



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, D.C. 20240

March 14, 1996

Dear Fellow Arkansans:

Enclosed is a camera-ready article written by Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt especially for Arkansas weeklies and dailies. I hope you will consider publishing it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Gauldin".

Michael Gauldin
Director of Communications
U.S. Department of the Interior

Enclosure

Endangered bird finds support at home

Arkansas, South shows nation how it's done

By Bruce Babbitt
Secretary of the Interior.

Too often the phrase "endangered species" conjures up images of an exotic fish, bird or animal that brings controversy to the part of the country or the planet where it's vanishing. In those other places, it seems, the creature splits its surrounding community in two camps, favoring either jobs or the environment.

As it turns out, however, America's classic example of an endangered species may quietly live right here in your own back yard: a rare, black and white Arkansas native called the red-cockaded woodpecker.

Yet for some good, sound reasons, that bird brings no controversy, no division, no costly litigation, no political wrangling, and no economic stagnation. If anything, it's boosting jobs, restoring ancient forests, and bringing people together.

In short, the woodpecker is proving the Endangered Species Act works exactly as it was planned.

I know because I've seen it working — firsthand — in the forests and woodlots all across the South. I've seen this bird coming back on Southern military bases, from Ft. Stewart outside Savannah, Georgia, to Eglin Air Force Base in Florida, to Camp LeJune, North Carolina, where the Marines have a unique slogan: "We're Saving a Few Good Species."

But I've seen it work best in the rural towns and longleaf pine forests of Arkansas, for it's there that timber companies like Georgia Pacific and Potlatch Corp. are charting an entirely new course in endangered species forestry, setting an example for America to follow.

In Arkansas, I have seen a refreshingly vigorous commitment to find, protect and recover the red-cockaded woodpecker, and, in the process, to restore Arkansas' rich natural forest heritage — a heritage that nearly vanished.

At the beginning of this century, the entire state was covered by the greatest old growth pine forests on the continent. A traveler could ride from Texarkana to Memphis shaded by the



great native pines — longleaf, loblolly, shortleaf and slash — the entire way. Nor would he be lonely, for the entire range was filled with the staccato and sight of the red-cockaded woodpecker.

Then came the northern timber barons, moving south from the cut-over lands around the Great Lakes, stripping the state's trees and leaving a ruined landscape in their wake. The native woodpecker vanished at the pace of the



clearcuts, for it can nest only in cavities excavated from tall, old pines whose interior wood has been softened by a fungus called red heart disease.

Only one thing kept this native creature from extinction: the 1973 Endangered Species Act.

After it was listed in the 1970s, southern timber industry skeptics predicted a replay of the "jobs vs. environment" train wreck caused by the Northern spotted owl. Thanks to Arkansas loggers, they can tell a quieter, subtler tale, with a different ending.

That tale began three years ago, when I met with Pete Correll, president of Georgia Pacific, to avoid a southern standoff like that in the Pacific Northwest. Pete made a suggestion that I quickly agreed to: Get his local land managers and our federal biologists in one room, tell them of our desire for consensus, and keep their feet to the fire until we worked out a solution.

Our result? A landmark, common sense agreement whereby Georgia Pacific protects the old growth tree clusters that are active nesting sites for the approximately 100 remaining woodpecker groups that forage on 50,000 acres of the 4.2 million acres of company owned pine forest.

That step set up an example of how business could move from hindsight to foresight, from reaction to prevention. That agreement sets a path for dozens more to follow.

Just last October I went to Warren, outside Little Rock, to announce an agreement with Potlatch Corp. That timber company, which has the fourth largest population of woodpeckers on private land in the U.S., is managing 15,000 acres of its forested habitat for the rare, native bird. That means retraining its Arkansas land managers to identify, recognize, protect and even restore habitat for the 44 nesting woodpecker groups that live there.

It also means no train wreck. No lawsuits. No "us vs. them" rhetoric. Arkansas' timber industry and landowners, like the military, have made peace with the woodpecker, embracing it on their woodlots. There is a southern success story, demonstrating that jobs and the environment grow together.

This month, *American Whitewater* is honored to have a statement by Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt. Previously, Babbitt has served as Governor of Arizona from 1978-1987, and as Attorney General of Arizona from 1975-1978. AWA staff had the opportunity to meet Babbitt on the banks of the Potomac River last fall where he confided his love of rivers and his weekly habit of canoeing on the Potomac.

A Nation United by Waters

The 1972 Clean Water Act is restoring more than lakes and rivers; it has set off a renaissance of economic and recreational growth on every waterfront in America. Now, suddenly, it's all at stake.

By Bruce Babbitt

Only a quarter century ago, the striped bass fishing industry on the Atlantic coast had collapsed. Cleveland's Cuyahoga River caught fire. Lake Erie was pronounced "dead." Appalachian rivers ran orange. And kayakers and canoeists on the Potomac River needed inoculations against diseases in order to enjoy its now famous rapids.

It seemed every one of America's rivers and lakes, especially those near industry and cities, was on a downward spiral of destruction and sickness.

Then, in response, a progressive, bipartisan Congress passed the 1972 Clean Water Act. That landmark conservation law articulated a simple, if awkwardly stated goal: make the nation's waters "swimmable and fishable." Set against



Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt rallies support for the C&O Canal Restoration Project. Photo by Rich Bowers

two centuries of abuse, it was the single most ambitious environmental law in history.

And it worked, in ways we never imagined.

For the Act, as enforced by the Environmental Protection Agency, not only gave Americans confidence in what they drink. It not only allowed Americans once again to fish, swim, canoe, and kayak in their local and urban rivers.

It set off an economic and social renaissance.

Striped bass fishermen are back at work on the Hudson River and in Chesapeake Bay. The Jersey Shore has spawned a new whalewatching industry.

Cleveland's Cuyahoga River doesn't burn anymore; it has walleye swimming in it, sportfishing boats to chase them, and new marinas and a riverwalk to anchor nose boats at the end of the day. The Great Lakes support 900,000 boaters and 2.5 million anglers, infusing more than \$3 billion in the regional economy. Last year, I was one of them.

I joined Americans out on the lakes and rivers of 27 states and some five dozen cities to celebrate the waterfront renaissance taking place all across America. A renaissance brought by strong federal conservation laws.

In April, I went fishing on Jamaica Bay and the Hudson River. I chased after Walleye on the Cuyahoga and Lake Erie one rainy morning last May. I caught greenback cutthroat trout in Colorado and smallmouth bass in North Carolina. I strolled the waterfront riverwalks in Jacksonville, San Antonio and Cleveland.

I rafted down the James River, an extraordinary river, the rapids running as if in a wilderness area right through the heart of urban Richmond. It's a river which has come back to life. Herring, shad, and sturgeon are now migrating and recreational boating is increasing due to its clean up, living proof that we can restore this landscape.

I saw kayakers eskimo roll on the Nashua and Merrimack Rivers of New England — rivers that before the Clean Water Act used to run orange, yellow, and green, depending on the factory discharge. I paddled down the Chattahoochee River in Atlanta, down the Little Miami River that runs through Cincinnati, across the southern estuaries of San Francisco Bay.

I expected dramatic improvement of our watersheds themselves. What I didn't expect to see was the social transformation, and economic growth that accompanied it on the banks of the waters. For as communities restored their local waters, the waters restored our communities. The Clean Water Act is the single greatest urban renewal law in American history.

That change is most evident in our own back yards. For example, I have seen growth in recreation near my home in Washington, D.C. Gradual, steady cleanup of the once polluted Potomac River, and protection of the historic C&O Canal, have allowed kayak outfitters to teach the crowded, often uptight D.C. population how to enjoy the remarkable resource.

Over 3 million residents of Maryland, Virginia, and Washington D.C. live within a 20 minute drive of the pristine shoreline near Great Falls. Trails wind through parks and over bridges, and fishing holes are full of small mouth bass; recently the Fish and Wildlife Service cut a notch in Little Falls Dam for shad to spawn further upstream. Land values increase with the cleanup, attracting businesses, rowing clubs, restaurants and outfitters.

Elsewhere, kayaks and canoes play the rapids at Fish Ladder and Rocky Island, while blue herons cruise alongside. Young and old generations alike are learning to roll in the placid back channels. The bedrock to the Potomac's restoration, as on all of our nation's rivers and waterways, remains the Clean Water Act.

Each river, lake and bay in America is a testament to the local communities who have learned to use that federal water law to preserve their sense of place, and to create a rich, democratic public commons on their waterfront.

The problems, however, are not entirely resolved. Runoff from streets, farms, backyards and forests are still pouring enormous amounts of pollution into rivers upon which we depend. During storms, runoff and sewage outflows wash untreated into our waters.

It would seem logical to build upon our past successes, to expand the scope of the Clean Water Act and other conservation laws to solve the problems that still exist.

Instead, on May 16, 1996, the House of Representatives chose to shrink it by

passing H.R. 961 by a vote of 240-185. This bill replaces water quality standards based on science, with standards based upon "economic and social considerations." It defines 70 percent of the region's wetlands — our natural water filters — out of existence. And it repeals the entire stormwater permitting system. The leadership of this Congress is now telling the American people that it's time to gut the very heart of the Clean Water Act.

In 1994, not one politician campaigned on a platform to weaken clean water protection. Yet some members of Congress now claim that the original goal of the Clean Water Act goes too far and impedes economic growth. They ignore the great economic benefit of clean, healthy watersheds: the boating, bait & tackle, ecotourism, and outdoor outfitter businesses.

The Republican environmental onslaught does not stop there. The GOP House whip compared the EPA to the Gestapo. The GOP chair of the public lands committee tried to set up a commission to shut down some 315 National Parks and Monuments Units — including the C & O Canal, the Cuyahoga Valley NRA, the Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River, and the Chattahoochee River NRA. A Colorado GOP leader tried to give away 270 million acres of public land. A Freshman House GOP Rep. staged an "endangered salmon bake."

Then Congress cut funds for key conservation programs, crippling enforcement of clean water standards. It slashed funds for geological and biological science agencies, which gather data on water quantity and quality, as well as species dependent on the watersheds. Finally, Congress introduced a "takings" bill that makes the public, not the polluter, pay the costs of industrial clean up of polluted watersheds.

If Congress would merely take a moment, lock the industrial lobbyists out of their offices, and look out their windows at the subtle transformation taking place right on the Potomac and rivers across the nation, they would see that, today, our environmental laws, sowed 25 years ago, have reaped both economic and intangible rewards, felt by the entire boating community.

As an active boater, part of a growing, multi-million dollar industry, your way of life depends on the network of rivers that spread throughout this country. Your businesses bear none of the marks of traditional industry; it leaves no scars, pollutes no rivers, scalps no forests, and drains no swamps.

Keep up the good work, and keep up the fight for clean waters. I believe that as we work together to restore every watershed in America, we will witness the restoration of the American community.

Colorado's Greenback Cutthroat:
The Essence of the Endangered Species Act

Final draft to be published in Sports Afield Magazine

by Bruce Babbitt

We are working our way up a freestone small stream in the heart of Rocky Mountain National Park, casting simulator flies for a wild, native fish that, by conventional wisdom, simply should not exist here.

It's called the greenback cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki stomias*), and for several decades in the middle of this century, in fact, it was considered a mythic creature. Extinct. But then one law and many individuals began to change all that.

Most anglers in this part of Colorado have heard enough about the greenback to know that it was the first fish to be listed under the 1973 Endangered Species Act. But they've also heard a lot of cynical rhetoric that this Act "doesn't work," that it's a "colossal failure" or even that it is so "flawed that it actually results in the decline of endangered species."

So I set out on the trail on a picture perfect August morning in an effort to hook one, to fish for reality, casting beyond the myth to see whether the Endangered Species Act can actually put a fish on my line.

Up here, above the falls, within sight of the summer snow fields on Ypsilon Mountain, the water is churning through a boulder-studded channel. If you want to see the greenback, Colorado is the only place. They don't live anywhere else, and never did; greenback only entered these headwaters when, after the Ice Age, drier weather and erosion caused "basin transfers" that isolated the Rocky Mountain front range streams from other drainage to the west.

With less than 10,000 years to adapt, the greenback is far more sensitive to its natural habitat than most trout. That means it's wilder; but that sensitivity also left the greenback more vulnerable to anglers and other threats to its survival.

Just upcurrent from me stands Bruce Rosenlund, greenback recovery project leader of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for the past fourteen years. Bruce knows the past, present, and near future of this fish, and tells me that the greenback cutthroat was once so common that it was the meal of choice for miners in Leadville, Central City and other gold mine towns. At the turn of the century anglers here caught up to 1,000 greenback over a three day fishing trip.

By stark contrast, after several hours on the river this morning near the end of the century, I haven't caught a one.

I've been casting short, dropping the fly in the eddies which separate the driving torrent from the quiet pools along the banks. There are a few bites, but I am slow to set the hook and the fish are gone. Too much time deep fishing in lakes; I am forgetting to watch the fish surface to take my fly.

We break for lunch in a clearing bordered by new growth lodgepole pine, aspen and the last purple fireweed of August. Bruce brings me up to date on the fall and rise of this fish.

At one time the only trout teeming in these waters, the greenback fell prey to miners' appetites and habitat loss from mine drainage. Then came the devastating stock introduction of aggressive, non-native trout like the rainbow, which interbred it toward extinction; and brookies and browns, which spawned earlier, grew faster and edged the greenback out of prime food and space. By 1937, the Denver Museum of Natural History pronounced the greenback extinct.

But in the mid-1960s, biologists traced reports of "funny looking" trout to a few hundred greenback lingering in Como Creek and the South Fork Poudre, both within the South Platte drainage. That set the stage for restoration efforts to begin, and the freshly minted Endangered Species Act -- which anchored the state wildlife division, the National Park Service, the USEWS, BLM and Forest Service under one coordinated program -- is the law that set it all in motion.

To achieve healthy, naturally spawning populations, biologists in the ESA recovery team found remote lakes and tributaries where the competing species like rainbow could be cleared out, and isolated by downstream barrier waterfalls. It took the cooperative work of helicopters and hatcheries, foresters and fishermen, public and private money. It also took the delicate task of convincing catch-and-kill anglers to release the native greenbacks, and convincing catch-and-release anglers to kill the others.

And it worked. The greenback is coming back with a vengeance; three more stable populations on the Arkansas River drainage will complete the de-listing process in full recovery. Already, 247 acres of lake habitat and 89 miles of stream habitat have been reclaimed for an estimated 70,000 greenback.

Or so the biologists tell me. I still haven't seen proof firsthand, and am restless to start casting again.

After lunch we move back, fly rods in hand, to work another stretch of water. This time I switch, and tie on a Joe's Hopper fly; it's a lot easier to follow this fly through rushing water. With my hand-eye coordination coming back, I feel a quick draw on the line, and soon I am playing my first greenback to the bank.

A greenback cutthroat coming out of the water is something like spotting a scarlet tanager flying out of the forest; the colors are so brilliant, so unexpected, that for a moment it seems unreal. My first is a male, still in spawning colors, stained bright red-orange on the jaws and underside, giving way to golden yellow flanks, spangled with black spots. But I don't see much green on the back or anywhere else; this one at least should have been named the scarlet belly cutthroat -- or perhaps the red-headed cutthroat.

Wetting my hands, I carefully unhook the fish, hold it still in the water, then watch it swim into a crevice between the rocks.

And in that moment this native trout reveals to me the spirit and essence of the Endangered Species Act. It cannot be expressed in legal language, or political rhetoric, or through statistical charts and timetables. For the Act is the recognition that fish, the greenback, is a reflection of divine purpose; my task, our task, is to enjoy them and preserve them for generations to come.

There is still a ways to go: The greenback cutthroat historically populated the entire watersheds of the Arkansas River and the South Platte River from elevations of about 5,000 feet -- the elevation of Denver -- up into tributaries reaching the "fish line" of about 11,000 feet, above which the spawning season is too short to support reproduction. And catch-and-release is the only kind of greenback angling allowed here.

The goal is to restore the greenback throughout that historic range, and there are only 19 officially stable population sites, including these rushing, ice-cold waters of Roaring Creek. But that goal is within reach, and I have already begun casting once again to confirm it.

Nor am I alone in my obsession. The chance to catch a greenback cutthroat -- once preserved solely in jars of formaldehyde and for decades only a heartbeat from extinction -- is attracting anglers from around the world. This beautiful native fish is proving that restoration does work and that sportsmen can and do benefit from the Endangered Species Act.

It's also rapidly winning over the hearts of other Colorado natives. In 1993 the Colorado legislature, in a burst of state pride, recognized the comeback of the greenback by designating it the official fish of the Centennial State. In the debate, legislators took note that the rainbow trout, formerly the state fish, was not even originally from Colorado. The secret was out at last -- the rainbow trout is a California native, a transplant, no longer to be awarded special status.

By mid afternoon, each member of our party has caught and released a half dozen of these multi-hued fish, and used up

several rolls of film in the process. No records broken here -- much of the fish fall in the seven to fourteen inch class. "But," Bruce reassures me, "down lower, with a longer breeding season, the greenback can grow to three or four pounds."

Never mind, for the outing has invigorated my faith in the resilience of nature through the channeled efforts of mankind. And the mere sight of one of these fish on the end of a line -- especially if it's my line -- is an experience to be had nowhere else in the world.

Bruce Babbitt
U.S. Secretary of the Interior
Keynote Address
Before the Convention on International Trade in
Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna.
November 10, 1994

On behalf of President Clinton and his Administration I am pleased to welcome the Ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties back once again to the United States of America.

It was just a little more than 20 years ago -- Saturday, March 3, 1973 -- that the New York Times ran a small story on page eight announcing that delegates from 80 nations meeting in Washington had drafted a treaty to protect wildlife endangered by international trade practices.

At the time, there were many skeptics who doubted that such an ambitious, multilateral treaty would ever be ratified, much less prove to be effective. History has proven otherwise. History has shown that the creation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES) was an extraordinary event, matched only by the extraordinary accomplishments which followed.

Of the many dramatic successes of this Convention in protecting the biodiversity of this planet, I would cite just a few well-know examples.

In 1973, CITES listed the leopard as an Appendix I species in imminent danger of extinction from world demand for leopardskin coats. Before that decision, the United States alone imported 7,000 commercial leopard skins each year. With the Cites listing decision, the market for leopardskin coats has virtually disappeared.

In the 1980s, a world market developed for exotic birds; for example, hyacinth macaw sold for \$30,000 per bird in New York City. Before CITES listing, the U.S. legally imported 1,000 Scarlet macaw; after listing, by 1986, there was only ten. A more dramatic case was with the Moluccan cockatoo: In the three years prior to listing, the U.S. legally imported 15,749 of those colorful birds; after listing, there were only six.

Perhaps the single most important CITES achievement has been its rescue of the African elephant. When the poaching frenzy began in 1970, ivory sold for \$2.80 per pound. By the 1980s, the price of

ivory had escalated 10,000 percent to \$300 per pound. The ensuing slaughter drenched the landscape in blood. Poachers shot 700,000 elephants in one decade: 70,000 elephants per year, 200 elephants every day, one elephant every eight minutes.

CITES has reversed that lethal trend. In 1989 the COP decided to list the African elephant on Appendix I, banning the ivory trade effective January 1990. The effect was immediate and profound. In Kenya alone, elephant kills dropped tenfold each year: in 1989 poachers shot 2,000; in 1990, they shot 200; in 1991, they shot less than 20. In East Africa, ivory prices plummeted from \$663 per pound to \$22 per pound. By June 1990 the commercial market in the U.S. collapsed: Wholesalers slashed prices by 70 percent, but ivory had become unfashionable, and retailers could not sell it.

The United States is committed to maintaining the ivory ban. It has worked well; it is supported by the force of world opinion; and it has saved the elephant. Some elephant range states have proposed a resolution to permit the trade in hides and meat, arguing that elephants can and should be culled on a sustainable basis. These states do not propose that the ban on ivory be lifted.

The United States recognizes that these range states have drawn a broad distinction between the trade in ivory and in hide. It is a distinction that merits full discussion and debate in the best tradition of the CITES process.

The success of the CITES system in preserving such species as the leopard, parrots and elephant has resulted in no small measure from public understanding and support. The most dramatic case, of course, is ivory; public support for the elephant has dried up market demand, because it is simply not fashionable to wear ivory jewelry or use ivory desk objects.

We have not been successful, in my judgement, with two other species of great concern: the tiger and the black rhinoceros. One reason that these two species are at the brink of extinction is that the demand for tiger bone and rhino horn for traditional medicinal uses is a far more complex issue than the wearing of ivory earrings or leopard skin coats.

Yet, however difficult it may be to change age old cultural attitudes, we have no choice, for the alternative will be unthinkable -- the eradication of tigers and rhinos from the wilds of this planet, within our lifetime.

Recognizing the urgency of this issue, the Clinton Administration has resolved from the outset to take every possible step to implement the CITES resolution, adopted at the last COP, which provides....[will get from Marshall Jones]

In September, 1993, I traveled to Brussels to consult with the Standing Committee of CITES on how best to strengthen enforcement efforts against poaching and illegal sales of tiger bone and rhino horn. The evidence presented at that meeting showed that in several areas of the world, wide open markets for these products still exist. In light of that evidence, the Standing Committee unanimously recommended that all parties consider prohibiting all trade in all wildlife with those nations.

On Nov. 8, following up the Standing Committee resolution, this administration gave a specific timetable for offending parties to show progress in eliminating traffic in rhino and tiger products. Then, six months later, when they failed to show progress, the U.S. imposed sanctions. This was a watershed decision. In twenty-seven years of the Pelly Amendment's existence, after two dozen certifications, this was the first to be followed by sanctions, cutting \$23 million in annual trade.

Since the imposition of Pelly trade sanctions, there has been some evidence of improvement. The responsible officials of Taipei have passed a new law intended to strengthen enforcement. Yet it is by no means clear that these measures have been sufficient. In the meantime, the Clinton Administration will continue to consult and work with the Secretariat and the Standing Committee to reduce and eliminate the illicit trade that threatens to destroy these magnificent creatures.

As CITES begins its third decade, there will be many new challenges for us to work together to protect the world's wildlife. We all know that to protect the biological diversity of this earth, we must do more than simply regulate or prohibit trade in listed species. Beyond trade regulation, all of us - as members of the Convention and as sovereign states - should make stronger national efforts to conserve wildlife, and, most importantly, the habitat on which that wildlife relies for survival.

Many member states believe, as I do, that the sustainable use of wildlife is an important incentive to habitat and species conservation, and that all member states have an obligation to assist one another within the framework of CITES in programs of sustainable management and commercial take of wildlife.

I am, of course, most familiar with the case of the crocodile. Just a few years ago, the American crocodile, along with related species in other parts of the world, had been poached to the brink of extinction. Crocodile skins sold for \$36.00 per square foot. At that point, CITES listed the crocodile and invented the quota system which authorized a sustainable level of take, including the introduction of commercial crocodile farming.

The quota system of sustainable take will come before this convention in the form of a review of game trophies from African range states. The taking of game trophies through sport hunting is a form of sustainable wildlife conservation with widespread support in both range states and in import countries. For that reason I believe that we, as parties to CITES, have an obligation to work together to perpetuate sustainable trophy hunting, to listen carefully to the complaints of the range states, and to consult and discuss acceptable solutions.

As I understand the concerns of Namibia and other range states, those sustainable take levels have been confused, disrupted, and ignored by some importing nations, including our own. Those import nations have sometimes intervened without any consultation, making the system unworkable and expensive. That is not our intention. We are committed to the concept of sustainable trophy hunting, and believe range states have the greatest interest and are in the best position to enforce that practice.

Our concern is that the quota may be subject to change which makes it unworkable. Our own experience, with ducks and other migratory birds and waterfowl, has proven that quotas set by a range state one year can be wildly off the mark the next. Under American law, we have a continuing obligation to ensure sustainable and diverse wildlife. Having said that, I sympathize with your complaints of unilateral practices which are taken without consultation.

With that spirit, we are prepared to work out a resolution which requires states to undertake formal consultation with the Standing Committee in those circumstances where they have serious reservations about the functioning of the quota system or the efficacy of the related conservation plan.

There may be those here who doubt our policy against unilateral and arbitrary intervention, or our policy in favor of a formal link between habitat preservation and quotas. Why do we propose them? For the same reason you should adopt them: As a range state, they are simply in our own best interest. From box turtles to tarantulas, we have turned to CITES to help us, like other range states, stop the pet trade that send them overseas. We have turned to CITES to help us preserve our threatened habitat.

In other words, the U.S. did not join CITES to enforce conservation law on others nations, but so other nations would help enforce that law in the U.S.

Apart from the institutional and legal measures, we should take whatever steps we can to assist each other within the broader agenda of CITES.

For example, the U.S. Elephant Conservation Act directs \$1 million per year to help nations increase their conservation capacity.

Last month, President Clinton signed into law the Rhino and Tiger Conservation Act, which authorizes up to \$10 million per year to further assistance of conservation projects in Asia and Africa.

And the U.S. also offers assistance and training to countries trying to improve CITES compliance. In July of 1994, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conducted a course in undercover wildlife enforcement techniques, designed especially for CITES officials.

For the spirit of CITES is the cooperation of nations. Twenty years ago, skeptics scoffed at that spirit and doubted that it could be made to work. Every month I see fresh signs that it is very much alive.

