities that you have to go slow anyway, so you get a chance to watch the scenery too.

But it seems that people these days want highways everywhere. More speed, more people, more tax money spent. In the long run, often from greed rather than need, and sometimes from ignorance and apathy, we destroy what we live here for, or let it be destroyed by those who do not live here, could not live here, who, as they pass through, only use this place we call home.

It's the same with Davis Road. Pour money into the pavement mostly for the dubious benefit of those who are in too much of a hurry trying to get somewhere else to appreciate what's right here now.

There's no question that a lot of us will use the road more, but the main function of the new Davis Road will be a shortcut from Tucson to Douglas and the new prison; it will not only bypass traffic around Bisbee, a city that's crying out loud for tourists, but will permanently alter the character of the country it passes through.

I hate to mention it because some of you will insist on seeing it for yourselves. It's like telling somebody about your favorite fishing spot. But since it's already about gone, guess talking about it won't do much damage. Davis Road passes through some mighty fine country: on one side, the northern tip of the Mules, on the other, the southern tip of the Dragoons, and all around the swelling forms of the Tombstone Hills.

Part of this land is protected as a federal watershed research station. Some of the prettiest rangeland in the country is here. It's the type location for what scientists call the "Mesquite Grassland" ecosystem found nowhere but in scattered parts of the Southwest—rolling alluvial terraces covered with scattered yucca, mesquite in the bottoms, and, where the jackrabbits and cattle haven't been too thick, a lush windblown pelt of perennial lovegrass and summer annuals.

Even the overgrazed and eroded scrubland to the east has its beauty—dark clumps of brush and yucca interspersed among patches of dried and silvered grasses leading up to where the creosote and chaparral take over near Highway 80.

Used to be you could stand at the intersection of Davis and Frontier Roads and look north-

northwest and know that there was no pavement running across your vision all the way to Interstate 10, and then nothing again until Highway 70 up on the Reservation. That was a vital part of the feeling of freedom and openness that has characterized Cochise County for centuries.

Now they're not only embalming Davis Road in macadam, but they want to hem in its horizons with a string of giant steel towers along the face of the Dragoons, across the San Pedro Valley to a substation south of Sierra Vista. More power for electric stoves, air conditioners and water heaters, more electric lights to protect people from each other.

Another nice thing about the old Davis Road was that at night you could stop the car and get out and watch the moonlight and wind move through the grasses, making the fields roll like waves on the ocean. Sometimes you could hear the coyotes in their mad song. The nearest lights were in Douglas and Agua Prieta. Sometimes you could stay there all night and never meet another car or person, and watch the unchallenged brightness of the stars roll out over the Chiricahuas and disappear several hours later behind the dark mass of the Huachucas. That opportunity will be gone now, along with the familiar bends and dips of the road, and the silence that held it all together.

Just before I came upon the road crew the other day, I passed a dead coyote. About the biggest one I've s'ever seen, and the first dead one I've seen on Davis Road. Lots of live ones over the years, some of them up pretty close, but never a dead one before. I take it as a sign of things to come.

Every year we cut up more of the land with unneeded highways and power lines and populate the resulting grids with subdivisions and shopping sprawls and prisons. In our mere 10 years here, we have killed off or scared off most of the game and other native inhabitants, eaten up or burned up the vegetation, dried out the rivers, befouled the air, and now we want to encourage more people to come here and drive fast. And this they call progress.

On the Draft Animal Damage Control Plan for the BLM Safford District (1989)

Michael Gregory, for the Sierra Club Grand Canyon Chapter, presented to the USDI-BLM Safford District (10 January 1989)

Dear Mr. Brady:

The following are the comments of the Grand Canyon Chapter of the Sierra Club on the draft Animal Damage Control plan for the Safford District.

First, two process issues:

1) I am disappointed that despite my longstanding request to be notified of any proposals for BLM pesticide activities, I found out about this plan only today, five days before comment deadline, from a third party. Please reinstate my name on whatever mailing lists are necessary to assure that I am notified well in advance of any future plans/proposals/etc. for pesticide use on the district.

2) As witnessed by numerous articles, letters to the editor, etc. in newspapers statewide, including some in the Safford District area, ADC programs are highly controversial. Yet, not only has no Environmental Assessment been prepared (as required by NEPA for such controversial projects), but apparently there has been no attempt to inform or involve the public in any way. After hearing about the plan today, I called several groups and concerned individuals in the area, none of whom had heard about the plan. Hopefully, you will extend the comment period for another 30-45 days and make a sincere effort to develop public participation.

Plan elements

3) Basis for action: By automatically assuming that "if a conflict between predators and livestock exists, there is justification for conducting damage control," the draft plan would establish a "no-fault" policy for livestock operators, regardless of how much the livestock management may be the cause of an alleged conflict. Rather, the plan should require a) proof that there is a conflict; b) proof that the wildlife and not the livestock operation is the cause of the conflict; and c) proof that the conflict is economically significant enough to justify control measures, and that the economic benefits outweigh the costs of controlling the public's wildlife. These decisions should not be made just by ADC and the livestock operators, both of whom are likely to be biased, but should involve BLM personnel and the Arizona Department of Game and Fish (ADGF). Operators who claim a loss should have to show that their management system does not invite predation. Public money should not be spent to protect a livestock operator who does not use best management practices to minimize predation.

4) Request for control: BLM, as manager of the public wildlife resource, must take responsibility for protection of that resource. ADC's specialty is wildlife destruction, not protection. What kind of control is to be undertaken should be decided by BLM wildlife specialists in consultation with ADGF. In non-emergency situations (which, despite typical operator and ADC claims, is almost always), the public should also be involved in such decisions.