On September 9, for example, the parties of Kenya, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia signed the Lusaka Agreement to clamp down on the illegal trade in endangered species. For 35 years, these six nations had witnessed the eradication of 97 percent of their rhinos, of 90 percent of their elephants. For 35 years, they watched the lucrative source of tourism and local revenues slipping away. After 35 years, they decided to stop it.

They used the interdependence of CITES to form the world's first International Wildlife Task Force. United, they will carry out cross-border operations and investigations, share directors experience across borders, and use a centralized database to gather and analyze information.

These nations picked up the burden because CITES challenged them to do so. It challenged them to match enforcement with a multilateral conservation plan. And it gave them the authority, the resources, the scientific standing, and the respect to carry it out.

Now that challenge stands before us, the parties assembled here today. We must not now shrink from our responsibility, for it is a responsibility we have chosen freely. Instead, like CITES founders twenty years before, let us prove the skeptics wrong and rededicate ourselves to the task set before us. It is a worthy task, a noble task; not without the worst of short term tensions, nor without the greatest of long term rewards.

Southern Hospitality Welcomes Native Creatures
(1,390 words)

By Bruce Babbitt

It is autumn here in the heart of North Carolina. Morning sun washes down through a longleaf pine forest to an understory of golden turkey oaks and wire grass. We move through the trees, binoculars in hand, searching for a rare, native, black and white woodpecker with tiny red feathers on either side of its cap.

Eventually we come upon a tall, longleaf pine with a telltale clue: sticky, protective sap is dripping down the bark like candle wax. Tracing its flow up the trunk we see the source, a nesting cavity thirty feet off the ground. In the hush, we wait for the appearance of the red-cockaded woodpecker.

Suddenly, the silence is shattered by a column of Amphibious Assault Vehicles roaring through the forest less than fifty yards away.

That's right. This beautiful longleaf pine forest -- one of the last remnants of an ancient woodland ecosystem which once covered 92 million acres across the Southeast -- is located on Camp LeJeune. It's not only home for this avian endangered species, it's home of the First Marine Division, perhaps the most aggressive landowner in the world.

And one of the least disruptive. Above the roar of the engines, Maj. General Patrick Howard explains that his AAVs coexist just fine with woodpeckers. Troops and training vehicles learn to maneuver around the nesting trees just like any other obstacle, and the rare birds don't mind the noise, as long as they have homes and enough space to forage. The General even has a new slogan: "THE MARINES: We're saving a few good species."

Below the Mason-Dixon line, they're not alone.

In my recent travels throughout the South -- from Fort Stewart in Georgia to Eglin Air Force Base in Florida, from vast, corporate timber properties to smaller 60-acre family owned woodlots -- I have seen a refreshingly vigorous commitment to find, protect and recover the red-cockaded woodpecker, and, in

the process, to restore the South's rich natural heritage. A heritage that nearly vanished.

At the beginning of this century, the South was covered by the greatest old growth pine forests on the continent. A traveler could ride from the Carolina Tidewater clear to Big Thicket in East Texas shaded by the great native pines -- longleaf, loblolly, shortleaf and slash -- the entire way. Nor would he be lonely; for the entire range was filled with the staccato and sight of the red-cockaded woodpecker.

Then came the timber barons, moving south from the cutover lands around the Great Lakes, stripping the South's trees and leaving a ruined landscape in their wake. The woodpecker vanished at the pace of the clearcuts, for it can nest only in cavities excavated from tall, old pines whose interior wood has been softened by a fungus called red heart disease. Only one thing kept this native creature from extinction: the 1973 Endangered Species Act.

After this southern woodpecker was listed in the 1970s -- roughly the same time federal protection began for another forest-dwelling bird called the northern spotted owl -- skeptics in the timber industry began to predict doom. They worried the woodpecker heralded another environmental train wreck, another confrontation between environmentalists and loggers, another round of lawsuits and countersuits shutting down the timber industry. And with just cause. For as everyone knows, that is exactly what happened in the Pacific Northwest with their owl.

But the South tells a quieter, subtler tale, with a different ending.

There has been no trainwreck. No lawsuits. No "us vs. them" rhetoric. The timber industry and landowners, like the military and individual families, have made peace with the woodpecker, embracing it on their woodlots. There is a southern success story: demonstrating how jobs and the environment can grow together.

The story began three years ago. Right after taking office as Secretary, I had a visit from Pete Correll, president of Georgia Pacific Corp., the nation's largest forest products company, with holdings in both the Pacific Northwest and Southern pine forests. To avoid a southern replay of the standoff in the Northwest, Pete made a suggestion that I quickly agreed to: Get his local land managers and our federal biologists together in one room, tell them of our desire for consensus, and keep their feet to the fire until we worked out a solution.

Our result? A landmark, common sense agreement whereby Georgia Pacific protects the old growth tree clusters that are active nesting sites for the approximately 100 remaining woodpecker groups that forage on 50,000 acres of the 4.2 million acres of company owned pine forest.

Weeks later, we signed a second agreement with Hancock Timber Resource Group that protects three of the last five groups of woodpeckers left in the state of Virginia. Following those breakthroughs, Champion International Corp. set aside 2,000 acres in Texas solely for the woodpeckers, hoping to increase their population of two groups to 20. Less than a year later Westvaco Corp. signed our fourth red-cockaded agreement, to protect and manage their population of 16 groups in South Carolina.

Each step helps business move from hindsight to foresight, from reaction to prevention. Each agreement reinforces the last, and sets a path for dozens more to follow. Just last October I went down to Little Rock, Arkansas to announce an agreement with Potlatch Corp. That timber company, which has the fourth largest population of woodpeckers on private land in the U.S., is managing 15,000 acres of its forested habitat for the rare, native bird. That means retraining its land managers to identify, recognize, protect and even restore habitat for the 44 nesting woodpecker groups that live there.

Federal foresters and land managers are also retraining to better manage woodpecker habitat. The Southern states are home to many of our great national forests and national parks, ranging

from Sam Houston National Forest in East Texas to Apalachicola National Forest and Big Cypress National Preserve in Florida.

For decades on those lands, the Forest Service and Park Service put out the frequent natural ground fires that burned back the hardwood understory growth, and left the ancient, fire-resistant pine trees to stand with abundant open space in between.

The arrival of Smokey Bear sped up the departure of the woodpecker. For as fire was kept out, the oak, shrub, and other hardwood midstory that developed forced the hungry bird to abandon their cavity trees and forage elsewhere.

Today the Forest Service has reversed course; Southern Forests are leading the nation in bringing prescribed fires back onto the landscape. So is the Air Force; in Eglin's 320,000 acre remnant of longleaf pine forest, managers set controlled fires in addition to those caused by munitions. Thanks to the rejuvenating flames, the forest has begun to regain some of its original character and richness. With woodpeckers following close behind.

This Southern approach allows more than the large industrial, military and federal landowners to work with natural rhythms. It also helps federal regulators shift from command and control toward incentives that encourage care and effort by landowners, no matter how small their acreage.

Consider, for example, our "Safe Harbor" habitat plan concept for individual woodlot owners. Under a safe harbor agreement, someone whose land management helps increase the number of woodpeckers on their property bears no additional legal responsibilities for the new arrivals. He needs only maintain habitat for what was there at the time of the agreement.

Also, the Fish and Wildlife Service is now working with several states to develop habitat conservation plans for isolated groups of woodpeckers. If someone nurtures juvenile woodpeckers on his land, he receives incentive credits. Those credits count towards letting him legally harvest the trees, after state and federal biologists transfer the birds to a national, state or

private forest where a larger woodpecker population is already thriving.

The Endangered Species Act is working, providing a common goal for the entire South. But its meaning goes far beyond that. Thanks to the Act, a third or fourth generation of managers, soldiers, loggers, real estate developers and woodlot owners are approaching their native landscape in a different, and I think, even better way than their ancestors. For them a forest is now measured by more than simply location, or board feet; it suddenly has a context, an age, a history, and becomes a bridge between the present human world and the complex natural heritage in which we live.

The return on our investment is to witness and take part in the renaissance of the great longleaf pine forest -- a native ecosystem being restored to its natural Southern glory -- proving that we can pass on the strongest timber economy, the best trained troops, and the most beautiful and biologically diverse natural heritage for future generations growing up in the South.

Twenty years ago the greenback cutthroat trout was thought to be extinct, but right now there's one on my line.



We are working our way up a small freestone stream in the heart of Rocky Mountain National Park, casting simulator flies for a wild, native fish that by all odds simply should not exist here. It is called the greenback cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki stonias*), and for several decades in the middle of this century, it was considered to be extinct.

Most anglers in this part of Colorado have heard enough about the greenback to know that it was the first fish to be listed under the 1973 Endangered Species Act. But they've also heard a lot of rhetoric that the act doesn't work, or that it's so flawed it actually results in the decline of endangered species.

So I set out on a perfect August morning to see if the Endangered Species Act could actually put a greenback on my line.

Up here above the falls, within sight of the summer snowfields on Ypsilon Mountain, the water is churning through a boulder-studded channel. If you want to see the greenback, Colorado is the only place you can do so. They don't (and never did) live anywhere else. Greenbacks entered these headwaters when, after the Ice Age, dry weather and caused "basin transfers" that isolated Rocky Mountain front-range from other drainage to the west.

With less than 10,000 years to adapt, the greenback is far more sensitive to its natural habitat than most trout. That means it's wilder, but it's also more vulnerable to anglers and other threats to its survival.

Just upcurrent from me stands Bruce Rosenlund, greenback recovery project leader of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the last 14 years. Bruce knows the past, present and near future of this fish, and tells me that the greenback cutthroat was once so common that it was the meal of choice for miners in Leadville, Central City and other mining towns. At the turn of the century anglers here caught up to 1000 greenbacks over a three-day fishing trip.

But after several hours on the river this morning, I haven't caught one. I've been casting short, dropping the fly in the eddies that separate the driving torrent from the quiet pools along the banks. There are a few bites, but I am slow to set the hook and the fish are gone. Too much time deep fishing in lakes; I am forgetting to watch the fish surface to take my fly.

We break for lunch in a clearing bordered by growth lodgepole pine, aspen and the last pur-veed of August. Rosenlund brings me up to the fall and rise of this fish.

One time the only trout in these waters, the greenback fell prey to mine drainage, as well as min-

ers' appetites. Then came the devastating introduction of aggressive non-native trout like the rainbow, and brookies and browns, which spawned earlier and edged the greenback out of prime food and range. By 1937, the Denver Museum of Natural History pronounced the greenback extinct.

But in the mid-1960s, biologists traced reports of "funny-looking" trout to a few hundred greenbacks

After lunch, I tie on a Joe's Hopper which is easier to follow through rushing water. I cast upstream of a small boulder that has created a swirling pool just below it. The fly drifts down into the pool, and there it is again—a flash of color. I raise my rod up quickly, the rod bends, and I am playing my first greenback to the bank.

Watching a greenback cutthroat coming out of the water is like spotting a scarlet tanager flying out of the forest; the colors are so brilliant, so unexpected, that for a moment it seems unreal. Mine is a male, still in spawning colors, stained bright red-orange on the jaws and underside. But I don't see much green on the back or anywhere else; this one at least should have been named the scarlet-belly cutthroat.

I carefully unhook the fish, hold it in the water, then watch it shoot back into the current and disappear. In this moment the naive trout reveals to me that it is a manifestation of divine purpose. My task, our task, is to preserve these fish for generations to come.

There is still a way to go: Historically, the greenback populated the watersheds of the Arkansas River and the South Platte River from elevations of 3000 feet up into the tributaries at

about 11,000 feet, above which the spawning season is too short to support reproduction.

The goal is to restore the greenback throughout its historic range, and there are only 19 officially suitable population sites, including these rushing waters of Roaring Creek. But it is a goal within reach.

The fish is also winning over the hearts of other Colorado natives. In 1993 the Colorado legislature designated the greenback as its state fish. The rainbow trout, the former state fish, is not even from Colorado—it's a transplant from California.

By mid-afternoon, each member of our party has caught and released half a dozen. No records broken here—many of the fish fall in the seven- to 14-inch class. "But," Rosenlund reassures me, "down lower, with a longer breeding season, the greenback can grow to three or four pounds."

Never mind that. The mere sight of one of these fish on the end of a line—especially my line—is an experience to be had nowhere else in the world. ♣

RECONSTRUCTING THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

Restoring the greenback cutthroat is only one example of what the Endangered Species Act has accomplished. Bald eagles, grizzly bears, gray wolves, California condors, whooping cranes and a host of other creatures have also benefited from ESA protection and recovery programs.

Critics say it imposes a regulatory and economic burden on businesses and private landowners. The Clinton Administration has implemented a number of changes, including exemptions for small private landowners and a "safe harbors" program to encourage habitat conservation on private lands.

Meanwhile, Congress has prohibited the listing of any more species until the act is reauthorized. Legislation that Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and environmentalists say would "effectively repeal" the ESA has been introduced in the House (HR 2275) and the Senate (S 768).

Supporters of a strong ESA agree that changes are needed, but they object to provisions that will gut the act's ability to protect habitat, restrict the Secretary of the Interior's power to list even critically endangered species, and weaken protection of foreign wildlife, such as rhinos and tigers.

At this writing, more moderate legislation to amend the ESA has been introduced in the House (HR 2374) and other bills may follow. The outcome of this struggle will determine the future of many wild species and their habitats.

lingering in Como Creek and the South Fork Poudre, both within the South Platte drainage. That set the stage for restoration efforts; the Endangered Species Act of 1973 set it all in motion.

To achieve healthy, naturally spawning greenback populations, biologists in the ESA recovery team found remote lakes and tributaries where competing species could be cleared out and isolated by downstream barrier waterfalls. This took the work of helicopters and hatcheries, foresters and fishermen, and public and private money. It also took convincing catch-and-eat anglers to release the greenbacks, and convincing catch-and-release anglers to eat the rainbows and browns.

It worked. Greenback numbers are rising; already, 247 acres of lake habitat and 89 miles of streams have been reclaimed for about 70,000 greenbacks.

At least, this is what Rosenlund tells me. I still haven't seen proof firsthand.

Saving six birds with one stone

By Bruce Babbitt

In the winter of 1993, Congress once again began debating the Endangered Species Act. All the usual suspects joined in, advancing the same old arguments: long on rhetoric and woefully short on facts. Called to testify, I suggested that we might break the stalemate by getting out of Washington, hanging up the phone on the special interest lobbyists, and trying to build consensus and, ultimately, solutions in communities actually affected by the Act.

Weeks later, we found our proving ground.

Orange County's explosive growth was pushing one of the earth's smallest birds towards extinction. But this bird, the native California gnatcatcher, inhabits the last remaining undeveloped coastal zone south of Los Angeles. To protect it, we would face a powerful, billion-dollar real estate industry, a major regional recession, a local county bankruptcy, and opponents who predicted the Act would derail any economic growth in the region. It looked like the next big environmental trainwreck -- or the perfect chance to prove otherwise.

The results are in. This week, Orange County completes the one of the most comprehensive and imaginative conservation plans in history, uniting developers and environmentalists on what is fast becoming a national model for habitat conservation, open space planning, and local empowerment to preserve their natural heritage.

That story began with a visit to my office by Doug Wheeler, the California Resources Secretary, shortly after I decided to list the gnatcatcher. Doug explained that California had a new untested law -- take a breath "The Natural Communities Conservation Program" -- that empowered counties and cities to join together in planning and designating open space for the protection of endangered species and their habitat.

Couldn't the Federal government, he asked, reach out and encourage California to take the initiative? The Irvine Company - Orange County's largest landowner -- also prodded me in this direction.

I patiently explained to them both that what they were asking for had simply never been done; that no previous Cabinet member had ever delegated that kind of authority under the Endangered Species Act before; that there was no political, historical or administrative precedent for what they had just proposed.

And yes, I said. Let's give it a try.

For too long, the Endangered Species Act had been administered as a set of heavy-handed federal dictates to landowners. That top-down approach ignored the reality that in this country land use planning is a local, bottom-up function, requiring direct grassroots involvement by residents and stakeholder groups. It was time to find a better way.

Within weeks I issued and implemented a regulation called a 4(d) rule, entrusting California to take the lead role. Then we

rolled up our sleeves, opened up the table and got down to business with all stakeholders in the county.

There were disagreements. But underlying every discussion was a deep, shared affinity for the mountains, river valleys and shoreline vistas that draw people to southern California. They knew it might be lost, as it had been in Los Angeles; they knew what was at stake. Protecting open space for people was an essential component; now there was an opportunity to design that open space to protect wildlife as well.

As the group began to forge consensus, different parts were set into place. The Irvine Company integrated its plans into the larger picture. Working from previous agreements, the company had set aside roughly 21,000 acres of its own land; with the NCCP process, those acres are united under one protected reserve.

With that cornerstone, and building with dozens of contributions from many other public and private landowners, the Orange County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a plan designating a total of 38,000 acres for preserves near Newport Beach and Irvine. These preserves are good for endangered species, but they're even better for human species. Spread out over two clusters, connected by greenways, mountain ridges, hiking paths and other recreational opportunities, the preserve dwarfs every urban open space in the country, from Manhattan's Central Park to San Francisco's Golden Gate Park.

More critical help came from the Few and the Proud. Early on, federal, state and local partners recognized that Camp Pendleton -- the largest block of open space along the southern

California coast -- could be a vital part of any regionally planning effort. The Marines are "steel on-target fighters," and no one knew quite what to expect. But Major General Claude Reinke, USMC, invited the biologists onto the base, developed an approach for the base similar to the NCCP process, and the Marines became part of the solution. He even unveiled a poster with an amphibious landing alongside endangered shorebirds entitled, "Marines: We're saving a few good species."

So what do developers, Marines, landowners and local officials get in return for their support of such an historic conservation plan? What draws them to the table and keeps them there until we construct a creative solution? In a word: certainty.

For it was clear from the start that there was more at stake than the immediate future of the solitary gnatcatcher; we set out to designate enough open space to protect all potentially endangered species that shared the same native habitat for centuries to come. Orange County set out to protect 42 species, including the peregrine falcon, the Southwestern willow flycatcher, the Orange-throated whiptail, the northern harrier and the sharp-shinned hawk. Along with the others, we decided to protect six birds with one stone.

But then lawyers posed the critical question: What if we miscalculated? After protecting habitat on part of the land, then developing the rest, how could they be certain that, ten years from now, a creature might take a turn for the worse and unravel the entire process?

U.S. Seeks to Remove Gray Wolf From Endangered List

■ **Wildlife:** Proposal would drop some protections and delist it entirely in states like California, where it is not found.

By BETTINA BONVALL
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Saying they have succeeded in pulling America's gray wolf population back from the brink of extinction, federal wildlife officials on Tuesday proposed dropping some protections for the sleek predator.

Since the gray wolf was listed as endangered in much of the United States in 1974, its numbers have climbed from a few hundred in Minnesota to between 3,000 and 4,000 animals scattered across the West and Great Lakes region.

"This is truly an endangered species success story," said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Jamie Rappaport Clark.

The wildlife service said it wants to reclassify the gray wolf from endangered to threatened in some parts of the country and take it off the list entirely in areas where it is not found—including California and Nevada.

Conservation groups were mixed in their reactions. They welcomed news of the population rebound but argued the wildlife service needs to do more to promote the wolf's return across the West and in northern New England.

"I think the service is being too cautious. We can accomplish more," said Tom France, senior counsel for the National Wildlife Federation.

Environmental groups were particularly critical of the proposal to delist the gray wolf entirely in all or portions of 30 states, where the wildlife service thinks it is unlikely the animals will

turn up in significant numbers.

"This plan takes all protection away from wolves if they cross the border [into those regions] and I defy the service to provide a biologically viable reason," said Bob Ferris, vice president for species conservation at Defenders of Wildlife.

Federal officials responded that there is nothing to stop individual states from launching their own recovery programs. Moreover, they said, the goal of the Endangered Species Act is not to return animals to their historical range, but to rescue them from the edge of extinction.

"Are wolves everywhere they could be? No," said Ed Bangs, western wolf recovery coordinator for the wildlife service. "The question is, 'Are they any longer endangered and threatened?' and the answer is quickly becoming 'no.'"

That, say wildlife officials, is a result of the federal protections of the last 25 years and plentiful prey, including an exploding deer population.

Gray wolves once roamed much of North America. Ferris estimated there were about 200,000 in the country before the Civil War. Relentlessly hunted and poisoned over the next century as livestock predators, they had all but disap-

peared by the 1930s.

While hated and feared by ranchers and farmers, wolves have been revered by others as an icon of the wild. Their recovery has been both controversial and celebrated.

Bangs said about 150 gray wolves live in the northern Rockies, including a much-chronicled group reintroduced to Yellowstone National Park in 1995. Most of the rest live in the wilds of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan.

The Fish and Wildlife Service proposal will be subject to public comment and is expected to take effect in a year.

Minnesota wolves are now listed as threatened. The rest in the nation have been classified as endangered, which makes it unlawful to kill, harm or harass them.

The new rules would reclassify the wolves as threatened, a change that would retain protections but allow private landowners to kill a wolf attacking domestic livestock.

The less than two dozen Mexican gray wolves living in New Mexico, Arizona and Texas would remain on the endangered list, as would the small population of red wolves found in the Southeast.

In Mural, Young Artists Envision Restored River

By APRIL DANIELS
Special to The Washington Post

A bald eagle, aquatic plants, landscapes free of litter and people working together to help restore the Anacostia River are all featured in a new mural painted by four District students and unveiled last week at the Department of Interior.

The mural, funded by Interior and located in the agency's fourth-floor lobby at 1849 C St. N.W., consists of two paintings that vividly display efforts to clean up the eight-mile river. It also serves as a symbolic illustration of what restoring the Anacostia could mean for the region.

The students' vision includes the return of the bald eagle, clear water, a healthy fishing environment and community members working together to plant aquatic vegetation. At present, fish taken from the Anacostia show high concentrations of pesticides as well as a series of intestinal disorders, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The four student artists who painted the mural are Derrick Byrd, 18; Brian Carpenter, 17; Shonondra Fogel, 16; and Brittany Oliver, 14. They worked on it and other projects as a part of the Corcoran College of Art and Design's Visual Arts Community Outreach Program, which provides art training for District youth and for Corcoran students seeking a bachelor of fine arts.

The outreach effort includes Corcoran Art

New Vision at School (CANVAS), a community program that brings art instruction into the classrooms of D.C. schools. The program also sponsors classes, summer jobs, internships and scholarships for student artists.

"When the teacher asked us to come up with a theme for the Anacostia River, I remembered the facts and the history we had learned behind the river," said Fogel, who, with Oliver, will attend Wilson High School in the fall. "We decided that we wanted the theme to be about what ... the appearance of the river should be, with an emphasis on the health of the animals and plant life of the river."

Carpenter, who like Byrd is a recent graduate of Duke Ellington School of the Arts, has been painting since he was 5.

"I have been working with the CANVAS program for four years," he said. "I was pleased that I had the opportunity to learn more about art and have this as a summer job. I have been working closely with the skilled instructors here on several projects, but this mural is by far the most honored addition to my portfolio."

The Corcoran's program for the District's youth have been designed to "bring about unity, common creative goals and help them understand the importance of preserving their communities as well as environments," said Julia Moe, director of the CANVAS program, which recruited the

student artists to paint the mural.

The students, she said, have researched, done the preliminary drawing and did the paintings themselves under the watchful eye of artist Judy Sutherland.

The four students teamed up with the Earth Conservation Corps, a non-profit organization in Southeast Washington that works with city youth to help restore the Anacostia and its tributaries. The art students were taken to the river to research its history and come up with ways to improve the waterway.

"Our goal is to help make the Anacostia River clean," said Forrest Muschette, 22, a member of the Earth Conservation Corps who started volunteering with the group while he was in high school. "We watched scientists test the waters and learned about the trash removal over the years."

At the mural's dedication last week, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt said employees at the agency "have enjoyed watching the students paint the mural over the last several weeks and are proud that our building will showcase these dramatic scenes of wildlife."

"I do not think that people fully understand the importance of this body of water," said Oliver, who has participated in Corcoran programs since she was 10. "By painting this mural, I hope that it will help the community see that the river is not in good shape and should be preserved for our sake and the future."



BY JAMES M. THRESENER—THE WASHINGTON POST

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt comments on mural of the Anacostia River painted by D.C. students in the Department of Interior's fourth-floor lobby.



NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

WEDNESDAY, MAY 31, 2000

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The Washington Post

In Calif., Birdies vs. Bighorns

Palm Springs' Drive for a Prestige Golf Resort Caught in Battle Over Wildlife and Open Space

By RENE SANCHEZ
Washington Post Staff Writer

PALM SPRINGS, Calif.—A tough, divisive question is confronting this old desert resort as it rushes to shape its future: Golf or

locked by city leaders, a local developer is intent on transforming a baked, barren canyon on the edge of a residential neighborhood into 18 holes of plush fairways and sparkling putting greens.

It would be the latest course to rise up among more than 100 others across Southern California's rugged Coachella Valley, and yet another salvo in the breakneck competition among rival cities here to improve their economic fortunes by drawing tourists and residents with top-notch "destination golf."

But environmentalists are fighting furiously to stop the elaborate project. They contend that it would radically alter the character of a vital mountain range and spell doom for a beloved and endangered species indigenous to the desert region, the bighorn sheep.

And in that conflict lies a much larger debate about the shifting fate of the shrinking open lands of the West.

No other part of the country is experiencing as much population growth. So many aging baby boomers are either in the West or settling here that Census officials project the number of elderly residents in most western states will double in 20 years. In California, for example, the number is expected to rise from 3.3 million to 6.6 million older residents.

And as much as that trend means new condos and shopping malls, it means golf.

More than 500 golf courses were constructed across the nation last year, a record number, and states such as Arizona, California and Nevada are at the forefront of the boom, which is showing no sign of letting up.

Some developers are creating entire residential communities built for a golf lifestyle and are snatching the natural spaces that define

the West—coastal wetlands, mountain valleys, scrub deserts—to do it.

In their path are environmental groups, warning that many of the sprawling, chemically manicured golf courses pose serious threats to ecosystems, and launching counterattacks in courts to stop or scale down proposed projects.

Federal wildlife officials are brokering complex land-sharing compromises at some contested golfing sites. But in many areas across the West, battles over new courses are becoming long, bitter sieges.

"Their aim seems to be to wear down developers and hope they eventually go away," said Martin Mueller, an attorney representing Preserve Golf Co., the developer of the proposed Palm Springs site. "But we know that we can build this course without killing or harming any of the sheep that are near the area."

Mark Massara, a Sierra Club director in California, said the growing campaign against golf courses in the West would continue until developers start selecting less ecologically sensitive sites on which to build, such as landfills.

"We're wrestling with golf courses nonstop nowadays," Massara said. "This is becoming such a menace. Virtually no natural habitat is improved by a golf course. And in some places around here now you have to ask, 'How many more golf courses do you really need?'"

The fight over the Mountain Falls Golf Preserve has been unfolding in Palm Springs for several years. After

first expressing reservations about the 100-acre development, the city council narrowly approved it in January. But the project is again tangled in litigation that will take months to resolve.

Both the Sierra Club and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service call the course a bad idea because of the bighorn sheep, which were recently protected under the federal Endangered Species Act, and are working through courts to block its construction. City leaders say that would be a terrible blow. The proposed course is a key part of their latest plan to revitalize the local economy.

Although Palm Springs has long been known as a golfing capital, much of the action these days has moved east a few miles down the desert highway to cities such as Rancho Mirage and Indian Wells. Those towns and others nearby have built one lush new golf resort after another over the past decade, and now Palm Springs is trying to keep pace with bigger or better ones of its own.

This region about 100 miles east of Los Angeles is one of the fastest-growing areas in the West, and because much of the desert floor here is full, developers are now pushing up the sides of mountains. The same kind of charge is taking place at an even faster rate in desert communities around Las Vegas and Phoenix.

"If we can get one more prime 18-hole course, it is sure to bring more residents and more conventions," said David Aaker of the Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce. "This is just what people want. We're not anti-sheep. This is going to blend into the environment. You won't even hear

the click of a 3-iron."

Advocates for the proposed course also argue that it would suit the canyon far better than other potential commercial development, such as shopping malls and the large parking lots they require. That refrain has become common in environmental debates over many golf resorts being built across the West.

Under intensive pressure from environmental groups, some golf course managers have begun limiting the use of pesticides and fertilizers on fairways and greens, setting aside sanctuaries for wildlife and reducing runoff from pollutants. It's a budding movement called "golfing green."

"We're really figuring out ways in which golf courses can greatly enhance the environment," said Jeff Bollig, a director of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. "The industry keeps getting more sensitive to this issue, but there are groups who just oppose any kind of this development."

Mark Leslie, the editor of Golf Course News, said that course developers are trying to collaborate with environmental groups because as the pastime grows more popular, their choice of sites on which to build is getting more limited and more ecologically sensitive. And this may be just the beginning, he said, because "the older the baby boomers get, the more they are hitting the links."

But to some environmental activists, the changes are either too little or too late. In some areas, they say the sheer presence of golf courses is an ecological horror story. In Palm Springs, opponents of the Mountain Falls resort say that developing the land and then flooding it with landscaping chemicals would bring just the kind of man-made hazards that have killed bighorn sheep in other parts of the populated desert valley.

"We don't think there is a middle ground in this case," said Wayne Brechtal, an attorney for the Sierra

Club. "This is a bad, bad spot for a golf course. It runs right into the hillside habitat of the sheep."

A century ago, thousands of bighorn sheep roamed the steep, rocky mountainside here. Even in decline, the sheep are still such a local icon that towns and businesses—including a golf course in Palm Desert—

often extol them in signs and slogans. Some home builders and golf course developers in the area who are worried about the herd's survival are even redrawing plans to accommodate its needs.

There are now only a few hundred bighorn sheep left in the valley, and a mere 24 residing in the mountain range near the proposed golfing resort.

Some officials here blame the steady demise of the sheep mostly on disease and hungry mountain lions—not development—and say the few left in the area hardly ever come down that far into the canyon anymore. But scientific studies have concluded that building a golf course could further drive the sheep toward extinction at a time when extensive plans are being launched to help the species make a comeback. Still, more research is underway. Neighborhood groups near the canyon, meanwhile, have begun campaigning on behalf of the sheep.

On one recent 100-degree afternoon in Palm Springs, Jim DeForge, a biologist with the nonprofit Bighorn Institute, walked quietly through the hardscrabble desert canyon lamenting the risk of more sheep losses, for more golf.

"This is ideal habitat for bighorn sheep, and losing it would be devastating to the herd," DeForge said. "It's easier to move a golf course than to keep these sheep alive, but the problem is that developers all want to be a little fancier and a little higher on the mountain with their courses than the last guy. But where does it ever end? Do we have to develop everything?"



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

A female California bighorn—ewes have shorter, smaller horns than rams—stands on a rock. The sheep are at the center of a dispute over a proposed Palm Springs golf course.



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of the Secretary
For Immediate Release: January 13, 2000

Contact: Tim Ahern (202) 208-5089

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt
Comment on the 10th Circuit Court decision
supporting wolf re-introduction at Yellowstone

I am very pleased that the courts have given a ringing endorsement to our wolf reintroduction program in Yellowstone National Park and central Idaho.

The court clearly agreed that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's reintroduction program is fully consistent with the Endangered Species Act.

Wolf reintroduction is a powerful demonstration of this Nation's commitment to protecting and restoring endangered species. Today's decision is a welcome vindication of our efforts to preserve this magnificent species

-DOI-



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of the Secretary
For Immediate Release
Sept. 27, 1999

Contact: Tim Ahern (202)-208-5089
Joan Guilfoyle (612)-810-6797

Babbitt Unveils First Statewide Habitat Conservation Plan, For Wisconsin Butterfly

The endangered Karner blue butterfly, a beautiful but fragile insect whose survival depends on patches of wild blue lupine, will be protected by the first-ever statewide conservation agreement under the Endangered Species Act, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt announced Monday.

The agreement, known as a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), will protect the butterfly's habitat on more than 260,000 acres in Wisconsin while permitting landowners, businesses and governments to continue a variety of activities.

"This is the first comprehensive statewide Habitat Conservation Plan and the most inclusive agreement of its kind in the country," Babbitt said at a signing ceremony at Sandhill Wildlife Area in Babcock, Wisconsin. "It is an excellent example of how the flexibility of the Endangered Species Act can promote regional habitat conservation planning by states and local governments and is a model for what other states and their partners might consider."

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Secretary George Meyer signed the Implementing Agreement, part of the HCP process, on behalf of the state.

"This is as fine an example of a public-private ecosystem management partnership as we've yet produced," Meyer said. "The department reorganized its management structure and focus in 1995 to reflect the desirability of partnerships to accomplish landscape-scale ecosystem management projects. This agreement hits that goal. Cooperation and involvement of all the partners certainly were key to the successful conclusion of this agreement."

A Habitat Conservation Plan provides for protection of endangered species while allowing economic development to continue. Under an HCP, landowners may "take" individual endangered species when the effects of the taking are mitigated and minimized by conservation measures. The Endangered Species Act defines "take" as either the direct killing, harming or harassment of an animal, or the destruction of its habitat.

Currently, there are more than 250 HCPs in effect nationwide and more than 200 under development.

The Karner blue butterfly HCP was developed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in conjunction with a group of 26 private and public partners, including county and industrial forest owners, utility companies, three state agencies, conservation organizations, and private landowners.

(More)

Marking a Victory for Eagle Rights

Once-Imperiled National Symbol to Be Removed From Endangered Species List

By WILLIAM CLAIBORNE
Washington Post Staff Writer

The American bald eagle, the nation's most durable symbol of democracy since 1782, was welcomed back from the brink of extinction yesterday as President Clinton announced plans to remove the majestic bird from the endangered species list.

Celebrating on the eve of the Independence Day weekend what he called a landmark in the struggle to preserve wildlife, Clinton said the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will begin a process that is expected to remove the bald eagle from the threatened category of the endangered species list by this time next year.

"It's hard to think of a better way to celebrate the birth of a nation than to celebrate the rebirth of our national symbol," Clinton said from a flag-draped platform on the South Lawn of the White House as Challenger, a 10-year-old bald eagle, squawked and flapped his wings nearby.

Clinton used the occasion to prod Congress to approve his \$1 billion Lands Legacy initiative aimed at preserving critical wildlife habitats and providing permanent financing for farms, city parks and other green spaces across the country. The president said he was disappointed earlier this week when committees in both the House and the Senate voted to cut deeply into his requests.

When the bald eagle was selected in 1782 for the Great Seal of the

United States of America—its wings stretched wide and an olive branch in one talon and 13 arrows in the other—as many as half a million bald eagles lived in the continental United States. But by 1963, as a result of hunting, loss of prey and habitat and the widespread use of the toxic pesticide DDT, only 417 nesting pairs were found in the lower 48 states, the Fish and Wildlife Service said. The species was never listed as threatened or endangered in Alaska because populations there have always been healthy.

With the banning of DDT in 1972 and the enactment of the Endangered Species Act a year later, the regal-looking bird began making a dramatic recovery. Today there are estimated to be nearly 5,800 breeding pairs—enough for wildlife officials to officially declare the bird no longer in danger of extinction. Four years ago the bald eagle was upgraded from endangered status to threatened.

"Today, the American bald eagle is back," Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt said. "The bald eagle joins a growing list of other once-imperiled species that are on the road to recovery, including the peregrine falcon and the Columbian white-tailed deer."

Babbitt praised the Endangered Species Act, one of the most politically charged U.S. laws and the focus of battles between environmentalists and supporters of land

development, as the world's first comprehensive law protecting threatened wildlife.

Since 1978, 21 species, including the American alligator and the gray whale, have been removed from the endangered species list. Eight others, including the peregrine falcon, are now proposed for delisting.

While environmentalists generally welcomed yesterday's announcement, some said that the increase in the bald eagle population was brought about not by the Endangered Species Act but largely by the ban on DDT and changing attitudes toward birds of prey that historically were sought by hunters.

"Eagles have been under federal protection since the 1920s, and the ban on DDT predates the Endangered Species Act," said Rob Gordon, executive director of the National Wilderness Institute. "Scientific wildlife management—not political posturing—is the way to help rare wildlife."

However, the Environmental Defense Fund, which filed the original petition to ban DDT, applauded Clinton's announcement and credited the Endangered Species Act.

"This is a tremendous victory for the bald eagle and for the Endangered Species Act," said Michael Bean, chairman of the fund's wildlife program. "There is no prouder symbol of our nation's commitment to preserving our natural heritage than the eagle, and there's no greater tribute to the En-

dangered Species Act than to allow its finest success story to fly off the list, free at last."

The National Audubon Society's director of science, Frank Gill, called the recovery of the bald eagle "one of the biggest conservation successes of the 20th century" and said it was important for conservationists to "recognize and celebrate this success."

Removing the bald eagle from the threatened category of the endangered list will not expose it to new dangers. Fish and Wildlife Service officials said. They said the service will work with state wildlife agencies to monitor the status of the species for at least five years, and if at any time it becomes evident the bird needs the Endangered Species Act's protection, it would be relisted.

Moreover, officials said the bald eagle will continue to be protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, both of which prohibit

the harming of the species.

Clinton called the return of the bald eagle a "fitting cap to a century of environmental stewardship," which he said was charted by President Theodore Roosevelt and included a national movement in which volunteers across the country banded together to guard nest sites, nurse injured eagles and reintroduce the birds in places where they had long ago vanished.

But Clinton observed that the bald eagle did not always have such an exalted status. He recalled that when the nation's founders first considered the question of an official emblem on July 4, 1776, the day the Declaration of Independence was signed, Benjamin Franklin wanted the national symbol to be the turkey.

"Fortunately in this case, Mr. Franklin, who had a lot of good ideas, had this referred to committee," Clinton said. Six years later, the Continental Congress approved the bald eagle for the Great Seal.

After 30 Years, the Nation's Living Symbol Is Deemed Safe

WASHINGTON, July 2 (AP) — The American bald eagle, the living symbol of the United States since 1782, is back from the brink of extinction and can now be removed from the endangered species list, President Clinton said today.

Celebrating a three-decade struggle to protect the bald eagle from pesticides and encroachments on its habitat, the President announced a process that is expected to remove the majestic bird from the list by July 2000.

"It's hard to think of a better way to celebrate the birth of a nation than to celebrate the rebirth of our national symbol," Mr. Clinton said on the eve of the Fourth of July weekend. "The return of the bald eagle is a fitting cap to a century of environmental stewardship."

The President was joined on a flag-backed platform on the South Lawn of the White House by a 10-year-old bald eagle named Challenger, who flapped his wings and cocked his snowcapped head.

Challenger was blown from a nest in the wild as an eaglet and experienced too much human contact at a young age to be able to survive in the wild.

"Believe it or not," Mr. Clinton said, "Ben Franklin wanted our national symbol to be a turkey. The press would be having a field day with that to the present day, wouldn't they?"

With the banning of the pesticide D D T in 1972 and the passage of the Endangered Species Act a year later, the bald eagle began making a dramatic recovery. Today, there are 5,500 breeding pairs.

Four years ago, with recovery well under way, the eagle was upgraded to threatened from endangered.

Removing the bald eagle from the Government's endangered list will not expose it to new dangers, and its status will be closely monitored.



Challenger, right, joined President Clinton during yesterday's announcement that after 30 years, the bald eagle was no longer an endangered species. In 1963, only 417 breeding pairs existed in the United States.

The once-endangered bald eagle now numbers in the thousands.

The eagle will continue to be protected from hunting or capture by two laws: the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which prohibits the taking, killing, possession, trans-

portation and importation of migratory birds, and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, which bans the taking, possession, transportation, export and import of a bald or golden eagle, alive or dead. "Taking" is defined as shooting, poisoning, molesting or harming the bird.

When the Continental Congress in 1782 placed the bald eagle in the center of the Great Seal of the United States, an olive branch in one claw and 13 arrows in the other, there were as many as

500,000 eagles in the skies of North America. By 1963, however, only 417 breeding pairs remained in the lower 48 states as a result of hunting, loss of prey and habitat, and the widespread use of D D T.

"Our majestic eagle was slipping toward extinction," the President said. "The eagle struggled barely to survive."

Mr. Clinton said today that the nation decided "that extinction is not an option — not for the eagle, not for the other creatures put here by God."



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of the Secretary
For Immediate Release
December 1, 1998

Contact: Stephanie Hanna 202/501-4633
Peter Umhofer 202/208-6011

SECRETARY BABBITT TO HOST STAKEHOLDER MEETING REGARDING THE PIMA COUNTY CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt will be in Tucson, Arizona, on Thursday, December 3, to meet with the Pima County Board of Supervisors and others involved in the habitat conservation effort for the pygmy owl and the Sonoran Desert conservation plan. Members of the Pima County Board of Supervisors, the Arizona Game and Fish Department and other stakeholders will attend the meeting.

"Pima County has embarked upon an innovative process to protect threatened and vital habitat for federally listed species like the pygmy owl. Conservation planning also means that many other animals and plants may avoid the need for protection under the Endangered Species Act if this effort succeeds," Secretary Babbitt said. "We are seeing more and more places around the country where habitat conservation planning is also saving for future generations the quality of life that brought people to beautiful places in the first place. Good conservation planning will allow a thriving economy and a healthy and sustainable environment for the people, wildlife and plants that share this fragile desert landscape."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the cactus ferruginous pygmy owl as an endangered species in March, 1997. The Service is continuing to work closely with tribal, state and local governments as well as with private citizens and organizations on efforts to develop a long term conservation plan that protects the pygmy owl as well as 18 other listed animal and plant species in Pima County.

Following the meeting, which is open to media, Secretary Babbitt will be available for questions from the press. The Board of Supervisors meeting, which the Secretary will join at 11:30 a.m., will be held on the ground floor of the Pima County Superior Court Building, 110 West Congress Street in Tucson. The Secretary's press availability will probably be held in front of the building immediately afterwards, at approximately 12:10 p.m.

-DOI-

Directions to the site from Phoenix: Take I-10 south to Exit 258 towards Congress St/Broadway. Turn right onto West Congress Street. Turn left onto Pennington Street. Take first right for parking.

Directions to the site from Tucson: Take West Congress Street and turn left onto Pennington Street. Take first right for parking.



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 1, 1998

Stephanie Hanna (O) 202/501-4633
(F&W) Terry Sexton (O) 303/236-7917
ext. 429

SECRETARY BABBITT TO ANNOUNCE SPECIAL RULE TO HELP RECOVER THE PREBLE'S MEADOW JUMPING MOUSE

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt will host a stakeholder meeting in Denver, Colorado, on Friday, December 4, to announce a proposed special rule to help recover the Preble's meadow jumping mouse.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the Preble's meadow jumping mouse as a threatened species in May, 1998. The special rule, known as a 4(d) rule after a section of the Endangered Species Act, is part of an overall conservation and recovery planning process for the species.

"We are using the flexibility built into the Endangered Species Act to forge new partnerships that ensure a bright future for the Preble's jumping mouse and people on the Front Range," Secretary Babbitt said. "The new rule will serve as a template for local conservation planning. It is an excellent example of cooperation in conservation on the Front Range in innovative ways that preserve not only habitat for threatened wildlife species but the values that drew people to live in these spectacular landscapes."

The State of Colorado and the Interior Department signed a Memorandum of Agreement in 1995 to conserve endangered species such as the Preble's meadow jumping mouse and many local communities in both Colorado and Wyoming already are developing conservation plans.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with the States of Colorado and Wyoming and local governments to develop conservation plans that can be put in place to help recovery of the mouse while still allowing some development activities.

The meeting will begin at 9:30am and will be held in the Arapahoe Ballrooms A & B at the Stapleton Plaza Inn, located at 3333 Quebec Street in Denver. Following the meeting, which is open to media, Secretary Babbitt will be available for questions from the media in Arapahoe Ballroom C at about 10:30am.

-DOI-

Directions to the site from Denver: Take I-25 to I-70 east. Take exit 278 (Quebec Street). Proceed 1/2 mile along Quebec Street to the Stapleton Plaza Inn (3333 Quebec Street).



NEWS

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November 13, 1998

Stephanie Hanna (O) 202/208-6416

Hans Stuart (O) 505/248-6911

BABBITT CONDEMNS SHOOTINGS OF MEXICAN WOLVES

Interior Secretary to Return to Lobo Release Area in Arizona

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt will travel Monday, November 16, to the remote area on the border between New Mexico and Arizona where 11 Mexican gray wolves were released earlier this year to condemn recent wolf shootings. Bullets have claimed the lives of at least two of the wolves, and are the likely cause of death of another two in the past month.

"These wolves had already learned to hunt, to provide for their young, and to survive in harmony with their wild environment," Babbitt said. "Because of these shootings, it is not only lives snuffed out, but the wolves that remain are deprived of important, learned survival experience."

Secretary Babbitt will travel to a remote, mountainous site on the Apache National Forest near Alpine, Arizona, at 2:30 p.m. (Mountain Standard Time) on Monday, to discuss the importance of the federal, state and private wolf reintroduction partnership and to comment on recent wolf shootings.

Mexican gray wolves, also known as lobos, were once commonly found in Arizona, New Mexico and Texas as well as in Mexico. They were brought to extinction in the United States and Mexico as a result of intensive efforts to remove predators during the late 18th and first half of the 19th centuries. The 11 wolves released in the wilds this year are the first of this distinct sub-species of wolf to be re-introduced into their natural range. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has successfully re-introduced two populations of another sub-species of gray wolf in the wilderness of Idaho and in Yellowstone National Park.

"The future survival of these rare and beautiful creatures must not be jeopardized by bullets and senseless killings," Babbitt said. "We want to work with local communities and solve these crimes. We are committed to the recovery of the Mexican wolf and the goals of the Endangered Species Act."

Exact directions and road routes to the site can be obtained from the Albuquerque Regional Office of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service by contacting Hans Stuart at 505/248-6911.

-DOI-



NEWS

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September 29, 1998

Stephanie Hanna (O) 202/208-6416

INTERIOR SECRETARY TO LAMENT THE PLIGHT OF THE BUMBLE BEE

Remarks on Importance of Restoration of Natural Areas to Highlight Concerns with Dwindling Populations of Pollinators

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt will speak in Austin, Texas, at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, September 30, on the importance of cooperative efforts and private/public partnerships in restoring conservation areas, open space and wildlife habitat.

In his remarks, to be made at the L.B.J. Auditorium on the main campus of the University of Texas, Secretary Babbitt will explain his concern for the animals and insects that pollinate a wide variety of the foods we eat, as well as most other important and endangered plants. Common pollinators are native bees, butterflies, bats and hummingbirds.

"These hard-working heroes of nature are not well understood but are clearly in peril in relatively recent times," Secretary Babbitt said. "Loss of habitat, poisonings, and fragmentation of the plant life on which they depend is reducing the number of pollinators alarmingly. Their dwindling numbers and even disappearances increasingly threaten the human food supply and the essential diversity of natural and agricultural plants."

Secretary Babbitt will make his remarks before a group of conservationists, scientists and academics attending a conference of the Society for Ecological Restoration. **Following the speech and a question and answer session with conference participants, Secretary Babbitt will be available for questions from the media. Media is welcome to attend his remarks, which will begin at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday.**

"It's very appropriate to discuss my concern with pollinators in Austin, since I know that bats have become a beloved and unique part of this city's considerable charm," Babbitt said. "I'm hopeful that when the public becomes more aware of the threats to these admirable creatures, more cities and communities will make efforts to conserve the wild plants and natural places essential to the survival of pollinators, whose future is so crucial to our own."

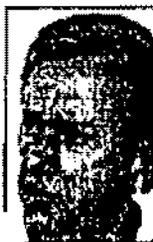
State Trout Denied Protection

Babbitt: Cutthroat Rescue Succeeding

By Ian Hoffman
Journal Northern Bureau

New Mexico's state fish, a trout the color of sage and Southwest sunsets, doesn't merit federal protection as an endangered species, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt announced Wednesday.

Government and private efforts to bring the Rio Grande cutthroat trout back to its native New Mexican and Colorado waters are working well enough, evidenced by 200 existing populations, Babbitt said.



BABBITT: Says existing efforts are working

"I believe this effort is going to be successful and really make a big difference," he said at the Albuquerque Biological Park, where the secretary posed for photos beside a tank of scarlet-bellied cutthroats.

Environmentalists and leading trout advocates criticized Babbitt's rejection of endangered status for the



IAN HOFFMAN/JOURNAL

DOING BETTER: Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt says the Rio Grande cutthroat trout, New Mexico's state fish, is doing better in the wild and doesn't need to be placed on the Endangered Species List. These two are part of a display at Albuquerque's Biological Park.

fish, some deriding his decision as a political dodge.

"It's just to avoid political backlash from powerful ranching and timber interests," said biologist Noah Greenwald of the Southwest Center for Biological Diversity.

Today, the Tucson-based activist group plans to notify Babbitt of plans to sue over the rejection. The center and four other groups petitioned for the listing in February. They hoped federal protection of the cutthroat would be a new weapon against grazing, logging and excessive water diversion by irrigators.

The Rio Grande cutthroat is an Archaic relic, once rich in the Rio Grande, Pecos River and Canadian River basins. The fish is golden or olive, marked by black spots from the dorsal fin to tail and with a bright orange or pink slash under its gills. It demands cold, clean, oxygen-rich

water, so the health of the cutthroat reflects the health of entire watersheds.

Human activity in those watersheds — livestock grazing, logging and irrigation drawdowns — helped chase the cutthroat into high alpine refuges mostly in the national forests. It lives in 5 to 10 percent of its original range, which some biologists believe extended as far south as Mexico. Cronado's 1541 expedition found the cutthroat near Bernalillo, Gloria Pass and elsewhere.

Many cutthroat fans argue the fish today lives a troubled and tenuous existence.

Drought, wildfire or severe winters can still wipe out entire populations, as occurred with the endangered Gila trout, the state's only other living native trout.

"When you have a whole mess of little populations in these little creeks, one good drought, thunderstorm or a snowstorm with anchor ice and you can lose them," said Michael Norte, president of both New Mexico Trout and the Rio Grande Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

Native trout like the Rio Grande cutthroat also are under assault from foreign invaders — rainbow trout from California, brook trout from the Appalachians and browns from Scotland and Germany. They either outmuscle the smaller, slower-growing cutthroats or, in the case of rainbows, threaten to pollute the cutthroat gene pool through interbreeding.

"The problem with not listing this fish as at least threatened is the fish is in decline and there are threats to it," Norte

said. "But because it is not a listed species, there is no hammer to make the U.S. Forest Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies pay as close attention to this species as it needs."

Under the Endangered Species Act, the Interior Secretary has 90 days to rule on whether a listing petition "presents substantial scientific or commercial information" to show a listing "may be warranted."