5) "Preventative control," as the term is normally used by ADC, should not be allowed except where a particular offending predator has been identified (as the plan proposes for wilderness and other special areas). Wiping out as many coyotes or other predators as possible from an area is a barbaric practice that should be absolutely prohibited not only in special use areas and for

black bears and mountain lions as proposed in the draft, but on all public lands and for all species. In most instances, real preventative control would be control of livestock, for example keeping calves out of lion areas.

6) Control methods: Leg traps, aerial hunting, M-44 and poison baits should be prohibited for predator control not just in special areas, as proposed in the plan, but in all areas. When any of these methods are used, for rabid rodents or other vector control, not only the Area Manager but the public should be notified. The plan should specifically describe what criteria will be used to determine if aircraft will be "approved".

7) Special management areas: The plan should spell out exactly how "management will be more restrictive" in these areas. Again, the public should have a say in deciding if wildlife control will be carried out in special areas. Please send me a copy of the map mentioned in the draft plan; my copy does not have one.

8) Stipulations: a) If, despite our recommendation, M-44's are used, the public as well as the Area Manager should be notified of their location; in no case should they be permitted in areas where listed species (eagles, e.g.) are likely to feed on contaminated carcasses. b) If, again despite our recommendation, leg traps are used, they should be checked not just "frequently", but daily to prevent unreasonable cruelty to trapped animals, including non-target species. c) The plan should define what criteria would be used to determine when a livestock loss is "serious" enough to warrant control activities in wilderness and other special areas.

On the Draft Animal Damage Control Plan for the Coronado National Forest (1990)

Michael Gregory, for the Sierra Club Grand Canyon Chapter, submitted to USDA-FS Coronado National Forest (12 February 1990)

Dear Mr. Abbott:

The following are the comments of the Grand Canyon Chapter of the Sierra Club on the 4 January 90 draft Animal Damage Control plan for the Coronado NF.

Issues, Concerns and Opportunities

We suggest that #9 Availability of nonlethal methods be retitled *Use of nonlethal methods*, and that nonlethal first response be required in all cases where a predator is blamed for livestock loss.

We further suggest that two more issues need to be added to the list: (1) Cost/Benefit analysis (to determine viability of actions undertaken to protect domestic livestock), and (2) Direct supervision by state wildlife management personnel (i.e., supervision over APHIS personnel and ranchers, as they already have supervisory authority over hunters and trappers).

Alternatives

We feel that the alternatives as set up arbitrarily favor use of APHIS for predator control. As you know, APHIS predator control programs are highly controversial, but disease vector control is far less so. We recommend that an alternative be included that would exclude APHIS from predator programs but allow the agency to continue its work, when necessary, for controlling outbreaks of rabies, plague and other diseases.

The alternatives as written in the draft also present a bias in favor of livestock over wildlife. For instance, there is no alternative that requires that only the particular offending predator be taken, or that the livestock operator prove that it is not his ranching practices, rather than the predator, that is at fault. We recommend that both these requirements be met on the Coronado, and that in general that Coronado policy establish a presumption in favor of the public resource (wildlife) over private interests (livestock) in all cases.

As noted in the issues above, control by ranchers should be permitted only under direct supervision of state game and fish personnel, and only when the value of livestock loss clearly outweighs the value of wildlife taken and the administrative costs incurred by such taking. Livestock loss *per se* should not automatically trigger control measures, and some loss should be expected as a cost of running a livestock business in predator country.

Under any alternative, cyanide guns and other pesticides should be prohibited for predator control, as should aerial gunning. Leg traps should be prohibited, except when failure of other nonlethal methods proves their need; when allowed, they should have to be checked at least daily (not even that may be sufficient to "minimize suffering. . .and insure safe release of nontarget animals").

Predator control for livestock protection (or as retribution for livestock loss) should be prohibited in wilderness.

Control of coyotes and smaller animals should be undertaken only on a case-by-case basis to

protect introduced species, not for livestock protection.

We appreciate the efforts of the Forest to incorporate nonlethal methods, as detailed under Alternative D in the draft, and we recommend that those methods which involve livestock management to be written into grazing contracts as required Best Management Practices for grazing permittees. A permittee who does not practice such management should not be given the benefit of taxpayer-assisted predator control. Too often, killing of predators in the name of livestock protection is not protective at all, but merely rancher revenge for livestock loss that could have been prevented by proper livestock management.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft. We look forward to seeing the final document.

Questions Concerning the Proposed Contract Between Cochise County and Animal Damage Control (1989)

Michael Gregory, for the Sierra Club Grand Canyon Chapter

Since wildlife is a public resource, the following questions should be answered before Cochise County enters into a contract to kill wildlife.

1. How many animals has ADC killed in Cochise Co. in previous years?
2. How many of those animals were rabid or otherwise diseased?
3. Why were the animals that were not diseased killed?
4. How many animals were killed because ranchers said they were stockkillers?
5. What was the value to the public of the wildlife killed?
6. What kind of proof was there that the animals killed were the ones that actually killed the livestock?
7. Who determines which wild animals will be killed?
8. What criteria are used to determine when and which animals will be killed?
9. What kind of controls will be included in the contract to guarantee that only diseased or "guilty" animals are exterminated?
10. How will Arizona Game and Fish be involved?
11. What requirements must ranchers meet to prove that they are not inviting wildlife to attack their livestock?
12. Why should taxpayer money be used instead of letting ranchers protect their livestock themselves?