If so, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would have up to a year to determine whether the species is threatened or endangered.

Babbitt's rejection of the listing petition means that in-depth study will not occur.

Babbitt Says Falcon May Leave

Endangered List

STONE MOUNTAIN, Ga., Aug. 25—Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt released a peregrine falcon into the wild today and proposed that the bird, once nearly wiped out by the pesticide DDT, be removed from the endangered species list.

"God put them there, and we ought not to recklessly destroy the patterns of creation," said Babbitt after the freed falcon twice circled Stone Mountain near Atlanta.

It then headed toward the glass and concrete canyons of the city's downtown, 20 miles away, where wildlife officials said it may have been born as part of a captive breeding program launched atop a skyscraper.

The freed bird entered captivity after developing a liver infection that rendered it incapable of flying.

"All across the United States, it is making a fabulous comeback,

and my proposal today is that we de-list it," he said. "They've come back wonderfully."

Once down to 324 known nesting pairs across North America, there are now at least 1,593 peregrine breeding pairs in the United States and Canada.

Babbitt's announcement started the clock on a six-month comment period on the proposal, and the interior secretary said he expected peregrines to be "de-listed" as an endangered species next February.

The peregrine falcon once ranged throughout most of North America, from the subarctic forests of Alaska and Canada, south to Mexico, nesting in tall cliffs from which it could reach speeds of 200 mph as it dived for prey.

The bird—which has a slate-gray back, buff-colored breast and tear-drop markings under its eyes—nearly became extinct during the economic boom after World War II, when widespread use of DDT caused its eggshells to become thin and break during incubation.

Studies conducted in Britain on the link between DDT and thin eggshells were confirmed by U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service researchers and published by agency worker Rachel Carson in the 1962 book "Silent Spring," alerting the world to the dangers of indiscriminate pesticide use.

The United States listed the peregrine falcon as an endangered species in 1970, and two years later the Environmental Protection Agency banned the use of DDT.

Since then, peregrines have been part of a captive breeding program, and Babbitt said the program had allowed the species to survive.

Babbitt said he expected other species, including the golden eagle, soon to follow the peregrine falcon in removal from the endangered species list.



**Wants to be hairy
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Falcon's comeback hailed

Peregrine falcon soars off endangered list

By Jeff Barker
The Arizona Republic
Aug. 25, 1998

WASHINGTON - Bruce Babbitt looked long and hard at the first peregrine falcon he ever saw, soaring over Arizona's Marble Canyon in 1968.

He didn't know if he'd ever see another one.

Today, Interior Secretary Babbitt is set to announce that the falcon has climbed far enough back from the brink of extinction to be removed from the federal list of endangered species.

The comeback of the swift, agile raptor has been particularly vigorous in Arizona, which boasts more known breeding pairs -- 159 -- than any state in the contiguous United States. Alaska has 301.

"This is a real milestone in the history of the Endangered Species Act," said Babbitt, a former Arizona governor. "We spent a long time looking at that bird (in 1968) because they were almost gone."

Babbitt is expected to officially announce the falcons' recovery today at a news conference at Stone Mountain Park near Atlanta. The bird's removal from the endangered list will be published in the Federal Register, and will be subject to a 60-day comment period before taking effect.

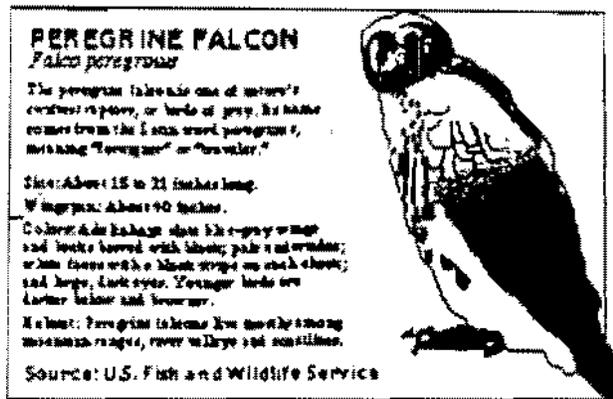
The raptor is believed to be the world's fastest bird, reaching speeds of 200 mph as it hunts its prey, including bats and other birds. It nests on tall cliffs and urban skyscrapers.



Mark Henle/The Arizona Republic

The peregrine falcon, like this one in Mesa, often lives in cities.

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PEREGRINE FALCON
Falco peregrinus

The peregrine falcon is one of nature's greatest raptors, or birds of prey. Its name comes from the Latin word *peregrinus*, meaning "foreigner" or "traveler."

Size: About 15 to 21 inches long.

Wingspan: About 40 inches.

Color: Adult falcons have blue-gray wings and backs barred with black; pale underneath; white throats with a black stripe on each cheek; and large, dark eyes. Younger birds are darker below and heavier.

Habitat: Peregrine falcons live mostly among mountain ranges, over valleys and mountains.

Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

THE ARCADE PHOTO

"One Memorial Day, I released one of these off the top of the Bank of New York Building above Wall Street," Babbitt said. "I let that bird go and it headed down Wall Street among all of those buildings. It's like it was flying through the Grand Canyon."

But the falcon was nearly wiped out during the late 1960s and 1970s by DDT, a pesticide that also hit the bald eagle and the brown pelican especially hard. DDT poisoned the food chain, and caused eggshells to be thin or to break so that offspring could not hatch.

Officially declared endangered in 1970, the peregrine population reached an all-time low in 1975, when there were 324 known nesting pairs in North America. Its recovery was aided when the government banned DDT for most uses in 1972.

However, residues of the pesticide are still found in farmland runoff in some areas of the country, including west Valley segments of the Gila River.

Besides banning DDT, the government also aided the birds' recovery by breeding them in captivity and aggressively protecting nest sites in the wild.

Today, there are at least 1,274 known breeding pairs in the United States, and 319 pairs in Canada. The original goal when the peregrine was listed was to reach 631 pairs.

While it's not likely to affect the falcons' revival, the peregrine has become something of a political pawn in the nation's capital.

Babbitt is using the birds' recovery to increase support for the Endangered Species Act, which is up for renewal in Congress. He says the falcons' comeback shows how well the law can work.

But many Republicans have accused the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of placing species on the list without regard for economic concerns.

Some of the lawmakers say the law needs to be rewritten to better protect private-property rights and to end bureaucratic intrusions. They accuse Babbitt of exaggerating the law's achievements.

But Babbitt said Monday that the Western Republicans "just will not accept the validity and the success" of the Endangered Species Act.

"Including," he said, "this bird."

Jeff Barker can be reached at (202) 662-7264 or at jeff.barker@pni.com via e-mail.

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Babbitt's back on top after a rough winter

By H. Josef Hobert
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt is having fun again.

He's tearing down outdated dams, calling for the protection of imperiled cutthroat trout and bashing Republicans in Congress over endangered species. His vitality and combativeness are back.

The nightmare of the past winter is over, Babbitt says. Would anyone guess a special prosecutor is still nipping at his back?

Only six months ago, Babbitt considered resigning from the job he calls the best he's ever had because of almost weekly headlines questioning his honesty.

Through the winter, two congressional committees, a Justice Department task force and a special prosecutor investigated allegations that Babbitt had rejected an Indian casino because of Democratic campaign contributions and then lied about it to Congress.

Babbitt, 60, vehemently denied any link between the casino decision and political contributions. Still, a special prosecutor continues to look into the matter.

Even so, the Babbitt brouhaha seems to have shrunk in importance amid no hard evidence of wrongdoing and Washington's focus on the president's troubles.

And Babbitt, a lanky Arizona, is back on the offensive.

"The lynch mob has ridden on and we're going full bore now," he beamed in an interview.

Just Tuesday, Babbitt was in Salmon boasting of his department's advances in controlling wildfires through less costly, more natural means.

Recently, on the salmon-rich Rogue River in Oregon, he grabbed a sledgehammer and whacked a chunk of concrete out of a dam to dramatize an ambitious effort to reverse a 70-year policy of dam building.

A few days later, back in Washington, he lashed out at congressional Republicans for cutting money he had requested for endangered species protection and public land purchases.

An infuriated Rep. Bob Livingston, R-La., chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, accused Babbitt of "playing fast and loose with the facts."

It was just the kind of fight Babbitt relishes — a seeming eternity from the Indian casino permit that caused problems last winter.

Cabinet's 'Boy Scout'

Babbitt, a twice-elected Arizona governor and a Democratic candidate for president in 1988 who almost was named to the Supreme Court five years ago, had been viewed as the Boy Scout in the Clinton cabinet. His troubles last winter stunned friends and critics alike.

After all, this is the Babbitt who as a young man marched with Martin Luther King to Selma; who joined VISTA to help the poor; who as a reformist Arizona attorney general found his name on a monster list.

Sitting in a chair in front of the fireplace in his Interior Department office in February after a special prosecutor was named, Babbitt wondered if it ever would end.

"I'm psychologically, financially and physically sore," he said. "How did it come to this after a quarter-century of trying real hard to do my job in public life?"

He found himself withdrawing, full of self-doubt and wondering what the controversy was doing to his family.

"He was lower than a snake in a wagon rut," said Michael Gaudin, his director of communications.

Greg Schneiders, a longtime friend, had been with Babbitt when he was forced to end a brief presidential bid a decade ago because of feeble support. But that disappointment was nothing compared to this.

"I've never seen him react to anything else the way he reacted to this thing with the casino," Schneiders said. "He's a guy who cherishes his reputation more than anything else."

His good name on the line

And that reputation was in jeopardy, because of an Interior Department decision on an Indian casino and a meeting between two old friends.

In July 1995, the Interior Department rejected a request by three Chippewa tribes for a casino at a falling dog track in Hudson, Wis., about 180 miles from their reservations. The department had approved only one previous request for an off-reservation casino, and then only with strong local support.



Katherine Jones / The Idaho Statesman

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt was in Salmon on Tuesday talking about the virtues of prescribed natural burns in Idaho.

"I've never seen him react to anything else the way he reacted to this thing with the casino. He's a guy who cherishes his reputation more than anything else."

ORIN SCHMIDERS
 Longtime friend of Interior Secretary
 Bruce Babbitt

In the Hudson case, state officials in both Wisconsin and Minnesota opposed the permit, as did the town and rival Indian tribes with a casino not far away.

But when the permit was rejected, the Chippewa charged the White House had pressured Babbitt after tribes opposing the casino had promised campaign contributions to the Democratic Party. These tribes, in fact, later gave \$230,000 to the Democrats, although no link between the money and the casino decision has been proven.

When Republicans, already investigating Democratic fund-raising, learned of the Chippewa's complaint, they thought they might have a "smoking gun" involving a member of Clinton's cabinet.

In late October, Babbitt was called before a Senate committee to explain the casino decision and why he had given conflicting accounts about alleged White House pressure in two letters.

The tone of the hearing caught Babbitt by surprise. "I very naively

assumed that this would be a fact-finding kind of thing. It turned out to be an all-out assault." He later would say.

The questioning centered on allegations ironically made by one of Babbitt's oldest friends, Phoenix lawyer Paul Eckstein, a law school classmate who had once run Babbitt's re-election campaign for governor.

Eckstein, hired to lobby for the casino permit, told the committee that Babbitt had acknowledged in a private July 14, 1995, meeting that he had gotten pressure from Harold Ickes, then White House deputy chief of staff, to make the casino decision promptly. Though not necessarily one way or the other.

'Testimony was confusing'

Babbitt, in an earlier letter, had denied Eckstein's assertion when it had first surfaced on Capitol Hill. But now Babbitt said he, indeed, had brought up Ickes' name during his meeting with Eckstein — but only as a ruse to get the lobbyist out of his office.

"I said something to the effect that Mr. Ickes wanted a decision ... Mr. Eckstein was extremely persistent in our meeting and I used this phrase simply as a means of terminating the discussion and getting him out the door," said Babbitt.

But, at the Senate hearing, Babbitt appeared defensive and was unable to clearly explain his earlier denial of Eckstein's account. Eckstein had said Babbitt mentioned Indian campaign money. Babbitt said he had no such recollection.

Many senators were unconvinced, and even those who believed him were taken aback.

"His testimony was confusing and unnecessarily so," recalls Sen. Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn., who

says he's convinced Babbitt never tried to mislead Congress.

Resignation was contemplated

For weeks after the Senate hearing, Babbitt failed to grasp the serious dilemma facing him, according to friends.

He would brood over the attack on his reputation and wonder what it was doing to his family — his wife Hattie, who is a lawyer, and his two sons, both students at Stanford.

Babbitt loved his job. When bypassed by a whisker for a seat on the Supreme Court in 1993, he told an interviewer the bright side was "as a consolation prize, I get to spend my summers fishing in Alaska and camping in Yellowstone."

Yet, in the winter of 1997, Babbitt began wondering whether he should resign.

"I'd go home thinking this is an outrage. I ought to just quit and chalk it up to a bad career choice," Babbitt confided.

With the new year, he traveled to Arizona, searching for solitude. He climbed a mountain outside Phoenix that he often had hiked when governor, and then visited the Grand Canyon near his hometown of Flagstaff.

As a youngster growing up in Flagstaff, he had viewed the open-covered mountains, the expanses of ponderosa pine and red-rock cliffs as his playground.

It's where he once searched for arrowheads, followed dinosaur tracks, floated the mighty Colorado River with his friends, and where, at 15, he lied about his age to help fight forest fires.

He returned to Washington determined to set the record straight at a second round of congressional hearings.

In a blistering opening statement

to a House hearing, Babbitt said the Hudson decision. "The right decision made the right way, and for the right reason."

Babbitt argued that his testimony on the casino matter and his testimony in the Senate showed no intention to mislead. But Rep. Don Burton, I Ind., said he wasn't convinced by Eckstein's sworn testimony. "Unfortunately there is no denials."

Days later, Attorney General Janet Reno recommended the appointment of a special prosecutor.

A day after Reno's appointment, Babbitt dismissed any suggestion of resigning. A report by the special counsel is expected late this year, early next.

Made his own bed?

Knowing at Babbitt is the fact that he largely brought the mess upon himself when he agreed to meet with Eckstein that July day.

After learning the Chippewa's case had been rejected, Eckstein phoned Babbitt from the Interoceanic apartment lobby and was invited up to his office.

It's the same wood-paneled office where some of the 19th century most powerful men sat around a fireplace and made the deals that opened the West. It is where another secretary in the 1920s hatched what later became the Teapot Dome scandal that sent him to prison for kickbacks on oil leases.

Only Babbitt and Eckstein were in the room for that meeting. They had not talked since 1995.

And what if Babbitt had done what his old friend had asked, and postponed the casino decision, already made?

"All hell would have broke loose," says Babbitt. "What he wanted me to do was intervene."

Babbitt Says Cutthroat Is Doing Fine

Secretary Casts Doubt On Need for Protection

By Mike Taucher
Journal Staff Writer

VERMEJO PARK RANCH — Bruce Babbitt didn't land any trout.

But that wasn't the U.S. Interior Secretary's real goal Wednesday. He was here to talk about restoring the New Mexico state fish.

U.S. Interior Secretary Babbitt said Wednesday he doubts the Rio Grande cutthroat will need federal protection because of voluntary restoration efforts such as the one here on media mogul Ted Turner's spectacular spread.

Babbitt was unsuccessful while fly-fishing on stop five of a tour of the western United States designed to promote the restoration of subspecies of cutthroat trout — the native trout of the Intermountain West. He praised efforts to restore the Rio Grande cutthroat to its native streams on Turner's ranch and surrounding property.

"This is arguably the most comprehensive effort in all the West," Babbitt said. "I'd like the people in the West to see and hear about this."

At Turner's Vermejo Park Ranch, a 588,000-acre expanse of sloping meadows, pine forests and ridgelines fading into the distance, biologists are removing non-native rainbow, brown and brook trout and replacing them with cutthroats.

Turner biologists are working with state biologists, neighboring landowners and the U.S. Forest Service to convert streams now inhabited by trout from other areas and bring back the native trout.

Such efforts, Babbitt said, could render unnecessary any protection for the fish under the Endangered

Species Act.

"I believe there is a good chance we can avoid listing this fish," he told reporters shortly after hooking but failing to land any of the non-native trout in one of Turner's mountain lakes.

Babbitt's comments were certain to anger — but not surprise — environmentalists, who are awaiting word on their petition to get the Rio Grande cutthroat listed as an endangered species.

"Babbitt wishes to avoid listing of the Rio Grande as an endangered species not because this will best conserve the species, but because he wishes to avoid political backlash from the ranching and timber industries," Noah Greenwald, an ecologist for the Southwest Center for Biological Diversity, said in a news release issued earlier in the week.

In New Mexico, the Rio Grande cutthroat has been reduced to less than 10 percent of its former range, sufficient evidence that it warrants Endangered Species Act protection, according to the Tucson-based environmental group.

Before Wednesday, Babbitt had conducted similar events in Colorado, Nevada, Utah and Montana to promote efforts to restore other subspecies of cutthroat trout.

"We can restore the landscape — not artificially but naturally — as a reflection of creation," Babbitt said. "That has sort of a powerful, spiritual appeal to people, like me."

At Vermejo, biologists are building 5-foot waterfalls on two tributaries of the Vermejo River to keep non-native trout from swimming upstream. The biologists then remove those species upstream of the waterfalls and replace them with cutthroats, said Vermejo general manager David M. Veckar.

Throughout the West, cutthroat streams have been denuded by cattle grazing and dams, and the fish has fallen victim to the brown trout, an aggressive European import, the brook trout from the East Coast and the rainbow, a West Coast fish that has hybridized many cutthroat populations out of existence.

Veckar said Turner plans to return Rio Grande cutthroat trout to about 10 to 15 miles of streams on the ranch and build a surplus of cutthroats to provide for restorations elsewhere in the region.

The trout effort is not the only effort at Vermejo to restore the ranch — where guests pay \$325 a night to fish, hunt and relax — to a more natural state. Turner also has taken the cattle off the ranch and replaced them with bison. He is expected to begin breeding endangered black-footed ferrets here soon.

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U.S. Department of the Interior

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PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

TUESDAY, MAY 19, 1998

The Salt Lake Tribune

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NEXT ▶

Sunday, May 17, 1998

SECTION

HOME

Babbitt Praises Utah Efforts to Preserve Bonneville Trout

BY BRENT ISRAELSEN
THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

MOUNTAIN DELL CANYON -- From a small plastic tub swarming with a half-dozen fish just netted in Mountain Dell Creek, a Utah biologist on Saturday handed an eight-inch Bonneville cutthroat to Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt.

The trout, probably a Republican, resisted Babbitt's grasp and leaped into the stream.

"That's 'catch-and-release' by the Interior secretary," quipped Don Duff, a U.S. Forest Service fish biologist.

In Utah for the third time in six weeks, Babbitt's latest photo opportunity was to call attention to efforts by the state, the Goshute Indians and the local chapter of Trout Unlimited to recover once-dwindling populations of the Bonneville cutthroat.

While a Colorado environmental group is trying to force the federal government to list the trout as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, state and local officials are trying to avoid such a listing through a "conservation agreement," a voluntary effort in effect for nearly three years.

"I feel really good about the agreement," said Charlie Thompson, regional aquatics manager for the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. "We've got Bonneville cutthroat all over the state. We feel they're coming back."

Thompson's remarks, echoed by Kathleen Clarke, acting director of the Utah Department of Natural Resources, were meant to persuade Babbitt not to grant federal threatened or endangered status to the Bonneville cutthroat.

The federal act often carries with it onerous restrictions.

The status of the Bonneville cutthroat, Utah's state fish, is being reviewed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in response to a recent petition filed by the Biodiversity Legal Foundation in Boulder, Colo.

But, if Babbitt's rave review of what he saw Saturday is any indication, the petition could be in trouble.

"We need more restoration partners like this," Babbitt said to participants in the conservation agreement. "You're onto something powerful here. I want to bottle you up and take you all over the West, saying, 'This is how they do it in Utah.'"

Saturday's stop in Utah was part of Babbitt's "Bring Back the Natives" campaign, in which he is promoting pro-active efforts to restore and protect some 20 subspecies of cutthroat around the West.



See photograph/Bryan Patrick

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, left, chats with anglers Joseph Lujan and Mark Lujan, 10, while touring the Natomas area Monday.

Babbitt called a plan to protect the giant garter snake a good example of balance between development and wildlife protection.

Babbitt: \$1 million from developers

Continued from page B1
where in Natomas. The conservancy's first purchase - a minimum of 400 acres of habitat - hasn't been identified, either.

"If these first few weeks suggest what's going to happen," said Bill Yeates, attorney for a coalition of environmentalists, "then these critters don't have much chance."

Terry Moore, special projects manager for the city, said the City Council should have a conservancy board chosen by July.

The habitat conservation plan, five years in the making, is permitted under a 1982 amendment to the U.S. Endangered Species Act. Such plans have become popular under the Clinton administration, with 190 approved between 1992 and 1996 and hundreds more in the works.

The Natomas plan is the first in Sacramento County.

"In Sacramento, we don't have reasons not to build everywhere," said City Councilwoman Heather Fargo. "We don't have canyons, mountains or the bay,

“
We're creating a
model for how it is we
can reconcile
protection of
agriculture,
development and
protection of God's
creations.
”

Bruce Babbitt
Interior secretary

But if we don't set aside some open space in this community, we are going to be so sorry."

Last month, the Sierra Club, Mountain Lion Foundation, Audubon Society and other environmental groups sued the state Department of Fish and Game,

arguing that it failed to give adequate study or public notice before it approved the Natomas plan.

More recently, environmentalists raised an alarm about tree-cutting and channel widening in Natomas that they say have disturbed Swainson's hawks and killed giant garter snakes. The city is enlarging Natomas ditches to handle the increased runoff expected from urban development.

David Zezulak, a Fish and Game biologist, said he permitted contractors to cut down a willow tree where a pair of Swainson's hawks appeared to be getting ready to nest. The tree had to be cut regardless, he said, and so it was better to remove it before the pair actually nested. The pair eventually nested in a nearby tree, he said.

The more important point, said Yeates, is that the Natomas habitat conservation plan is lagging behind development.

"This is a new thing," he said. "It takes a lot of trust."

Sacramento Bee, Tuesday, May 12, 1998



NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

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PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1998

Babbitt Sets Plan to Pare Endangered Species List Protected Status Aided Recoveries

By JOBY WARRICK
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Clinton administration will announce plans today to remove dozens of once-rare creatures from the government's official "endangered" list, declaring victory in staving off extinction for such powerful symbols as the peregrine falcon and the bald eagle.

From the fearsome gray wolf to the obscure Missouri bladder-pod, a total of 29 formerly threatened animals and plants are likely to be declared fully or partly recovered within two years in what officials describe as the biggest such "de-listing" since the Endangered Species Act was adopted 25 years ago.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt will announce the move as part of a new policy that emphasizes removing threatened creatures from protective status once recovery is assured. The policy is intended in part to blunt criticism from congressional opponents who complain that endangered-species laws don't work.

"In the near future, many species will be flying, splashing and leaping off the list," Babbitt said. "They made it. They're graduating."

More than 1,130 animals and plants are listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as endangered or threatened, making it illegal to kill or harm them. Over the years, only a handful of species have been removed. Some, like California's Tacopa pupfish or Florida's Dusky seaside sparrow, were dropped on-

THE WASHINGTON POST

ly after they became extinct.

But others have rapidly recovered under federal protection, and Babbitt argued that they should be removed from the list to free up funds for other projects.

"There's a genuine savings once you get these creatures off the list," he said in a briefing with reporters. "The federal monitors can pack up and go home."

The 29 species cited by Babbitt have made solid recoveries and

Back From the Brink

Once threatened with extinction, these animals and plants are top candidates for removal from the government's "endangered" list:

Bald eagle: The national symbol's numbers have increased tenfold since the 1960s and are now growing at a rate of 10 percent each year.

Gray wolf: Expected to be taken off list soon in western Great Lakes, and in 2002 in Rocky Mountains.

Peregrine falcon: Population increased after restrictions on DDT and release of falcons reared in captivity. Expected to be taken off list this year.

Columbian white-tailed deer: Recovered from a population of only 500 two decades ago. May be removed from list in some regions next year.

Aleutian Canada goose: Limited to a single island in 1967, the goose has thrived because of restrictions on hunting and protections for its California wintering grounds.

Virginia northern flying squirrel: After development, pollution and pests damaged forest habitat, population has bounced back. Service plans to reclassify as threatened.

Other species: Three plants—Robbin's cinquefoil, Missouri bladder-pod and running buffalo clover—will likely be reclassified. Four plant and animal species in the Mojave Desert's Meadows National Wildlife Refuge might be taken off list.

would top the list of creatures to be declared fully recovered or moved to a less-protective status following a months-long process of formal review.

Some of the recoveries have been widely chronicled. Both the peregrine falcon and the bald eagle were pushed to the brink of extinction by the use of DDT and other pesticides that caused reproduction rates to plummet. Today, there are more than 1,500 nesting pairs of falcons—including at least one in downtown Washington—and the bald eagle population is increasing at a rate of about 10 percent a year. Bald eagles were reclassified from officially "endangered" to "threatened" in 1995.

While the two birds have become symbols of the recovery effort, Babbitt's list of success stories also includes lesser-known animals and plants that he calls "just as ecologically significant. . . I don't know what a Missouri bladder-pod is but I'm pleased that it's ready for consideration," he said of the mid-western plant.

News of Babbitt's decision was generally welcomed by environmentalists, who said the proposed "de-listings" were a vindication of the Endangered Species Act. "These species are genuine success stories," said Christopher E. Williams, policy analyst for the World Wildlife Fund.

But others saw the timing of Babbitt's announcement as political, coming as Congress is weighing competing proposals for reforming the act, which expired in 1992. Sen. Dirk Kempthorne (R-Idaho), author of one of the bills, noted that the recovering species on Babbitt's list "didn't all reach that point together."

"Five years ago people were saying it's time to de-list the bald eagle," Kempthorne said. "This underscores the fact that there is no mechanism in place for scientific de-listings."



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of the Secretary
EMBARGOED release: 5:00am, May 6, 1998

Contact: Cindy Hoffman in DC (202) 208-3008
Jamie Workman (202) 208-6416
Diana Weaver in Mass. (413) 253-8329

BABBITT ANNOUNCES NEW POLICY, PLANS TO "DELIST" ENDANGERED SPECIES *New Emphasis and actions could change terms of ESA reauthorization debate*

GILL, MASSACHUSETTS --With a backdrop of two nesting bald eagles raising their three week old chick, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt announced a seemingly minor new policy with major implications: The Administration will make it a priority during the next couple of years, to propose delisting or downlisting close to two dozen endangered species that are healthy and thriving once again.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service signed the policy, which sets in motion the legal process of moving roughly two dozen species, including bald eagles, either off the Endangered Species Act "list" or to the less critical "threatened" category during the next couple of years. Removing recovered species from the list enables officials to redirect funds and manpower to species with greater needs.

"Our new policy, to emphasize delisting, could alter the terms of debate over the future of the landmark 1973 conservation law," said Babbitt. "For we can now finally prove one thing conclusively: The Endangered Species Act works. Period."

Critics of the Act often claim that once a species is placed on the list, it stays there forever, citing that as evidence that the Act is ineffective and should be weakened or even repealed. With future delistings, their argument becomes moot.

Bald eagles, initially declared an endangered species in 1967, recovered to the point that they were upgraded to threatened status three years ago. Today, more than 5,000 nesting pairs of bald eagles live in the lower 48 states.

"In the near future," said Babbitt, "many species will be flying, splashing and leaping off the list. They made it. They are graduating. They're coming back to their native American soil, water and wind."

Adding species in need of the Act's protections to the list remains a high priority for the Service, particularly any species facing high immediate risks that require emergency listing. Currently, 1,135 species (466 animals and 669 plants) are on the ESA List. Under this Administration, the Service has placed an average of 85 species on the list each year.



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 30, 1998

Stephanie Hanna (O) 202/208-6416

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR BRUCE BABBITT ON THE COURT OF APPEALS DECISION REGARDING WOLF REINTRODUCTION

I am very pleased that a federal court of appeals has given a ringing endorsement to our wolf reintroduction program in Yellowstone National Park and central Idaho. The court clearly agreed that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's reintroduction program is fully consistent with the Endangered Species Act, and expressly disapproved the reasoning of a Wyoming district court that had struck down the program. The Wyoming decision, which has been stayed pending appeal, is now before another federal court of appeals in Denver

Wolf reintroduction is a powerful demonstration of this Nation's commitment to protecting and restoring endangered species. Tuesday's decision is a welcome vindication of our efforts to preserve this magnificent species

-DOI-

[Note: The court decision, from the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco, resulted in upholding the conviction of a man prosecuted for unlawfully shooting one of the wolves reintroduced into Yellowstone National Park.]



NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

MONDAY, APRIL 20, 1998

THE WASHINGTON POST

APR 19 1998

'Low-Tech' Effort Aims to Return Massive Trout to Nevada Waters

By LOU CANNON
Special to *The Washington Post*

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt joined leaders of the Paiute tribe and Trout Unlimited today in placing novel fish incubators alongside the swiftly flowing Truckee River in the first step of an effort to restore giant trophy trout to a degraded lake and river system.

"I have the vision that in my lifetime Lahontan cutthroat trout will swim from Pyramid Lake up the Truckee and see the bright lights of Reno on their way to Lake Tahoe," Babbitt said.

The Truckee flows more than 100 miles from Tahoe in the high Sierra to Pyramid Lake in an arid desert 35 miles north of Reno.

Pyramid Lake was once home to monster Lahontan cutthroat trout that weighed from 40 to 60 pounds. Babbitt caught a "planted" Lahontan trout weighing about five pounds from the lake today and presented it to Mervin Wright Jr., chairman of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribal Council.

Later Babbitt, Wright and Matt Holford, chairman of the Nevada Council of Trout Unlimited, joined in placing the first of two streamside incubators along the Truckee. Holford said they were the "ultimate in low-tech incubation." The incubators are nothing more than camouflaged old refrigerators into which plastic boxes holding trout eggs will be placed. Water flows through the refrigerators and the hatched fish swim into the river.

Wright said restoration of the giant trout, upon which the Paiute have long depended as a principal source of food, would be crucial for his people.

"It's a great day that we are actually trying to restore the native trout after talking so long about

doing it," Wright said. The effort to restore the Lahontan cutthroat trout is the latest and one of the most dramatic steps in a campaign launched by Babbitt last year to "bring back the natives," meaning a variety of native western fish at the brink of extinction.

Each of the incubators planted along the river today will be filled in mid-May with 90,000 fish eggs from a Paiute hatchery. A similar effort with other native fish in Wyoming produced a 90 percent success rate, Holford said. The sponsors of the Nevada project hope the Lahontan trout will hatch and become biologically imprinted with the Truckee River. They would then spawn throughout the river, perhaps eventually also returning to Lake Tahoe. Fish that are raised in hatcheries and then put in a lake or stream rarely leave the area in which they have been placed.

"We know this succeeds in theory. Now we have to see if it works in the Truckee," said Patrick Coffin of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Babbitt has compared the Lahontan restoration attempt with the controversial campaign to bring back the wolf to Yellowstone.

Both attempts have been unpopular with ranchers—the wolf because it is a presumed livestock predator, and the trout because some farmers fear they will be deprived of irrigation water. While farmers in the Fallon area east of here did not object to installation of the streamside incubators, they have made it known that they will oppose any efforts to reduce their water rights or remove dams on the Truckee River. Currently, however, a series of wet years in northern Nevada and agreement among government agencies, the tribal council and farmers brokered by Sen. Harry M. Reid (D-Nev.) have brought a truce to the water wars that often plagued this arid state. Babbitt said in an interview that ironing out the final



Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, left, and Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribal Council Chairman Mervin Wright Jr. discuss effort to restore Lahontan cutthroat trout.

details of this agreement and having it signed by all parties is a high priority for the Interior Department.

The Lahontan cutthroats, named for two distinct red slashes on their lower jaw, were once the largest inland trout in the nation, and the story of their near-destruction is characteristic of what has happened to many species during a century and a half of development in the West.

In 1844, the explorer John Fremont and his party traveled south from Oregon and became the first people of European origin to see the saline body of water he named Pyramid Lake because of a distinctive formation in the middle of the lake. Pyramid is a remnant of Lahontan Lake, a vast inland sea that 12,000 years ago covered much of Nevada. The trout and a rare sucker-type fish, cui-ui, which is sacred to the Paiute, can tolerate higher levels of salinity and heat than most non-native species. Fremont received a friendly greeting from the Paiute, who gave his party a feast of trout that the explorer thought tasted better than any fish he had ever eaten.

According to fish historian and biologist Robert J. Behnke, "Fremont and his party were the first and probably the last Anglos to see Pyramid Lake and its native trout in all their pristine glory." The trout soon became a popular food in mining camps. Lahontan trout spawning in the Truckee were killed by sawdust pollution from lumber mills. By 1875, dams near Reno had blocked 75 percent of their spawning habitat.

Even so, the abundance and resilience of these native trout was remarkable. Annual railroad shipments of cutthroat trout from Wadsworth in the 1880s ranged from 200,000 to 250,000 pounds.

The most serious blow to the Lahontans was struck in 1905 by the federal government, which owns 87 percent of Nevada lands. The newly created Bureau of Reclamation built Derby Dam to irrigate vast areas of desert for farming. When the Paiute objected that this would destroy the fish, Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Frederick Newell declared: "Fish have no rights in water law."

For many years, sufficient water passed over Derby Dam to allow a reduced fishery. In the 1920s, Pyramid Lake became a fashionable vacation spot for movie stars who often were photographed with trophy trout they had caught. But in 1938 increased diversion from the Truckee and a severe drought all but finished off the Lahontans. The trout that spawned that year were, as Behnke put it, "left high and dry, writhing in their death throes on a damp river bed after the entire Truckee River flow was diverted at Derby Dam."

By the 1940s Pyramid was classified as a "dead lake," impoverishing the Paiute, who had used the trout for food and maintained a flourishing guide business on the shores of the lake.

Lahontan trout survived in tributaries and lakes of the Truckee and other small streams in various parts of Nevada. In the early 1970s these trout were listed as a threatened species, and federal and state agencies worked with tribal groups and private organizations such as Trout Unlimited in an effort to restore them. Today a Lahontan fishery thrives in Pyramid Lake, but the fish are much smaller than the monsters of the past, rarely above 15 pounds and more often about five. For a long time, it was believed that the original genetic strain of the giant Lahontan trout had been lost when the lake went dead in the 1940s.

But a small population of fish was found in two streams at Pilot Peak near the Nevada-Utah border that some scientists believe are descendants of the original Lahontans. Using new genetic methods, Jason Dunham and G. L. Vineyard of the Biological Resources Center at the University of Nevada-Reno are comparing the DNA of these Pilot Peak fish with DNA taken

from giant Lahontans that were caught and mounted earlier in the century.

In a recent paper, Dunham said broodstock of the fish from Pilot Peak may "provide an important source of genetic diversity for rebuilding the cutthroat fishery at Pyramid Lake." But it is not known if these fish will attain monster size. Dunham's paper said changes in environmental conditions as well as genetics may have reduced the Lahontans' size.

Restoration of the native fishery could be significant to the Reno area, where casinos are closing, downtown real estate values are in decline and outdoor recreation is increasingly seen as the wave of the future. The Reno Gazette-Journal on Thursday said the valuation of downtown Reno is less than one luxury casino opening this year on the Las Vegas strip. Increasingly across the West, the presence of native trout is being seen as an index of environmental health.

"Trout are so sensitive to habitat, needing cold and clean streams, that they form keystone species that link aquatic plants and animals throughout the watershed," Michael P. Dornbeck, chief of the U.S. Forest Service, said in a statement. "To recover one is to recover all."



PHOTO BY JEAN DEGEN—RENO GAZETTE-JOURNAL VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Babbitt, center rear, and Steve Kinerson of Paiute Tribal Council, right, help move incubator made from refrigerator.



APR 20 1998

RENEWING TROUT: Placing old refrigerators along the Truckee River to serve as incubators for fish eggs, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and others began an effort in Sutcliffe, Nev., Saturday to restore the Lahontan cutthroat trout, the largest trout in North America. Officials say that before the Truckee was dammed downstream from Reno in 1905, the trout would grow as large as 60 pounds. Now the plastic boxes containing eggs will be placed into the refrigerators so the hatched fish can swim into the river.

Spring Mountains to be safe haven for rare species

By Mary Manning
LAS VEGAS SUN

Federal and state officials were expected to ink a landmark comprehensive agreement today that protects 68 rare and endangered species in the Spring Mountains west of Las Vegas.

The Spring Mountain Conservation Plan is the first of its kind in the nation, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt said.

"We are learning to make the Endangered Species Act work in Nevada," he said.

"The same beauty and diversity that make this extraordinary habitat a 'Great Basin Galapagos' attract thousands of visitors each week. Our response is not to restrict access to the Spring Mountains, but to create a bold, innovative solution called a conservation agreement."

Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., was scheduled to join Babbitt and representatives of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Spring Mountain Natural Conservation Area and the Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources at the Mount Charleston Hotel.

Success of the agreement comes

from keeping rare species off the endangered list, Babbitt said, referring to reforms President Clinton instituted to preserve species in 1993.

Most conservation agreements safeguard a single species, Babbitt said. Of all the plants and animals protected in the Spring Mountains, 25 are found nowhere else in the world.

For Reid, it was the capstone of years of work to preserve the Spring Mountains.

"As someone who grew up in the desert down in Searchlight, I remember being amazed by the alpine scenery the first time I went to the Spring Mountains," Reid said. "Today's children growing up in Las Vegas need to have the same opportunity to experience the mountains that I had. With the record growth we are experiencing in the valley, it is critical that we all work together to preserve and protect Nevada's special places like Red Rock, the Spring Mountains Recreation Area and Mount Charleston."

"The historic signing of this conservation agreement marks the next step in the process to improve our quality of life in Southern Nevada."

■ Babbitt

CONTINUED FROM 1A

The unique agreement brought together federal, state and local partners, he said.

The conservation agreement will protect unique species threatened or endangered on public as well as private lands.

Official work on the agreement began after a U.S. Forest Service plan was amended in October 1996, said Alan Pinkerton, assistant forest supervisor of the Spring Mountains Natural Recreation Area. The plan improves environment for all of the species so they will not be listed, Pinkerton said, noting that steelhead salmon and bullhead trout have been listed as threatened in Idaho

In addition to providing a haven for rare and sensitive creatures, the Spring Mountains offer Las Vegas residents and visitors an alpine world for recreation 35 miles from downtown, said Bob Williams, field supervisor of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Reno.

The agreement balances the survival of the species with future recreation development in the Spring Mountains, Williams said.

Representatives of Sen. Richard Bryan, D-Nev., Rep. John Ensign, R-Nev., Rep. Jim Gibbons, R-Nev., the Nature Conservancy, the Smithsonian Institute, UNLV and the Center for Conservation Biology at Stanford University were also

invited to the ceremony at the gateway to the Spring Mountains.

Some of the species saved include the Shasta blue butterfly, the Palmers chipmunk and the plant Clokey's eggvetch.

Once Congress finalizes the agreement, it will become part of Clark County's multispecies plan, under development to protect up to 83 plants, animals, insects, birds, fish and reptiles in the Las Vegas Valley, Williams said.

Pete Morros, director of the Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, praised the work between agencies.

"I think it's a case where everybody has found common ground," Morros said.

4-13-96
Lake Mead National Recreation Area
Date
The Nevada Sun



NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior
PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

Office of Communications
FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 1998

FOR MAN OR MOUSE?



The Prairie's meadow jumping mouse lives only in riparian areas along the Front Range.

Babbitt seeks win for both

By Mark Eddy
Senior Policy Development Writer

4-9-98

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt said Wednesday that he'll become "personally involved" in trying to determine how best to protect the Prairie's meadow jumping mouse.

The mouse, which lives only in riparian areas along the Front Range from Cheyenne to Colorado Springs, will be listed as either endangered or threatened next month by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The agency, which oversees implementation of the Endangered Species Act, said last year that the mouse should be considered endangered because it faces extinction if swift action isn't taken to preserve its habitat.

That announcement sparked an uproar along the Front Range, because much of the mouse's habitat is prime development property. Restrictions on development would be imposed if the mouse is listed.

Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, R-Colo., has said it should be called the "killer jumping mouse," because this listing will be destructive to our infrastructure, economic development and jobs in Colorado.

Babbitt, who has been criticized for compromising with business interests when it comes to endangered species, said the Prairie's mouse is definitely on his radar screen.

"I have indeed talked with Sen. Campbell. We've had a constructive exchange, and I told him that I understand his concerns and I believe we can manage this one to the mutual satisfaction of Colorado, the Front Range and the Fish and Wildlife Service," Babbitt said during a quick trip to Denver.

"I told him I would get personally involved, that I would talk to the governor, and we will see if we can get the stakeholders together and work... to put together a conservation approach that



The Denver Post / HENRI K. SEIB

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt speaks to reporters gathered at the Holiday Inn Denver Southeast in Aurora on Wednesday about the survival of the Prairie's mouse, which he said is definitely on his agenda.

reconciles protection and development and economic issues."

But it's too late for Babbitt's approach, said Neil Levine, an attorney with Earthlaw, which represents the Biodiversity Legal Foundation.

"If in fact there were efforts to protect the mouse five or six years ago, then you could have gotten ahead of the train and taken steps back then so we wouldn't be in the position we're in today," Levine said. "This sort of 11th-hour attempt to circumvent the listing is not acceptable under the law."

The foundation, which won a legal battle to have the lynx added to the endangered species list, has said it will file a lawsuit if the Fish and Wildlife Service refuses to list the mouse.

Babbitt may in fact want to protect the mouse, but he's going about it the wrong way, Levine said.

"His goal is to avoid the listing, getting certain stakeholders together to agree to do certain things. Our beef with doing it that way is there's no enforceability, there's no accountability. Only through the listing do you get that."

There are ways to work within the Endangered Species Act to accommodate development and protect the mouse, Levine said.

"There should be a workable solution here," he said.

Babbitt, who's heard the criticism before, said the best way to protect the rights of people and wildlife is through compromise and consensus.

"Whatever my critics may say, it remains my position that that's the best way to do it."

Mark Eddy's e-mail address is wmarkedly@aol.com



'Safe Harbors' plan will help save endangered woodpeckers

By BRUCE BABBITT

pick, name the bird that's a federally protected endangered species since 1973, nests in old-growth pine forests and is in the 12 most timber-rich, heavily logged states in America.

Is the North-west spotted owl?

Nope.

Is the Southeastern red-cockaded woodpecker.

Not in his sight. This rare, black-and-white South Carolina native quietly became the all-American poster child of the new Endangered Species Act.

Why? Because under administrative reforms, that act is helping private woodlots, on industrial sites, on golf courses, even on military bases. Their numbers are stabilized and are now rising. Meanwhile, the act allows smart, careful logging, development and boot camp to dinos without missing a beat. In short, the woodpecker proves the act is working.

Where owls once divided, woodpeckers now unite. Landowners, wildlife officials, timber companies, environmentalists and a Trappist monk from Memphis

Abbey recently gathered in Charleston to endorse a statewide incentive plan that will create even more private habitat for the bird's recovery.

The incentive program is called "Safe Harbors." It's simply Southern hospitality extended to other members of God's creation. While the concept was hatched here in the Carolinas to help the woodpecker, Safe Harbors is rapidly being adopted all across the country.

And for states where nine out of 10 acres are private property, adoption's what Safe Harbors is all about. Say you're a woodlot owner with a 50-acre, 50-year-old tree farm. When your trees are mature, and the market is right, you plan to harvest them on your land to finance retirement. You also want to control hardwood growth through careful prescribed burns and pinestraw raking. Then, perhaps, build a hunting cabin.

As a steward of creation, you also want to help restore endangered species.

But your neighbor once warned that attracting endangered birds to your land would "lock it up," and that you'd better harvest, fast, before it's too late.

Instead, now, you call the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, which enrolls you in a voluntary agreement. As long as you keep or improve your land as habitat, and attract red-cockaded woodpeckers living on it, you won't be held legally responsible for them. You "adopt" them, but only temporarily. You can later harvest, develop or modify the land as you see fit. In the process, you'll be attracting game species, such as wild turkey and quail, near your future hunting cabin.

Sound (air)? Fifteen South Carolina landowners think so. They range from an elderly lady who is asking us to put up nest cavities on her property (woodpeckers are very people-friendly), to Norfolk Southern Railroad, which has the largest known population of woodpeckers on private land, to Westvaco's president, who helped forge the agreement and has recruited individual property owners to be part of the solution.

So far, Safe Harbors has

enrolled nearly 85,000 acres and 145 groups (families) of red-cockaded woodpeckers on private land. That's roughly a third of all woodpeckers in the state. No wonder six other Southeastern states are following South Carolina's lead.

Also, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is now working with the state to develop habitat conservation plans for isolated groups of woodpeckers. Under these, if you nurture juvenile woodpeckers on your land, you receive incentive credits. Those credits count toward letting you legally harvest the trees, after state and federal biologists transfer the birds to a national, state or private forest where a larger woodpecker population is already thriving.

The Endangered Species Act is scheduled to be overhauled this year. If Congress writes these recent administrative reforms into the law, woodpeckers and landowners will reap the benefits. But then the act may lead us even further. It may help reconnect us to our past, to see the natural heritage our ancestors saw. What was nearly sacrificed may yet be restored.

At the turn of the century, the South was covered by the greatest

old-growth pine forests on the continent. A traveler could ride from the Carolina Tidewater clear to Big Thicket in East Texas shaded by the great native pines — longleaf, loblolly, shortleaf and slash — the entire way. Not would he be lonely, for the entire range was filled with the staccato and sigh of the woodpecker.

But then the timber barons razed the landscape, sliced up habitat, drove native wildlife to near extinction. Only the Endangered Species Act stood in the way.

Now, under these incentives, we can use the act not just to protect, but to knit these torn fragments of the forest mosaic back together. To rebuild.

As we help landowners restore the woodpecker, the woodpecker in turn helps us restore the longleaf pine forest to its former richness and character for generations to come.

To find out more about the program, contact the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, Sandhills Research and Education Center, P.O. Box 23265, Columbia, S.C. 29224 or call (803) 419-8645.

Mr. Babbitt is secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior.



NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 1998

THE REGISTER-GUARD OPINION WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 1998

States must get moving on salmon plans

By BRUCE BABBITT

HEAR THAT ALARM? That's the sound of 13 Pacific salmon runs crashing from Puget Sound to Central California, plunging toward the Endangered Species Act, and possibly to extinction.

Like every rude awakening, alarms leave two options. The tempting one is to hit the snooze button and roll over. Call in sick. Point fingers and say it's someone else's problem. That's what we did in the early 1990s with warnings about a critter called the spotted owl. By the time we finally got moving — in the eleventh hour — the train wreck had already begun.

Our other option is to get up and get an early jump on the work ahead, using three valuable lessons we've learned so far.

First: states and tribes must take a leadership role conserving species, as soon as possible. Just because a species isn't yet endangered, doesn't mean it ain't broke, and can't be fixed. State wildlife managers didn't and don't wait for deer, elk, wild turkey or waterfowl to reach the emergency room stage before taking steps to rebuild game populations. Their expertise and authority is essential to the process.

Oregon has already stepped forward to the challenge. Under a Candidate Conservation Agreement, the administration agreed to hold off listing coho salmon if the state took fast, serious steps toward recovery. Gov. John Kitzhaber asked his Legislature for \$32 million, and got it. His rules-and-incentives Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds will modify timber and agricultural practices to improve water quality in coastal estuaries where coho spawn.

Will it go far enough to avoid listing? That largely depends on Oregon's farmers, ranchers, loggers and state officials, not to mention El Niño. Yet either way it should become the focal point for salmon recovery. A jump start.

Second: private landowners must fully participate. Without their help we have no chance of rescuing listed species, let alone restoring them. Steelhead and salmon ig-

nore property lines and city limits, spawning up watersheds dominated by private holdings. Yet every year, their habitat shrinks due to collective changes, growth and development. Extinction is not an option. Nor is rigid blanket regulation. Nor status quo.

Enter the Habitat Conservation Plan.

An HCP is an environmental blueprint negotiated with landowners which says, in effect: "Build here, log there, farm that, and keep this dam. OK? Now, in exchange, leave that field open, steer chain saws away from those river banks, leave a stream buffer along here."

In Washington state, landowners have pioneered this concept. Why? Because in return, we ensure their right to pursue legitimate business productivity — "no surprises" — knowing that regulators won't come back in a few months or years with a different agenda. They get certainty.

To restore listed spotted owls, bald eagles, and marbled murrelets the president's Forest Plan spawned a half dozen major HCPs with timber companies like Weyerhaeuser, Plum Creek, and Pacific and the state itself. These plans cover 3 million acres, protecting riparian buffers, steep slopes, and unbroken corridors on their own land.

Now Gov. Gary Locke is poised to go further, drafting a comprehensive State Salmon Strategy Framework. That way, even if runs should ultimately be listed, Washington will be ready with the equivalent of a huge statewide HCP for its native chinook salmon and steelhead.

Third, we must engage counties, cities and suburbs in the recovery process. Bring them to the table, set a firm goal for them, and match their efforts to reach it.

Five years ago California quietly passed legislation that does just that. It's time for Oregon and Washington to take note. For that law — creating the Natural Communities Conservation Program — has begun to bear real fruit in Orange and San Diego Counties.

Like the Willamette Valley or Puget Sound, Southern California's explosive growth was pushing one of that region's natives towards extinction. A bird called the gnatcatcher inhabits the last remaining undeveloped coastal zone south of Los Angeles. To protect it we faced a powerful, billion-dollar real estate industry, a major regional recession, a county bankruptcy, and opponents who predicted the Endangered Species Act would derail any economic growth in the region.

Instead, the act harmonized growth and conservation. People shared an affinity for the landscape. They knew protecting habitat for endangered species kept open space for human species. They saw what Los Angeles had lost to unchecked sprawl, congestion and asphalt.

So local governments accepted the challenge and hashed things out with landowners, until ultimately city, county, state and federal planners set aside a total of 210,000 acres of open space habitat for 85 imperiled native plants and animals.

If Oregon, Washington, and California can respond to the wake-up call, so must Congress. It can and should reauthorize the Endangered Species Act to make these reforms of the past five years — from no surprises to candidate conservation agreements — permanent.

In addition, Congress has never provided states with matching grants to rescue native species. It must do so now, as an incentive for us all to take early action, roll out of bed and hit the floor running. The clock is ticking. One year to reverse the decline of Oregon's and Washington's state fish: It isn't much time. But if used right, it may prove just long enough.

Bruce Babbitt is the Secretary of the Interior.



NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 1998

SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE MARCH 11, 1998

Balance on species

Bipartisan measure headed to Senate floor

Since its 20-year authorization expired in 1993, the federal Endangered Species Act has languished in legislative limbo. Congressional Democrats have lacked sufficient votes to extend the law as written (and as liberally interpreted by the courts). Republicans have lacked the veto-proof margin of votes necessary to rewrite the law to their liking.

But the impasse very well may end this spring. The Senate is expected to take action shortly on a bipartisan measure, co-sponsored by Sens. Dirk Kempthorne, R-Idaho, Max Baucus, D-Mont., Harry Reid, D-Nev., and John Chafee, R-R.I., that would modify the 1973 law to provide a better balance between species protection and the interests of private landowners.

The Kempthorne bill, as it's called, would codify into law a policy that the Interior Department has been successfully pursuing in recent years.

It works this way: The federal government enters into a negotiated contract with a private landowner who agrees to set aside acreage to protect endangered species habitat. In return, the landowner is free to use the remainder of his land without government interference on grounds of species protection.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, an advocate of this "no surprises" policy, has thrown his support behind the Kempthorne bill, recognizing that 80 percent of endangered species live on

private property.

The virtue of the measure, said Babbitt, is that it provides "incentives that enable landowners . . . to preserve and protect wildlife habitat by taking simple, flexible, inexpensive and, above all, scientifically sound steps."

As it is, the federal government, as well as state and local governments, have negotiated more than 200 habitat conservation agreements. One of the most ambitious of these is San Diego's Multiple Species Conservation Program, which Babbitt has cited as a model for the nation.

Indeed, a year ago this month, the San Diego City Council approved the first step in a habitat conservation agreement covering 900 square miles, setting aside 172,000 acres for 85 endangered species. The agreement will allow landowners to freely use the remaining acreage.

Of course, there is opposition to habitat conservation agreements at the local, state and federal levels. Uncompromising environmental groups say that no-surprises contracts are sell-outs to developers and commercial companies. Unyielding property-rights advocates say that no-surprises contracts deny landowners their right to compensation by the government.

It is because these diametrically opposed interests have dominated debate on the Endangered Species Act for much of the past five years that Congress made little progress toward modifying the law.

But the extremists should not be allowed to block the Kempthorne measure from passage.

The bill strikes a reasonable balance between the interests of private landowners and the protection of endangered species habitat.



Bruce Babbitt

FREEDOM BECKONS

Wolves Take Wary Steps Toward Wild

■ Amid protests and media glare, family of three moved to holding pen to prepare for release

BY MIKE TAUCHER
Journal Staff Writer

HANNAGAN MEADOW, Ariz. — For the first time in decades, Mexican wolves are occupying this remote country.

"I grew up in this country, and always had the sense that something was missing," Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt told reporters Monday, shortly after helping carry one of three wolf kennels into a forested holding pen near the New Mexico border.

"This is a big moment for wolves, but also for the human spirit," he added.

The family of three Mexican wolves, a subspecies long confined to zoos and refuges, became the first to be reintroduced to the Southwest.

Protesters in Alpine, a small town about 25 miles north of the reintroduction site, demonstrated against the release throughout the day. "We're fed up with government intrusion in our lives. It's real simple," said blacksmith Dink Robart.

Two more family groups of wolves will be moved to similar sites in the coming weeks, and all 11 wolves will be released this spring to fend for themselves.

A wolf pup known as No. 511 was the first one out of her kennel.

Cautious and stiff from a full day in the metal box, she darted several feet out onto the snow and stopped to look back at a throng of reporters, photographers and television crews.

She started again, stopped again and looked back again at the media before bounding off to explore her new confines. Her mother, an assertive female known as No. 174, exited her kennel a few moments later — also showing an apparent wariness of the media before following her pup.

After the media had been ushered away from the wolves' holding pen, there was a reunion for the family that had spent the past year at the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge near Socorro. Male No. 166, described by biologists as



A Mexican wolf moves through a one-third acre pen after being released from a kennel in Arizona near the New Mexico-Arizona border.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



KITTY CLARK/JOURNAL

United States Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, right, assists U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Jamie Rappaport Clark in carrying the first Mexican wolf released in a pen Monday.

See WOLVES on PAGE A4

Wolves Take Steps Toward Wild

from PAGE A1

an elusive but majestic animal, finally had wandered out of his kennel.

"As soon as they were together, their tails were going like this," said wolf biologist Wendy Brown, indicating a wagging motion with her hands. "It was great."

The wolves comprise one of three family groups that are on their way back this year to the wild — a remarkable comeback for a subspecies of gray wolf that once teetered on the brink of extinction. They were nearly wiped out during the first half of this century by ranchers and the government.

Today, wolf biologists say they believe Mexican wolves no longer exist at all in the wild. The 175 Mexican wolves alive, all descendants of just a handful of captured wolves, were all in refuges or zoos.

Until Monday at about 10 a.m.

Conservationists were elated. They noted that it was near here that famed conservationist Aldo Leopold recalled in one of his best-known essays the time he shot a Mexican wolf, thinking that doing so would increase the deer population and improve hunting.

But, Leopold recalled, watching the "fierce green fire dying in her eyes" made him realize the wolf's importance to the life of the mountain.

It was an early epiphany for the



KITTY CLARK/JOURNAL

OPPONENTS: Dana Bennett, holding her baby goat, Precious, John Luke Wilkins in Alpine, Ariz., is protesting the reintroduction of a family of Mexican wolves.

conservation movement. "In this very place, with the very same species," said Defenders of Wildlife president Rodger Schlickeisen.

Leopold also was responsible for getting the nation's first designated wilderness area in the Gila, where Mexican wolves such as the ones being released this year are expected to recolonize. Schlickeisen compared this reintroduction to the nation's first wilderness area to the reintroduction of wolves to the

country's first national park three years ago at Yellowstone.

"It (wolf reintroduction) is symbolic and important because it's happening on the 50th anniversary of Aldo Leopold's death," he added.

The other two family groups will be moved into holding pens in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest near the New Mexico border, where they will be kept in the one-third acre pens for six to 10 weeks to acclimate to the wild. Then they will

be set free.

Using ear tags and radio collars, biologists will monitor the 11 wolves after their release. They will be especially interested to see if the wolves are denning and killing prey, said David Parsons, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Mexican wolf recovery leader.

The Fish and Wildlife Service plans to continue releasing wolves each year until there is a self-sustaining population of about 100 wolves in the neighboring Gila and Apache-Sitgreaves national forests.

But opposition to wolf reintroduction runs deep among locals, who protested in front of Robart's blacksmith shop in Alpine.

Protesters wore blue armbands and held signs with messages such as, "Is the wolf a ploy for U.N. control?" and "Don't import wolves. Deport environmentalists, Babbitt and (Vice President Al) Gore."

Wally Wynia, a miner from Socorro, added, "Wolves simply will not work in livestock country."

Babbitt, however, said the West is big enough for wolves and ranchers.

"The West belongs to all of us," Babbitt said. "It's not one or the other. There's too many people who say the West should be an industrial wasteland or a wilderness without people."

"There's plenty of room for God's creation."



NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 1998

THE WASHINGTON POST

Mexican Wolves Return to Southwest, Despite Ranchers' Howls

By Tom Kenworthy
Washington Post Staff Writer

APACHE NATIONAL FOREST, Ariz., Jan. 26—Writing more than a half century ago, conservationist Aldo Leopold evocatively described the howl of the wolf in the rugged mountain country straddling the border of Arizona and New Mexico.

"A deep chesty howl echoes from rimrock to rimrock, rolls down the mountain and fades into the far blackness of the night," wrote Leopold in his essay, "Thinking Like a Mountain." "It is an outburst of wild defiant sorrow, and of contempt for all the adversities of the world."

For the first time in decades, that sound of defiant sorrow and contempt reverberated again today, through the lush stands of ponderosa pine that carpet the mountains of the Blue Range Primitive Area, as government biologists and officials triumphantly escorted the Mexican wolf back to its ancestral home. More than eight decades after the federal government set out at the behest of ranchers to eradicate the wolf, and 22 years after the government reversed course and put it on the endangered species list, the advance guard of what biologists believe will be the first group of Mexican wolves to roam free in the United States since 1970 was brought here from a federal captive breeding facility.

Following several weeks of acclimation to their new environment, the three Mexican wolves—a female designated No. 166, a male specified as 174 and their pup, 511—will be released from their holding pens to become free-ranging representatives of one of the rarest land mammals in the world. During the next few weeks and years, other family groups will join them, and biologists expect that by the year 2005 the wild population will reach 100 animals roaming a recovery zone more than twice the size of Yellowstone National Park.

Returning the wolf is a chance to "erase the sins of the past," said Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, himself the product of a pioneering Arizona ranching family, before he helped carry the three wolves' crates into their holding pen today.

"What is the spirit brought out by these events?" he asked. "It has to do with our own ability not just to protect wildlife, but to restore it . . . to say there's room enough to spare in God's creation."

Hunted, trapped and poisoned in America's southwest and Mexico during much of this century, Mexican wolves came as close to extinction as an animal can get without actually tumbling off the edge into oblivion. The Mexican wolf was down to a handful of individuals when two males and one female were captured in Mexico in the late 1970s and were used to establish a captive-breeding program. Two other lineages—one from wolves at a living museum in New Mexico and one from wolves at the Mexico City zoo—were added to the program a few years ago when DNA testing revealed that they were not related to the original group.

Today, the captive population has grown to about 175 wolves, enough in the minds of wildlife experts to restore them to the wild—specifically, the 4.5 million acres of forest and mountains shared by the Apache and Gila national forests along the New Mexico border, about 150 miles east of Phoenix.

The Mexican wolf is one of five North American subspecies of gray wolf—smaller and with a habitat centered in Mexico and the southwestern United States. If it establishes a foothold here, it will become for supporters the third jewel in the government's crown of wolf reintroduction, resting next to almost 100 red wolves in eastern North Carolina and Tennessee, and about 160

Northern gray wolves in two regions of the northern Rocky Mountains, in Yellowstone National Park and the vast wilderness of central Idaho.

But as was the case with its cousin three years ago in the Northern Rockies, the Mexican wolf faces implacable opposition from ranchers in this isolated quarter of the southwest, a region that arguably harbors more distrust and outright hostility for the federal government's land management and wildlife policies than any other place in America.

Just to the east lies Catron County, N.M., spawning ground for a western movement that insists federal lands be subject to local control, and a place where agents of the Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Forest Service have sometimes faced ugly threats of violence and the county government urges every adult to own a gun.

Bumper stickers suggest, "If It's Endangered, Clone It."

This is a region where federal environmental laws are not an abstraction, but sometimes a grinding economic reality. Court-imposed logging restrictions to protect the Mexican spotted owl shut down timber harvests on public forests in New Mexico and Arizona for more than a year and a half and contributed to the closure of two-thirds of the timber mills operating in the region.

Livestock producers who depend on federal grazing lands now are

facing new environmental restrictions to protect other imperiled species such as the southwest willow flycatcher, a rare songbird that competes with cattle for the same streamside habitat.

Now comes the wolf, and to many ranchers the federal assurances that its designation as a "nonessential, experimental" population—which means no restrictions on their activities—ring hollow. The designation means that wolves killing livestock can be removed and even shot, and biologists estimate that the recovered population will kill a maximum of 34 cattle per year.

But that is cold comfort for those who view the wolf as did rancher G.W. "Dub" Evans, who in his 1951 memoir described it as "the cruelest, most wanton killer of all our Southwestern predators." The wolf, wrote Evans, "is a butcher, killing at every opportunity whether he is hungry or not."

Evans's 82-year-old nephew, Jupe Means, raises Angus and Hereford cattle on 40,000 acres of rolling grassland near Buckhorn, N.M., and shares his late uncle's views. A gregarious and hospitable third generation cattleman who prides himself on being a good steward of the land, Means still has a vivid recollection of a wolf pack hamstringing a grown bull on the family ranch when he was a young boy.

"They were eating out his thigh, and the bull was still alive and just bawling," recalled Means. "That was music to their dinner, that's how criminal they are."

On his vast ranch with its spectacular views of the Mogollon Mountains, Means and his ranch hands fight a constant battle against other predators—coyotes, mountain lions and bears—and see nothing but folly in adding another one that earlier, more rancher-friendly government officials spent decades wiping out.

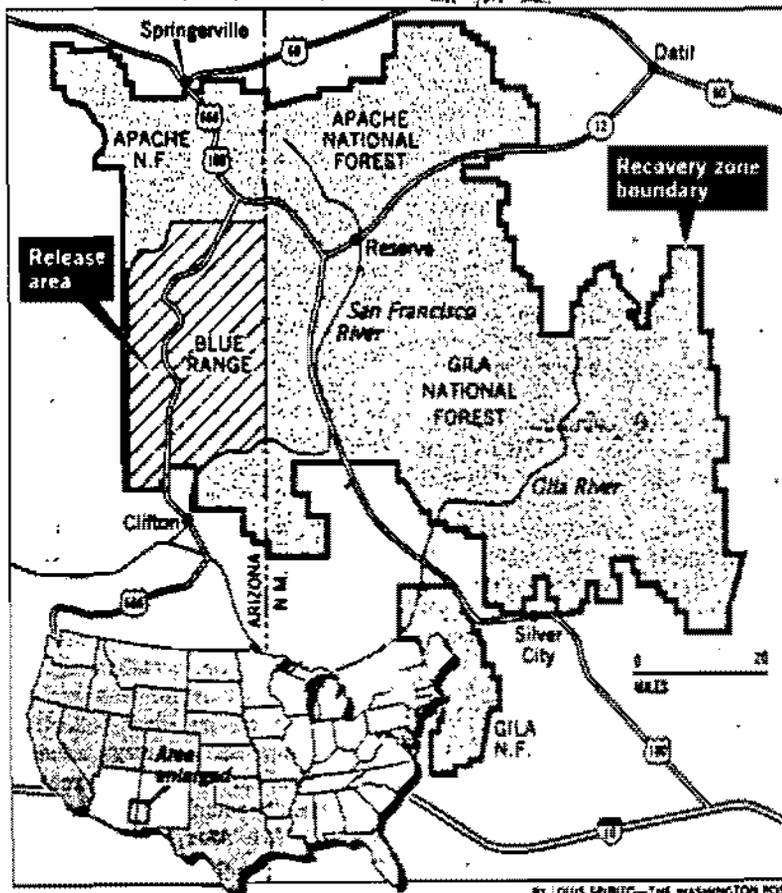
"Now what good is the 'lobo' going to do?" asked Means, using the Spanish word for wolf. "If the wolf has the right to run in this country, we have the right to protect our interests, if you understand what I mean."

Environmentalists such as Craig Miller of Defenders of Wildlife, a group that has worked on wolf restoration and compensates ranchers for their losses, are hoping that time and experience will nurture a more balanced view of the animal.

"The wolf has been unfairly saddled with myths and legends that portray it as an evil, vicious, lustful killer," said Miller. "But wolves play a very important role in balancing the ecosystem. They help cull the prey population and prevent overgrazing by elk and deer. But most importantly, it's the right thing to do."



Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, right, and Jamie Clark, director of Fish and Wildlife Service, help carry the cage containing one of three Mexican wolves.





NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

For Immediate Release

December 15, 1997

Contact: Jamie Workman

(202) 208-6416

BABBITT VISITS MAINE TO ENDORSE SALMON RECOVERY PLAN

Signs formal State Atlantic salmon conservation plan, announces decision not to list species

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt came to Augusta, Maine on Monday, December 15, to formally endorse a State conservation management plan aimed at restoring Atlantic salmon populations -- and the freshwater quality -- in seven of the state's key watersheds. Upon doing so, he withdrew a petition to place the species on the federal endangered species list.

In ceremonies starting at noon at the Statehouse Hall of Flags, Secretary Babbitt, Maine Governor Angus King, and other agency heads backed a State plan that will cooperatively reduce incidental take, improve spawning habitat, and help recover Atlantic salmon stocks swimming up the Sheepscot, Ducktrap, Pleasant, Machias, East Machias, Denny and Narragausus Rivers.

The plan, which culminates 17 months work by the Governor's Atlantic Salmon Task Force, addresses potential threats to the species from agriculture, aquaculture, forestry and recreation fishing, and outlines actions to reduce threats and promote recovery. It was pivotal in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's and National Marine Fisheries Service's joint determination of whether or not these stocks should be placed on the federal Endangered Species Act list.

"We are unlocking the full potential of rivers in Maine, and opening a new chapter in conservation history," said Babbitt. "The Governor showed great leadership in forging this public and private sector collaboration, which will enhance the ecology and economy of the state for years to come. The rivers will continue to attract anglers, boaters and other sportsmen who will help grow and sustain new jobs and revenue."

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NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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October 23, 1997

INTERIOR SECRETARY PRAISES "MONUMENTAL CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENT" IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Calling it "a major milestone in America's conservation history and a model plan for communities nationwide," Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt praised last night's approval of the Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) by the Supervisors of San Diego County, California.

"The MSCP opens a new chapter for conservation and open space planning for the 21st Century," he continued. "Voluntary conservation partnerships on private lands will be as valued by future generations as we value the conservation ethic of Teddy Roosevelt and the establishment of national parks and wildlife refuges at the beginning of the 20th Century."

This vote puts in place a complex and extraordinary blueprint for the San Diego County's future, that balances the conservation of ecologically-sensitive areas with the need to accommodate long-term economic development. It is the first and largest of three regional conservation plans, and was approved by the San Diego City Council on March 18, 1997. The area in the MSCP covers about 900 square miles from the San Dieguito River Valley to Mexico, and from the Pacific Ocean to national forest lands.

"San Diego County is blessed with a unique and extraordinary natural landscape. Along with it comes an enormous biological diversity in the array of plant, wildlife and marine species that reflects the varied terrain of mountains, canyons, lagoons, bays and beaches and the rolling mesas and hills that lie between them," Babbitt continued. "At the same time, this southern coast offers one of the most attractive climates and qualities of life in our country. As a result, the coastal open spaces between Los Angeles and San Diego were under enormous development pressure before local and innovative conservation plans got underway. San Diego County can now offer a model to the nation for how to plan for and balance the needs of man and nature, and how to do the job right."

The MSCP planning process grew out of an unprecedented partnership between federal, state and local governments, private landowners and interested citizens. The effort began over five years ago when Secretary Babbitt used the flexibility of the Endangered Species Act to implement a special 4 (d) Rule to delegate responsibility for protecting and conserving the threatened California gnatcatcher to the State of California.

(more)

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By replenishing rare, wild and native trout and salmon, we can restore our rural economy and ecology to its former character
"Turning Greenbacks that swim into greenbacks that buy groceries"

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Outdoor Writers Association of America
Haines City, Florida June 24, 1997

Before beginning my remarks, I have a confession to make. In my travels I have come across many hard working Americans green with envy at how someone, much less an unelected person, gets paid to gallivant around the country on weekdays, on an expense account, fish in the outdoors, then volunteer his learned opinions to the public about the joys and benefits of angling where he's been....

But enough about you.

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I have enjoyed each experience -- salt or freshwater, lake or stream, landlocked or anadromous, spincasting or flyfishing -- and my interest in fishing only deepens and grows.

Yet along with our shared passion, we also share a challenge: In this age of fiscal austerity, limited funds and regulatory restraint, can we still replenish the rare, wild and native trout, char, or salmon unique to each region?

I am confident that we can, by using the tools and values under existing conservation laws such as the Endangered Species Act.

How am I so sure? Because during the first term I've seen where we already have. As randomly scattered candles, our pilot efforts have won bipartisan support across the spectrum. It is now time to unite them into a strong, steady, and productive flame.

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I narrow the scope of my remarks to native trout, char and salmon for several reasons. The first is that, more than others, these fish primarily inhabit our public lands, and so reflect America's shared responsibility and commitment as stewards of God's creation. They also demand the most from us and from that habitat in terms of water quality, quantity, flow, temperature, and

oxygen. Finally, they belong to that habitat, each evolving with native people and uniquely linked to a specific place.

That evolutionary link is borne out in their very names: Gila. Bonneville. Paiute. Lahontan. Apache. Chinook. Yellowstone. The scientific, latin name *onchorhynchus clarki lewisi* reminds us of those first undaunted explorers, William and Meriwether, who first described a new specimen to Thomas Jefferson. Or by its common name, Westslope cutthroat, we may recall the very fish sought by Norman Maclean's family in "A River Runs Through It."

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By whatever name, however, these diverse native fish stocks all shared one common trait over the past century: Sharp decline.

Many of you know local variations on the national story of why they declined. We dammed our rivers. We diverted them, split them with roads and culverts, pumped them dry. We mined their headwaters and left acid waste to bleed into them for decades after the exhausting the mine. We logged them from mouth to source, removing shade, shelter, nutrients and insect habitat, letting the barren banks erode and silt up spawning gravel beds. We drove vast cattle herds into and up their waters. We dumped chemicals and sewage and slaughterhouse waste into them.

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Not all of these changes were bad. Browns in the Kennebeck now thrive where native trout could not. Cold tailwaters below dams have become prime habitat for introduced trout where the temperature would not otherwise support them. Where trout have adapted, we have and should strive for a balance; for ultimately we simply need more anglers spending more time on the water.

Yet most changes, whether initiated unwittingly or deliberately with the best of intentions, have led to the near extinction of native trout and salmon in streams where they spawned for tens of thousands of years.

As elsewhere on public lands, we have the tools, experience, skills and ability to make our native fish recovery plans work.

What we so often lack is a dependable way to pay for them. Until we could find it, we have had to experiment both within and between agencies, forging partnerships with the private sector, states, tribes and universities, learning to use whatever legal and practical resources we could get our hands on. Behind these experiments, and guiding our efforts, was a respect for creation, manifest in the landmark Endangered Species Act.

I first went to school on native trout at Trout Creek Mountain in Southeastern Oregon. The Lahontan cutthroat trout which once spawned vigorously in the cool, shaded alpine streams there had been driven to the brink of extinction by excessive grazing. When the Fish and Wildlife Service intervened with the threat of regulation, local residents, led by two remarkable ranchers -- Doc and Connie Hatfield -- decided to try something new.

Before long, the Trout Creek Mountain Working Group had hammered out a deal with ranchers and the Bureau of Land Management to use rest and rotation techniques, planting willow and riparian fencing to restore creeks, and thus bring back the Lahontan cutthroat while maintaining the ranching way of life. If you go to Trout Creek Mountain today, you will see the landscape growing aspen, willow, cutthroat trout and livestock all in concert, and this remarkable, spontaneous partnership became an early model for setting up partnerships to restore native fish habitat from the grassroots up.

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It worked like a magnet, helping us strengthen:

- our new partnerships with states, tribes, aquariums, and universities to combat whirling disease;
- President Clinton's new Executive Order on Sportfishing to resolve differences between native and recreational fisheries;
- our national fish hatchery system, which now not only mitigates federal dam projects but propagates fish to replenish over a quarter of the 107 threatened native fish species, from Arizona's Apache to California and Oregon's Winter-run chinook;
- goals of the 1973 Endangered Species Act, both to remove listed native species, and to keep declining species off that list.

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Today, that pilot effort is no longer an isolated experiment, but the cornerstone of this Administration's plan to replenish wild trout and salmon. It is called Bring Back the Natives, and today I am proud to more than double the federal funds available for it, fuse it with other pilot projects around the country, and announce \$5 million in new joint public and private grants this year for 44 innovative projects to replenish natives in 14 states.

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Your second reaction to the goals of this drive may be "Show me the money. Show me that this isn't just another one of your fish stories." Fair enough. You may not have heard yet about what we've done for wild and native trout under the Endangered Species Act. You may have heard even the opposite, that the Act is cumbersome, rigid, that it somehow hurts the economy.

But there's been a quiet revolution over the past five years. The reason you may not have heard success stories is because fisheries biologists are quite often anglers, and anglers, I have learned, have the tendency to jealously guard the best fishing

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But in the mid-1960s, biologists traced reports of "funny looking" trout to a few hundred greenback lingering in Como Creek and the South Fork Poudre, both within the South Platte drainage. That set the stage for restoration efforts to begin, and the freshly minted Endangered Species Act -- which anchored the state wildlife division, the National Park Service, the USFWS, BLM and Forest Service under one coordinated program -- is the law that set it all in motion.

To achieve healthy, naturally spawning populations, biologists in the ESA recovery team found remote lakes and tributaries where competing species like rainbow could be cleared out, and isolated by downstream barrier waterfalls. It took the cooperative work of helicopters and hatcheries, foresters and fishermen, public and private money. It also took the delicate task of persuading anglers to release the native greenbacks, and convincing catch-and-release anglers to kill the others.

And it worked. The greenback is coming back with a vengeance; three more stable populations on the Arkansas River drainage will complete the de-listing process in full recovery. Already, 247 acres of lake habitat and 89 miles of stream habitat have been reclaimed for an estimated 70,000 greenback.

How do greenbacks that swim turn into greenbacks that buy groceries? Two years ago the Colorado legislature made the greenback its official state fish, which helps attract 830,000 anglers from around the world to the Centennial State each year. Two summers ago, I was one of them; next week I'm taking my son. And within a few years, thanks to Bring Back the Natives, the greenback may well have splashed right off the Endangered Species list for good.

That's a classic example of how the Endangered Species Act can be used to Bring Back the Natives, but it's only one of many. In fact, we find a similar renaissance quietly taking place in each of the 20 states where Bring Back the Natives is put to work, from Dorf Run in Ohio to Coos Bay in Oregon.

What's more, these fish engender a sense of regional pride. Like Colorado, the Utah legislature recently recognized that their former state fish, the rainbow, was in fact a transplanted Californian, and replaced it with a Utah original, the native Bonneville cutthroat. Under Bring Back the Natives, we have struck a conservation agreement with the state of Utah to replenish the Bonneville to keep it off the ESA list.

Nevada's official state fish, the Lahontan cutthroat, nearly vanished from overgrazing, clearcuts, erosion, diversion and mining. Habitat shrank from 2,200 miles to 300. The final spawning run up the Truckee into California came in the 1930s when a sudden agricultural diversion left hundreds flopping around and suffocating in the mud.

Under Bring Back the Natives, we have begun restoring the Truckee and the overgrazed Marys River watershed through exchanging land, purchasing water rights, building fence enclosures, drilling wells, removing culverts and planting 15,000 aspen, chokecherries and alders. The result should boost 200 angler days per year to more than 1,500, and help attract and retain more anglers (and their wallets) to rural parts of Nevada, from 171,000 in 1991 to 224,000 last year.

My home state of Arizona boasts another success story. There, like the greenback, federal agencies worked with state and private property owners to rebuild genetically pure wild native stocks in the White Mountains where the official state fish, the Apache trout, evolved, adapting to warmer waters where no other kind of trout could survive. Under the flexibility of the Act, we downlisted the species to "threatened" encouraging catch and release, and building a stake in ownership from anglers. Under Bring Back the Natives, 77 volunteers worked with fishery biologists from the Forest Service and the Apache Reservation to rebuild degraded habitat. Both state and tribe are now reaping the rewards.

Then there's California, where anglers discovered a different kind of gold in rivers flowing out of the Sierra Nevada range: golden trout. They made it the official state fish, but on the Little Kern River, it too nearly went extinct because of habitat loss, competition and interbreeding with non-natives. Linking state and federal recovery efforts, we killed off introduced species, treated the waters with rotenone, and built barriers to isolate those upper tributaries for genetically pure species. What's more, we did this carefully, one segment at a time so that it would not interfere with recreational sportfishing. Some parts of the system always had fish of catchable size. Using Bring Back

the Natives, biologists were able to restore 100 miles of stream and 11 headwater lakes to a native Little Kern golden trout fishery.

I won't go into specifics here, but I would encourage each you to consider the level of economic prosperity generated each year when a steady stream of a hundred thousand new anglers pour into local towns and rural counties on fishing trips to catch fish they have only heard about or seen in your magazines and papers.

While this drive to Bring Back the Natives expands the base of rural economic growth, it also broadens and strengthens the integrity of aquatic ecosystems. Because they are so sensitive to habitat, needing cold, clean, well-oxygenated streams, trout form a keystone species that links aquatic-based plants and animals throughout the watershed. To recover that key part is to replenish the whole. Which means that from Idaho's osprey to Mark Twain's red-legged frog of Calaveras County, Bring Back the Natives helps restore 183 rare species throughout the West.

This campaign can also absorb the sudden and unpredictable impact of natural disasters. In some watersheds, it promotes prescribed fires that can restore the integrity and stability of a surrounding forest, minimizing the risk and danger when a natural fire roars through during a drought. In others, southwestern Oregon for example, rebuilding wetlands and replacing large trees back into the stream -- to restore rip rap, food, shelter and oxygen for native trout and salmon -- helped displace the force of the current when a 100-year flood roared down.

Finally, one of the concerns I've heard from states and counties and many of you is that our federal agencies don't get involved with recovery until it's too late. That is, until a species of fish is listed. Then we don't follow through, having to divert time and funds to other worst-case scenarios. It is a valid criticism, made true by the limits of funds provided to carry out the Act.

That is why Bring Back the Natives stands as a model for us as we begin the process of reauthorizing the Endangered Species Act. It shows how we can build incentives with private landowners and counties, how we can work from the grassroots up, how we can match private funds with public expertise, how we can take steps to keep species from ever getting anywhere near the list, and how we can see a restoration plan through from start to finish.

Now, working with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, we plan to build on it's success as a model in other watersheds, through Save our Southern Streams and Fisheries Across America.

But the greatest thing Bring Back the Natives builds is more than fences, buffers and renewed rural economies. It builds trust.

And, much like catching a wild native trout that was once thought extinct, you can't ever put a price on that.
Thank you.

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What's more, these fish engender a sense of regional pride. Like Colorado, the Utah legislature recently recognized that their former state fish, the rainbow, was in fact a transplanted Californian, and replaced it with a Utah original, the native Bonneville cutthroat. Under Bring Back the Natives, we have struck a conservation agreement with the state of Utah to replenish the Bonneville to keep it off the ESA list.

Nevada's official state fish, the Lahontan cutthroat, nearly vanished from overgrazing, clearcuts, erosion, diversion and mining. Habitat shrank from 2,200 miles to 300. The final spawning run up the Truckee into California came in the 1930s when a sudden agricultural diversion left hundreds flopping around and suffocating in the mud.

Under Bring Back the Natives, we have begun restoring the Truckee and the overgrazed Marys River watershed through exchanging land, purchasing water rights, building fence exclosures, drilling wells, removing culverts and planting 15,000 aspen, chokecherries and alders. The result should boost 200 angler days per year to more than 1,500, and help attract and retain more anglers (and their wallets) to rural parts of Nevada, from 171,000 in 1991 to 224,000 last year.

My home state of Arizona boasts another success story. There, like the greenback, federal agencies worked with state and private property owners to rebuild genetically pure wild native stocks in the White Mountains where the official state fish, the Apache trout, evolved, adapting to warmer waters where no other kind of trout could survive. Under the flexibility of the Act, we downlisted the species to "threatened" encouraging catch and release, and building a stake in ownership from anglers. Under Bring Back the Natives, 77 volunteers worked with fishery biologists from the Forest Service and the Apache Reservation to rebuild degraded habitat. Both state and tribe are now reaping the rewards.

Then there's California, where anglers discovered a different kind of gold in rivers flowing out of the Sierra Nevada range: golden trout. They made it the official state fish, but on the Little Kern River, it too nearly went extinct because of habitat loss, competition and interbreeding with non-natives. Linking state and federal recovery efforts, we killed off introduced species, treated the waters with rotenone, and built barriers to isolate those upper tributaries for genetically pure species. What's more, we did this carefully, one segment at a time so that it would not interfere with recreational sportfishing. Some parts of the system always had fish of catchable size. Using Bring Back the Natives, biologists were able to restore 100 miles of stream and 11 headwater lakes to a native Little Kern golden trout fishery.

*

I won't go into specifics here, but I would encourage each you to consider the level of economic prosperity generated each year when a steady stream of a hundred thousand new anglers pour into local towns and rural counties on fishing trips to catch fish they have only heard about or seen in

your magazines and papers.

While this drive to Bring Back the Natives expands the base of rural economic growth, it also broadens and strengthens the integrity of aquatic ecosystems. Because they are so sensitive to habitat, needing cold, clean, well-oxygenated streams, trout form a keystone species that links aquatic-based plants and animals throughout the watershed. To recover that key part is to replenish the whole. Which means that from Idaho's osprey to Mark Twain's red-legged frog of Calaveras County, Bring Back the Natives helps restore 183 rare species throughout the West.

This campaign can also absorb the sudden and unpredictable impact of natural disasters. In some watersheds, it promotes prescribed fires that can restore the integrity and stability of a surrounding forest, minimizing the risk and danger when a natural fire roars through during a drought. In others, southwestern Oregon for example, rebuilding wetlands and replacing large trees back into the stream -- to restore rip rap, food, shelter and oxygen for native trout and salmon -- helped displace the force of the current when a 100-year flood roared down.

Finally, one of the concerns I've heard from states and counties and many of you is that our federal agencies don't get involved with recovery until it's too late. That is, until a species of fish is listed. Then we don't follow through, having to divert time and funds to other worst-case scenarios. It is a valid criticism, made true by the limits of funds provided to carry out the Act.

That is why Bring Back the Natives stands as a model for us as we begin the process of reauthorizing the Endangered Species Act. It shows how we can build incentives with private landowners and counties, how we can work from the grassroots up, how we can match private funds with public expertise, how we can take steps to keep species from ever getting anywhere near the list, and how we can see a restoration plan through from start to finish.

Now, working with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, we plan to build on it's success as a model in other watersheds, through Save our Southern Streams and Fisheries Across America.

But the greatest thing Bring Back the Natives builds is more than fences, buffers and renewed rural economies. It builds trust. And, much like catching a wild native trout that was once thought extinct, you can't ever put a price on that.

Thank you.



WASHINGTON



THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

BABBITT UNVEILS JOINT PLAN TO RESTORE FISH, RURAL GROWTH *"BRING BACK THE NATIVES" REPLENISHES TROUT, BASS, SALMON COAST-TO-COAST*

For release: June 24, 1997

Contact: Jamie Workman (202) 208-6416 (Interior)
Jim Petterson (202)720-4623 (Agriculture)

In an address before the 2,000-member Outdoor Writers Association of America in Haines City, Florida today, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt announced a coordinated public lands campaign to replenish wild and native fish stocks, spur rural economic growth, reduce flood and fire damage, and rescue rare and declining trout and salmon species -- including the official state fish of California, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Idaho, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado -- off of or away from the Endangered Species list.

Like their "Fight Fire with Fire" initiative launched earlier this year, Babbitt again teams with Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman to combine pilot restoration efforts under one clear, unified and aggressive national plan, and to more than double the funds available for it.

Under this drive, to "Bring Back the Natives," Babbitt and Glickman released more than \$5 million in new federal and private grants for more than 44 innovative projects that will directly replenish aquatic habitat for native fish species in 14 states this year. Ultimately, the campaign aims to restore habitat on 283,000 miles of streams and 6.5 million acres of lakes within 462 million acres, or 70 percent of all federal lands.

"If at first this joint campaign seems modest in cost," said Babbitt, "just consider its on-the-ground local impact: Every public nickel is matched by private dimes, every quarter is pumped directly into the local watershed, every dollar bill invested towards a self-sustaining native fishery yields a fiver for community businesses in that watershed. In this way, the Endangered Species Act fuels, guides and expands the base of rural economic growth."

In addition, Babbitt boosted his Bureau of Reclamation into the federal-private team of the USDA Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and private or non-profit groups such as Trout Unlimited. He endorsed the use of federal fish hatcheries to replenish rare native fish as a priority. And he unveiled the economic and ecological rewards of this leveraged approach, state by state.

"Healthy fisheries reflect a healthy watershed -- this translates to economic prosperity," said Secretary Glickman. "On USDA Forest Service lands, fishing generates over \$1.8 billion a year for rural communities. We can and should expand their growth and development by doubling our efforts through cooperative, up-from-the roots programs such as this."

More native trout habitat = more anglers, revenue

In the Rockies, Bring Back the Natives helps replenish greenback cutthroat trout, once

TO REAUTHORIZE THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

Why, where and how we should translate our success stories into law

Remarks of Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt

The National Press Club, Washington DC

July 17, 1997

*

I am pleased to return to the Press Club in the opening months of the second Clinton Administration. I have chosen to speak about the Endangered Species Act and I would like to begin by stating a change of position and explaining the reasons for that change.

From the day this Administration arrived in 1993, I have repeatedly voiced to the Congress my view that it was not yet the time to re-authorize the Endangered Species Act. The reason, I explained, was that no one had ever really tried to make the Act work. Too many of our predecessors had virtually ignored the Act, had watched it collapse around them, and then thrown themselves at the mercy of the courts, claiming it wasn't their fault that the Act didn't work.

The Endangered Species Act, I told them, is a good piece of legislation, with much flexibility and potential for innovation. Give me a chance, I said, to dust off the Act and bring it to life, give us time to go out onto the land to work with communities and private landowners, to prove how we can both protect the environment and permit sound economic development.

Now, after four years in the field we are protecting more plants and animals than ever before. We have completely changed our relationship with local landowners, moving from conflict to consensus. So, we are ready to return to Capitol Hill and to show you how the Act is working, and to explain our administrative reforms and to offer our cooperation in re-authorizing the Act. The Endangered Species Act is ripe for re-authorization, we know what works (and what doesn't), we have made administrative reforms that can be written into law, and have enough on-the-ground experience to engage in a debate about how to improve the Act.

The Endangered Species Act is the most comprehensive of all our environmental laws. It is the law which embodies our commitment to live in harmony with Creation, to carry out the Biblical covenant, sealed by the rainbow, between the Creator "and all living things on earth."

To see just how far we have come in four years, let's fast-rewind to January 1993. Those early frames show a complete impasse in the old growth forests of the Northwest, an impending crisis threatening to shut down homebuilding in southern California, another timber industry standoff looming in the longleaf pineforests of the South, and a hundred other ecological crises hurtling toward us day by day.

In April of 1993 President Clinton inaugurated a new chapter in conservation history by going to Portland where he spent a day meeting with citizens, local officials, researchers, loggers and environmentalists. He then directed us to work together to produce a solution, consistent with good science, the law, and the needs of local communities.

One year later the parties produced the Northwest Forest Plan, settling the dispute and laying out a sustainable forestry future for the entire Cascade region, from Puget Sound to San Francisco Bay. Within months, federal courts endorsed it, and we were off.

We then turned to the impending development conflict in the rapidly disappearing coastal ecosystem between Los Angeles and San Diego. Developers and homebuilders agreed upon the need to avoid the mistakes of Los Angeles sprawl and conceded that homeowners prefer accessible open space. The California gnatcatcher and other threatened species need habitat. Open space for homeowners and habitat for endangered birds can be pretty much the same thing, provided the lines are drawn in concert by both biologists and urban planners.

Working with the State of California and local city and county governments and developers we set out to do just that. If you want to hear about the results, don't take my word for it, ask the governor of California, or the mayors of many southern California towns and cities, or major land developers -- they all claim credit, and well they should, for this was truly a consensus solution.

The pine forests of the South are still another unsung example of success retrieved from the jaws of confrontation and litigation. In those forests, which stretch from east Texas to the Carolina tidewaters, there is a bird called the Red-cockaded woodpecker, which shares the preference of the spotted owl for old growth nesting sites.

However, working with companies like Georgia Pacific, Potlatch, Champion, International Paper and a dozen others, and with States like Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana, Texas and Alabama, we have successfully developed agreements to conserve species. And at North Carolina's famed Pinehurst Country Club we invented something entirely new -- the Safe Harbor habitat concept for individual woodlot owners.

Under a Safe Harbor agreement, someone whose land management helps increase the number of woodpeckers on their property -- like the golf course and resort at Pinehurst -- bears no additional legal responsibilities for the new arrivals. He need only maintain baseline habitat for what was there at the time of the agreement.

Also, the Fish and Wildlife Service is now working with several states to develop habitat conservation plans for isolated groups of woodpeckers. If someone nurtures juvenile woodpeckers on his land, he receives incentive credits. Those credits count towards letting him legally harvest the trees, after state and federal biologists transfer the birds to a national, state or private forest where a larger woodpecker population is already thriving.

On the Columbia River it is the Endangered Species Act that is driving the restoration of our great salmon runs; on the Platte River the Act is bringing three states together to protect the wetlands that nourish the greatest flocks of migrating cranes in North America; and it is the ESA that is driving the reintroduction of the great Atlantic salmon to the rivers of New England, of grey wolves to the wilderness of Yellowstone, of Greenback cutthroat to the tributaries flowing out of Colorado's Rocky Mountains.

These are just a few of many success stories. By September, we will have over 200 Habitat Conservation Plans completed and over 200 more under development, together covering more than 300 species on 18.5 million acres of private land. The International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies -- representing all 50 states as well as provinces of Canada and Mexico -- has roundly endorsed these agreements, along with new policy initiatives such as "Safe Harbor," and "No

Surprises.”

Why? Because they provide: incentives for landowners to protect and even attract rare native species on their property; certainty for businesses to move ahead; and ways to restore rare and declining species in time to keep them off the endangered list. Each agreement is an affirmation of our commitment and of the possibility of working together out on the landscape to get beyond political rhetoric, send the lawyers back to their offices, and get down in the dirt to work out sensible agreements.

We have field-tested these reforms and have discovered that they work. After four years in the field working to implement the Act, we are now ready to return to Washington and engage with the Congress in a serious national debate over how to reauthorize the Endangered Species Act. For the very first time, we have a full record of the successes (and, yes, a few failures). We know from experience both the rich possibilities and the limitations of the Act in its present form. With that record, we should be able to move beyond political rhetoric and come together to make the Act work even better in the future.

To set the stage for a productive legislative debate, I suggest some guiding principles:

1. NO BACKSLIDING.

This Administration is not coming to the table to weaken or dilute the provisions of the Endangered Species Act. This is not merely a good act; it is the keystone law that infuses all our environmental laws with a sense of direction and purpose -- to harmonize development and resource use with the protection of our natural heritage.

Let it be known that the Endangered Species Act is working. Polls consistently show that the vast majority of the American people support the Act against attempts -- such as those made by the 104th Congress, to tear it apart.

And if you would know why the people support this Act, just look around you through the eyes of an American citizen in love with his country, a nation filled once again with: bald eagles nesting right here on the Potomac River, grey whales crowding the California shores, wolves stalking elk through the morning mist of Yellowstone, condors soaring over the Grand Canyon, and red-cockaded woodpeckers hammering on the great pines throughout Southeastern forests. Think of your sons or daughters fishing for the Atlantic salmon, the Oregon steelhead, or the Colorado Greenback cutthroat trout, or simply taking delight in the lazy roll of a Florida manatee, or chasing after seabirds on a summer shore.

2. WE MUST TRANSLATE SUCCESS STORIES INTO LAW.

HCPs, NO SURPRISES.

A good starting point is to give full statutory recognition to the habitat conservation planning (HCP) process that has been worked out over the last four years. The Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service have issued an HCP policy guide that provides guidance to communities interested in the process. There are many important issues that need debate including scientific peer review, the need for monitoring, the continued administration of protected reserves and the policy of "No Surprises" which says that, once a conservation plan has been worked out, absent unforeseeable changes, additional habitat requirements will be the responsibility of the

public sector.

"No surprises" is a policy that was worked out in the intense give and take that went into the Southern California NCCP process. This solution basically says that: once the government and a landowner agree as to what, where, and how much shall be done to minimize and mitigate damage by a development project to a listed species, both sides must then stick to that package. The government cannot come back at the landowner pleading for more. It boils down to four words: "A deal's a deal." I am absolutely convinced that it is fair and that the idea of closure that it embodies is essential to bringing the private sector into the conservation process.

DO MORE TO KEEP SPECIES OFF THE ENDANGERED LIST

Out in the field, during the last four years, we have learned that in some, perhaps many situations, it may be possible to avoid listing altogether, if only we can spot the problems early and induce the parties to take proactive and aggressive conservation steps to manage resource use and development to protect land and water habitat.

Candidate Conservation Agreements are one of the prime tools we are using to avoid listing species. Indiana, Illinois and Kentucky joined with the federal government and the coal industry early on to provide safeguards and avoid listing of the northern copperbelly water snake. This particular creature enjoys the same wetlands used for coal mining. Coal companies have agreed to avoid, cut down or modify mining in snake habitat areas, and insure that the land they leave after mining is in good enough shape even for a snake to love. Public agencies agree to protect the snake and its habitat too.

In Oregon, Gov. Kitzhaber has taken the lead by bringing together timber companies, farmers and other private landowners to develop a coho salmon conservation plan, avoiding the immediate need for a "threatened" listing for the fish. His signature on the agreement is backed by \$30 million from the Oregon Legislature.

Candidate conservation agreements maximize conservation through enhanced flexibility, which allows us to avoid listing species. Success, to me, isn't listing species. It's saving species, and we are saving more species with candidate conservation agreements.

INCLUDE STATES, TRIBES, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

We must provide expanded opportunities for state and tribal involvement. For most of its history the Endangered Species Act has been administered in a unilateral federal form. I do not believe there is anything in the text of the act that dictated that course, and indeed, for the last four years we have had great success in working cooperatively with other federal agencies, states and Indian tribes in administration of the Act -- the NCCP process in California is certainly the best known of those successes, but there are many others.

In the Southwest, the Apache trout is being successfully restored to the White Mountains by the White Mountain Apache tribe. Just last month, along with Commerce Secretary Daley, I signed a joint Secretarial Order designed to clarify the responsibilities of our Departments when actions taken under authority of the ESA involve Tribal land or trust resources.

In Colorado, the Greenback cutthroat is splashing off the list under state leadership. I would also highlight the lead role played by the state of Georgia in recovery of red-cockaded woodpeckers and

by the Governor of Oregon in restoration of coastal salmon, to name but a few.

PROVIDE INCENTIVES

Critics of the Act have long complained of the lack of incentives to induce a more positive result out on the landscape. The point is well taken and our Safe Harbor policy, evolved out of our experience with the Pinehurst Resort and Country Club, is a good example of that.

We have also downlisted some trout species to allow catch-and-release fishing, which encourages angling groups across the country to take an active, hands on role in restoring aquatic and riparian habitat. And under this Administration's new Bring Back the Natives partnership, private groups voluntarily match federal funds two dollars to one in order to launch small-scale, on-the-ground fish restoration projects to benefit 183 rare species.

I began my remarks with criticism of how previous Republican Administrations ignored the Act, let it collapse and then said it didn't work.

But I also want to acknowledge that the Republican leadership of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, particularly Senator Chafee and Senator Kempthorne, along with Senators Baucus and Reid, have worked hard to address many complex issues associated with reauthorization of the Act. They are working together both to codify our successes and to develop new approaches to make the Act still more effective and user friendly.

Recently I read an account of a Los Angeles "Eco-Expo" last April, where children were invited to write down their answers to the basic question: "Why save endangered species?"

One child, Gabriel, answered, "Because God gave us the animals."

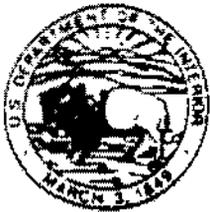
Travis and Gina wrote, "Because we love them."

A third response: "Because we'll be lonely without them."

Still another wrote, "Because they're a part of our life. If we didn't have them, it would not be a complete world. The Lord put them on earth to be enjoyed, not destroyed."

Whatever our values, we can all learn to answer this question in the same voice of the child, who wrote her reply right down there at the very bottom of the page: "Because we can."

Thank you.



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

For Immediate-Release
June 6, 1997

Contact: DOI -- Lisa Guide or Paul Bledsoe (202) 208-6416
DOC -- Kelly Lees (202) 482-4883

BABBITT AND DALEY SAY PROTECTIONS FOR RARE PLANTS AND ANIMALS HAVE INCREASED UNDER THE "NEW" ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

Private Landowner Involvement is Key to Increased Level of Protections

Protections for America's rare plants and animals are more effective now than at any time in the 24 year history of the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and Commerce Secretary William M. Daley said today. Secretaries Babbitt and Daley unveiled two draft conservation incentive policies while highlighting the dramatic improvements in species protection due to Clinton Administration reforms.

Babbitt said the Administration has been able to address many concerns about the ESA by using the law's built-in flexibility, allowing private landowners to conserve species while preserving certainty about the economic potential of their property.

"For the first time in history, the Endangered Species Act is effectively saving rare plants and animals on privately owned lands," said Secretary Babbitt. "It is a difference so profound that in practice we really have a "new" Endangered Species Act. We're saving hundreds of additional species, we are in partnerships with hundreds of landowners, and millions of acres of private property are being managed to protect America's natural heritage. Endangered species, and the Endangered Species Act itself, are flourishing under our new reforms."

"These new policies demonstrate significant progress in wildlife conservation as well as fostering greater appreciation for the flexibility of the Endangered Species Act," said Secretary Daley. "Having used these ESA policies as guidelines we already enjoy dozens of successful partnerships with the private and public sectors showing that species can be protected while allowing sustainable development and important government functions to continue."

"Four years ago, the act was in grave trouble, with many in Congress and the private sector supporting damaging revisions," Secretary Babbitt said. "But many Americans were outspoken in their support for the ESA. With their support we have prevented the paving over of America's natural heritage by taking the Endangered Species Act's built-in flexibility and using it for the benefit of conservation. Because the law is now responsive to the concerns of landowners, we now have something never before associated with the ESA: the active involvement of landowners, business people, environmentalists and others to develop partnerships that work."

(More)

Administrative reforms of the ESA have vastly increased the number of species being protected and increased the amount of land being managed for conservation by millions of acres, Babbitt said.

Since more than half of listed species have 80 percent of their habitat on private land, an effective conservation program must include significant private lands involvement. Currently, 212 partnerships called "habitat conservation plans" with private landowners have been completed and signed, and over 200 are at various stages of development. By September 1997, 18.5 million acres of private land will be covered by HCP's, including both preserve lands and those that will be actively managed for conservation or developed. These agreements will protect over 300 species, including state and federally listed, candidates for listing and species of special concern. Only 14 habitat conservation plans were signed between 1982 and 1993, the year President Clinton took office. In addition, a "No Surprises" policy that provides assurances to landowners who are participating in HCP's was officially proposed as a regulation by the Interior and Commerce Departments on May 29, 1997.

"Secretary Babbitt's commitment to achieving the goals of the Endangered Species Act through Habitat Conservation Plans, backed by his No Surprises policy, has captured substantial enthusiasm and trust from many private landowners and resource users. The beneficiaries are species which would otherwise be unprotected, even as the sensible development of resources progresses and benefits the economy," said Guy R. Martin, of the Western Urban Water Coalition and Bay-Delta Urban Coalition.

Twenty Five "Safe Harbor Agreements" have brought active species conservation to nearly 21,000 acres of privately owned land and benefit more than ten species. Sixteen other agreements are in development and are expected to cover an additional 14,000 acres.

"These new policies offer the promise of not just preserving the status quo, but of improving upon it; unless we accomplish that, the goals of the Endangered Species Act cannot be achieved," said Michael Bean, Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) senior attorney.

Through habitat management more than 200 rare species are benefiting from conservation agreements designed to remove threats to species that are candidates for ESA protection. These Candidate Conservation Agreements are intended to preclude the need for listing.

"Innovative multiple species conservation programs--partnerships with private interests and local government--are giving real hope to the endangered species of Southern California," said Dan Silver, Coordinator for the Endangered Habitats League, located in Southern California. "We strongly support these efforts, but also ask for needed improvements, such as in funding and scientific input."

While a goal of the new administrative reforms is to prevent the need to list declining species by taking action to protect them before they become critically endangered, other species

have reached the point of requiring the full protections of the ESA. Despite a year-long congressionally imposed moratorium on the listing of species, 374 species have been added to the list during the Clinton Administration, more than during any other Administration.

"The Nature Conservancy has been working cooperatively with private landowners for decades to conserve rare species and ecosystems on their land," said John Sawhill of The Nature Conservancy. "As approximately 75% of all threatened and endangered species rely to some extent on private land to survive, we are delighted to see an increasing focus on these activities in the context of the Endangered Species Act."

Babbitt and Daley announced two policies today, one creating "Safe Harbors," which will enhance recovery of Federally listed species on non-federal lands, and the "Candidate Conservation Agreements" policy, intended to remove threats to species not yet listed. "Safe Harbors and Candidate Conservation are key pieces of the Clinton Administration's ESA reforms," said Secretary Babbitt. "Both provide important new incentives and assurances to private property owners to help save and enhance habitat for listed and candidate species without having to worry about additional regulatory restrictions under the Act."

"Commerce's goal to balance protection of our natural resources with sustainable development will be complemented through these two policies. The policies will also enhance our Nation's efforts to save endangered fish and wildlife by providing private landowners with a better understanding of the act's regulatory guidelines," said Secretary Daley. "More effective stewardship or management of private land will keep essential habitat undivided, maintain and restore unique habitats and create other unique benefits for endangered species."

"The Southern California Natural Community Conservation Program has taken endangered species protection beyond regulatory gridlock and ideological posturing and built a bridge between environmental protection and economic imperatives," said Monica Florian, Sr. Vice President of the Irvine Company. "It has made conservation on private lands feasible and even desirable from a landowners' point of view. The NCCP has provided an innovative and practical means to conserve multiple habitats on a large scale and to protect multiple species before they are in danger."

Babbitt said that under the draft Safe Harbor policy, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service (the Services), in cooperation with appropriate state agencies and affected Tribal governments, may provide property owners with assurances for enhancing the recovery of a listed species by voluntarily entering into Safe Harbor Agreements. The Services must find that species included in an agreement are expected to receive a net conservation benefit from voluntary conservation activities. A current habitat baseline condition would be determined and any increase in an animal's population above that condition resulting from a property owner's voluntary good stewardship would not increase their regulatory responsibility or affect future land use decisions. The Services would issue the property owner an "enhancement of survival permit" under Section 10(a) (1) (A) of the act, which would allow the property owner to return the

affected property at the end of the Safe Harbor agreement back to baseline conditions even if it resulted in the incidental take of a listed species. As long as the property owner complied with the terms and conditions of the Safe Harbor agreement and permit, he or she could make any use of the property that maintained the agreed-upon baseline conditions.

The Candidate Conservation Agreements draft policy is similar in principle to the Safe Harbor policy but pertains exclusively to species that are facing threats but are not yet listed. The goal is to remove threats to eliminate the need for listing. If a species is nonetheless listed in the future, the Services would authorize the property owner to return the property to condition mutually agreed to in the Candidate Conservation Agreement and would not require the participating property owner to do more to conserve the species.

Comments about the draft Safe Harbor and Candidate Conservation agreements policies and accompanying regulatory changes to 50 Code of Federal Regulations Part 17 must be received within 60 days after publication (during the week of June 9th) in the Federal Register and should be addressed to Chief, Division of Endangered Species, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1849 C St. NW, (ARLSQ-452), Washington, DC 20240.

--DOI--

The "New" Endangered Species Act Top Ten Achievements of Clinton Administration Reforms

**Habitat Conservation Planning protects more than 300 species
18.5 million acres of private land will be covered by agreements by September 1997**

**Safe Harbor Agreements protect more than 10 species in 41 finished or pending
agreements covering 36,000 acres of private land**

**Candidate Conservation Agreements protect more than 200 rare but unlisted species
under 40 agreements, providing earlier protection to avoid future listings**

**374 species have been listed under the Endangered Species Act since 1993, more than
during any other Administration**

**A Secretarial order "harmonizing" Federal trust responsibilities to 555 Federally
recognized Native American tribes with responsibilities under the ESA on 95 million acres
held in Federal trust.**

**Average time for federal agencies in the Northwest to complete formal consultation and
biological opinions has been slashed by two thirds, to 45 days**

**Federal wildlife agencies provide more assistance to other nations to conserve migratory
wildlife**

**Increased involvement of all 50 state governments and hundreds of local governments in
carrying out the ESA**

**Interested public and local interests provided with "a seat at the table" when Feds plan
and carry out species recovery**

**Independent scientific review now required for listing decisions and recovery plans; helps
provide stronger, sounder stewardship**



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 4, 1997

Stephanie Hanna (O) 202/208-6416

SECRETARIES OF INTERIOR AND COMMERCE TO SIGN LANDMARK ORDER ON ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT AND INDIAN TRIBES

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt and Secretary of Commerce Bill Daley will meet in the Indian Treaty Room at the Old Executive Office Building on Thursday to sign a landmark agreement recognizing the treaty and trust responsibilities of the federal government to work with Indian tribes on issues involving the Endangered Species Act and Indian lands.

"For too long we have failed to recognize the needs of Indian Tribes to be consulted and part of the process from the beginning, and the traditional knowledge they can share about species, habitat and conservation," Babbitt said. "This Order is another example of the Clinton Administration's significant efforts to use the Endangered Species Act in a way that is sensitive, responsive and flexible to those who are affected."

Secretaries Babbitt and Daley will sign the Secretarial Order in a ceremony, beginning at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, June 5, that will be attended by representatives from a large number of Tribes nationwide. Tribal leaders Jaime Pinkham of the Nez Perce, Ronnie Lupe of the White Mountain Apache, Billy Frank, Chairman of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, and Ron Allen, President of the National Congress of American Indians will also speak.

Due to security requirements for entering the White House, all media wishing to attend **MUST** provide name, birth date, social security number and citizenship in advance for admission to Thursday's event. This information must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, and should be given to Ken Burton in the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service at 208-5657.

-DOI-



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 19, 1997

Stephanie Hanna (O) 202/208-6416

STATEMENT BY SOLICITOR OF THE INTERIOR JOHN LESHY ON SUPREME COURT DECISION IN BENNETT v. SPEAR

The Supreme Court's Endangered Species Act decision today involves some highly technical legal arguments concerning how people go about challenging agency decisions under the Act. We have always believed that our actions under the Act are and should be subject to court review, whether at the behest of environmentalists or other affected interests. In fact, we are defendants in numerous lawsuits brought under the Act by all sorts of interest groups.

We sought to uphold the lower court's decision dismissing this particular lawsuit because we believed the plaintiff water districts had not followed the correct legal path to the courthouse. Although the Court's decision today rejected our technical legal arguments, it reaffirmed that the courthouse doors are open to all affected interests to review our implementation of the Act - an outcome with which, broadly speaking, we agree.

I do not anticipate that the Court's decision will have any significant effect on our administration of the Endangered Species Act.

-DOI-



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

For Release: March 18, 1997

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STATEMENT OF INTERIOR SECRETARY BRUCE BABBITT REGARDING THE SAN DIEGO CITY COUNCIL VOTE ON THE MULTI SPECIES CONSERVATION PLAN

I want to thank and congratulate Mayor Susan Golding and the San Diego City Council on today's historic vote. Mayor Golding's leadership in protecting San Diego's natural heritage has resulted in an agreement that will help preserve the most environmentally sensitive pieces of the San Diego landscape. San Diego is famous for its natural beauty, and the mayor, through her advocacy, has insured that beauty will remain for many generations.

Today's action also has important national implications. I consider the San Diego plan the latest and best example of a new era in American conservation. Voluntary conservation partnerships on private lands will be as important to America's natural heritage in our children's lifetimes as President Teddy Roosevelt's founding of the National Wildlife Refuge system and establishment of new national parks and national monuments in the early 20th century was to us. The ability to reconcile the needs of both environmental protection and economic development is an essential part of conservation planning in the 21st century.

The Clinton Administration has more than 300 habitat conservation plans (HCP) either completed or in the works. By September 1997, about 18.5 million acres of ecologically important lands will be covered under these plans. HCP's are part of the new way of administering the Endangered Species Act. We are using the flexibility of the Act to promote consensus among interested parties, rather than divisiveness and conflict.

The San Diego plan is the jewel of habitat conservation plans; a careful balance between many points of view that bring conservation planning to a more complex level. Dozens of different interests worked to craft an agreement that saves a significant portion of ecologically sensitive lands. This was doubly difficult because development pressures here are as intense as they are anywhere in the world. The result is that more land will be managed to conserve our natural heritage here than we could ever hope for under a parcel by parcel, or species by species, process.

It is a magnificent achievement. I congratulate all the stakeholders who sat down at the table and made this process work.

- DOI-



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 30, 1997

Stephanie Hanna (O) 202/208-6416
Tony Floor (O) 360/534-9330

CLINTON ADMINISTRATION'S MCGINTY, BABBITT TO FINALIZE STATEWIDE CONSERVATION PLAN FOR WASHINGTON STATE'S FOREST LANDS

Kathleen A. McGinty, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, and Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt joined Jennifer Belcher, Washington's Commissioner of Public Lands today in Seattle to finalize approval of a 70-100 year habitat conservation plan (HCP) for more than 285 species of fish and wildlife on 1.6 million acres of Washington state-managed forests. This habitat plan is the largest agreement of its kind on forested lands. The Washington state Department of Natural Resources HCP will now join four large private timber harvesting companies, that have completed similar agreements, resulting in 2,135,000 acres of northwest forested land managed for long-term habitat conservation.

"America's conservation challenge in the 21st Century is for private citizens, states and the federal government to work in partnership as stewards of the land," McGinty said. "Today's agreement shows us the way."

"This HCP offers a unique opportunity to prove that strong, biologically-based habitat protections can be maintained for the long-term side-by-side with sustainable timber harvests," Babbitt said. "President Clinton made a commitment in 1993 to help this region reach a balance between species protection and strong economies, and this Administration, with unprecedented cooperation from state governments and private timber companies, is proving decisively that it can be done. Together with the President's Forest Plan, we are creating a conservation mosaic across Washington's magnificent forests that will lead to survival, indeed recovery, of aquatic species and wildlife now endangered or in peril while offering long-term certainty for rural timber economies, students and other state trust beneficiaries."

An HCP is a land management plan authorized under the Endangered Species Act to conserve threatened and endangered species. For the Department of Natural Resources, it means a comprehensive plan for state trust lands that allows timber harvesting and other management activities while emphasizing species conservation and ecosystem health. This plan has been approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

(more)

Under the Act, the "taking" of a listed, threatened or endangered species -- killing, harming, or harassing a species, or adversely modifying habitat -- is prohibited without special authorization from the Fish and Wildlife Service. Through a habitat conservation plan negotiated with the Service, however, an applicant can be permitted to "take" a listed species if the taking is incidental and is part of a larger conservation plan that will not jeopardize the continued existence of the species and is incidental to legal activities.

Part of the Department of Natural Resources HCP replaces spotted owl protection circles with a more flexible approach to protect the owl, which is listed as a threatened species under the Act. The conservation strategy supports spotted owl populations in designated areas that scientists have determined to be most important to owl conservation based on proximity to federal reserves. Currently, there are 344 owl protection circles on the Department's land affecting timber activities on 600,000 acres.

West of the Cascade Mountain range, this HCP also provides habitat protection for: steelhead; sockeye, pink, chum, chinook and coho salmon; sea-run cutthroat trout; and bull trout. The HCP allows carefully managed timber harvest within streamside buffers as long as precautions are taken to protect fish habitat.

The Department of Natural Resources manages 5 million acres in Washington state of forest, aquatic, agricultural and urban lands for benefits to current and future trust beneficiaries and other residents of the state. Of this land, 2.1 million acres are forest lands. By state law, state-owned trust lands must be managed primarily to produce income for public schools, universities, prisons, state mental hospitals, community colleges, local services in many counties, and the state general fund.

-DOI-



JOINT STATEMENT
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
on the
ENDANGERED SPECIES RECOVERY ACT OF 1997
INTRODUCED BY SENATORS CHAFEE, BAUCUS, KEMPTHORNE AND REID

We congratulate Senators Chafee, Baucus, Kempthorne, and Reid on the introduction of their bipartisan bill to reauthorize one of our nation's most important conservation laws, the Endangered Species Act. We would like to further recognize the leadership of Senator Chafee, the Chairman of the Environment Committee, for his long history of accomplishments in the area of environmental protection.

This bill represents a carefully crafted agreement developed by the Republican and Democratic leaders of the Senate Environment Committee. They have found constructive common ground on extremely difficult and complex natural resources issues. Their bill builds on the extensive experience we have gained with the Endangered Species Act over the past 25 years, and particularly on the innovations that have been made in the past 4 years. It represents a serious effort to address the concerns regarding the Act's impact on landowners without undermining or weakening the fundamental protection for species and habitat provided by the Act. It also highlights the critical importance of recovering species.

While the Administration has not yet taken a position on the bill, the bill codifies a number of administrative reforms that the Departments of Commerce and Interior have developed over the last several years to improve implementation of the Act for both endangered species and people. A few of these key provisions include:

- o Multi-species approach. Over the past 25 years we've learned that good science supports a multi-species strategy. This bill provides for multi-species recovery and conservation plans, and takes other steps to encourage a multi-species approach to conservation.

- o Certainty for landowners. Many landowners and businesses are willing to help conserve species, but they want certainty about what will be expected of them in the future. This certainty is essential to giving private parties the incentive to enter into conservation plans. This bill codifies important reforms this Administration has made to provide certainty for landowners in conservation planning.

o Removing disincentives. A criticism of the current Endangered Species Act is that it inadvertently encourages landowners to destroy wildlife habitat because they are afraid of possible restrictions if endangered species are attracted to their property. This bill addresses that issue by incorporating the Administration's "Safe Harbor" policy that is designed to encourage landowners to take pro-active steps to improve or enhance endangered species habitat by removing the regulatory disincentive associated with attracting additional endangered species to their property.

o Improving public and State involvement. This bill contains provisions to open the endangered species process -- especially recovery planning -- to the public, and increases the role of States as important partners in endangered species conservation.

o Preventing species from becoming endangered. It is easier and less expensive to conserve species before they become endangered by removing threats to them through pro-active conservation measures. This bill includes provisions to allow the Interior and Commerce Departments and other partners to reach agreements that get ahead of the curve and preclude the need to list candidate and proposed species.

It is important to bear in mind that although representatives of our agencies provided technical assistance in the development of this bill, the bill has not undergone full inter-agency review by the Administration. The Committee has scheduled a hearing on the bill and the Administration will be prepared at that time with its detailed thoughts and recommendations. This will include any concerns regarding specific provisions of the bill, including concerns regarding the increased number of deadlines, the roles and responsibilities of federal agencies, and whether the increased authorization levels are adequate to cover the anticipated additional procedural and program costs needed to implement this legislation.

This bill is an important first step on the road to a reauthorized and revitalized Endangered Species Act. We encourage everyone to review this legislation carefully. We doubt anyone, including the Senators, will argue that this is perfect legislation that cannot be improved. However, reaching a bipartisan consensus among the Senate Committee leadership on this issue is a tremendous accomplishment. We look forward to continuing our work with the Senate and House to reauthorize the Endangered Species Act, and to renewing our commitment to the American people to conserve our nation's natural heritage for future generations.



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 3, 1996

Stephanie Hanna (O) 202/208-6416
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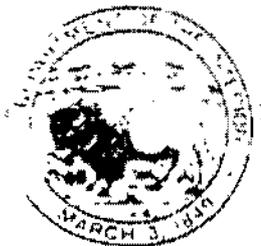
STATEMENT OF SECRETARY BABBITT ON SCIENTIFIC REPORT ON EXTINCTION THREATS TO MANY WILD MAMMALS WORLD-WIDE

"I believe that all of us should be concerned by the news that fully a quarter of all the world's wild mammals are now considered threatened with extinction. This report, from the Species Survival Commission of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and jointly published with Conservation International, is probably the most thorough scientific assessment of the state of the world's wildlife ever undertaken. It clearly indicates that, unless people of all nations make extraordinary efforts, we face a looming natural catastrophe of almost biblical proportions.

"The report's conclusion that habitat loss and degradation are primarily responsible for this threat is both disturbing and a reason for hope. The damage done by human activities can perhaps be set right by the ingenuity of people working together. That is why the Clinton Administration will continue to work through partnerships under the Endangered Species Act to conserve, protect and restore wildlife habitat. Through this Administration's efforts and the work of dedicated local people, we have shown that economies can thrive while protecting irreplaceable wildlife resources and conserving the land and water habitat so important to wildlife and to our own quality of life.

"The IUCN's report shows that we must not only continue and accelerate these efforts here at home, but that we must extend them world-wide by offering our expertise and support in conservation activities. Our children and grandchildren should not be deprived of a world where these magnificent and diverse wild animals can still find places to exist and raise their young. Today's report is a clarion call to take action while we still can."

-DOI-



OFFICES OF THE SECRETARIES OF INTERIOR & AGRICULTURE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 27, 1996

(DOI) Stephanie Hanna (O) 202/208-6416
(USDA) Tom Amontree (O) 202/720-4623

SECRETARIES BABBITT & GLICKMAN SIGN AGREEMENTS WITH PLUM CREEK TIMBER TO IMPROVE HABITAT CONSERVATION FOR WILDLIFE AND FISH

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt and Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman today announced agreements with Plum Creek Timber Company to protect habitat for threatened and endangered species and other wildlife on private lands and national forests. Secretary Babbitt signed a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) on private lands owned by Plum Creek, located in the I-90 corridor north of Seattle, Washington. Secretary Glickman announced a proposed land exchange between the USDA Forest Service and Plum Creek to consolidate public forests currently interspersed with 170,000 acres of Plum Creek's private lands in a "checker-board" pattern.

"Today's action is another example of President Clinton living up to his commitment to make the Endangered Species Act work better," Secretary Babbitt said. "I view this as the most innovative and sophisticated Habitat Conservation Plan we have developed so far. Not only will this provide long-term protection for some of the best habitat in the Northwest for the northern spotted owl, but the plan offers an opportunity to conserve a host of wildlife and fish species that we know are in serious peril, even if they have not yet been listed as threatened or endangered."

"While the Interior Department has been working with Plum Creek to protect listed species on private lands, the USDA and Plum Creek have been working on a proposed land swap to improve endangered species protection on public lands," Secretary Glickman said. "This exchange could transfer to public ownership nearly 40,000 acres of Plum Creek lands, protecting currently roadless areas and improving the Forest Service's ability to provide habitat for threatened and endangered species in the region."

Working with Interior's Fish & Wildlife Service and Agriculture's Forest Service scientists, Plum Creek has designed the capability to analyze, document and adapt to complex data on wildlife populations and migration patterns that are likely to change over the 50-year duration of the HCP. The technique involves high-resolution Geographic Information Systems mapping and telemetry as well as watershed analysis

(more)

"This Administration has accomplished major strides in making the Endangered Species Act work better and more flexibly, Babbitt said. "Beginning with the President's Forest Plan, we have implemented a number of policies that are revolutionizing our capability to work voluntarily with property owners throughout the country," Babbitt said. "The flexibility in the Act, and this Administration's goal to encourage certainty for landowners through a multi-species approach to conservation, has allowed companies like Plum Creek Timber to look at ecosystems and watersheds on their land and develop a blueprint for long-term protection that we all can be very proud of."

The Plum Creek HCP will protect old growth forests, create 200 foot buffers on fish-bearing streams, limit or restrict logging on wetlands, and provide both habitat for nesting and roosting owls and adequate areas for distribution and dispersal to encourage long-term recovery for owls as well as species such as grizzly bears, marbled murrelets and goshawks. In all, it is estimated that the Plum Creek HCP will protect four listed species and more than 280 species of fish and wildlife in an ecosystem that spans 170,000 acres and 20 watersheds.

Through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, the Forest Service and Plum Creek have committed to identify equally-valued national forest lands for exchanges that will take place in the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie, Wenatchee and Gifford Pinchot national forests. Plum Creek has agreed to defer timber operations on most of their lands proposed for transfer for two years to allow the Forest Service to locate and permit lands outside the HCP suitable for timber operations.

"This exchange will have significant habitat protection benefits, protecting more of the scenic area in the 'Mountains to Sound' green way, which links the Cascade Mountains to the Puget sound, and improving our ability to implement the President's Forest Plan," Secretary Glickman said. "It will consolidate important forest lands in the Snoqualmie Pass Adaptive Management Area and increase access to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area -- one of the most visited wilderness areas in the nation. Together, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of the Interior and Plum Creek timber are working to improve and maintain the integrity of our natural environment."

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NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 17, 1996

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Pat Foulk (O) 916/979-2129

INTERIOR SECRETARY SIGNS FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND SPECIES HABITAT AND OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION PLAN IN ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

The serene and wildlife-rich coastal sagebrush landscape of Orange County, California, will be protected from development under a landmark conservation plan signed today by Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt. The plan, developed by local citizens, businesses and governments, will protect over 40 native Californian species threatened by destruction of habitat and increased urban sprawl. The Orange County Central and Coastal Natural Communities Conservation Plan (NCCP) is the first-of-its-kind partnership between federal, state and county governments, municipalities, land developers and other property owners sharing a common interest in protecting open space.

"Today's historic agreement is an example of President Clinton delivering on his promise to make the Endangered Species Act work better," Secretary Babbitt said. "By giving local citizens the power to develop conservation plans, with technical and financial assistance from the state and the federal government, we have a good shot at long-term success. The days of the federal government directing every detail of endangered species planning from Washington, DC, are over. This Orange County plan will serve as a model for the nation, pointing the way to protect wildlife and conserve open space in areas of increasing urban pressure. It is a real triumph of communities over conflict."

The NCCP creates about 38,000 acres in Nature Reserve, located three areas spanning the coastal foothills and the foothills of the Santa Ana Mountains. In all, about 40 at-risk species of wildlife and plants will receive protection at the same level as the six species already listed under the Endangered Species Act. By shifting the emphasis on protecting species to a multi-species habitat conservation approach, the Department of the Interior is able to offer participating landowners long-range certainty about the future development of their land.

"This is a win-win situation for both economic certainty and species conservation," Babbitt continued. "We will be able to protect these at-risk species before it becomes necessary to add them to the Endangered Species list, and private and public landowners can develop plans for the future of their properties with certainty. At the same time, Orange County residents now and in the future have assurances that the dramatic coastal vistas, the recreational opportunities and the quality of life that drew them to Orange County in the first place will not be eroded away by urban expansion."

Babbitt explained that representatives from the California Resources Agency and from The Irvine Company, a large land developer in Orange County, had met with him early in 1993 to express an interest in coordinating a new state law empowering counties and cities to designate open space habitat for protection of endangered species. "This proved to be a perfect opportunity to demonstrate this Administration's belief that the Endangered Species Act could be used to avoid the kind of train-wrecks created by previous administrations in the Pacific Northwest."

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Within weeks of that 1993 meeting, Babbitt invoked the power of rarely-used provisions (Sections 10(a) and 4(d) of ESA) within the Act to allow the State of California to take the lead in protecting the threatened California gnatcatcher. This action triggered a consensus process in Orange County involving all stakeholders, including local environmentalists, in the planning process. The Department of the Interior has since used regulatory flexibility in the 4(d) Rule to approve more than 140 Habitat Conservation Plans around the country, and more than 330 additional plans are currently in the development process. In southern California, the planning process is underway to protect coastal and sage scrub habitat in five counties: San Diego, Orange, Los Angeles, Riverside and San Bernardino. The eventual outcome will mean that 6000 square miles between San Diego and Los Angeles will have locally-planned open space reserves, set aside for enjoyment and recreation as well as habitat protection for wildlife and plants.

"This Administration has made a series of administrative changes that make it easier for local citizens to protect their open spaces and use their land while still providing essential habitat protection for a multitude of wildlife and plant species," Babbitt said. "These conservation plans are voluntary for private landowners, and offer common-sense solutions and long-term certainty. This is the way we will be doing business in the future, and we are already seeing results on the ground from Washington state to the Everglades."

In the case of Orange County, this is the first of three regions of the county to complete the NCCP process. The Irvine Company is the largest private landowner in the Central & Coastal Plan, and is contributing 21,000 acres for a large part of the open space set aside as Nature Reserve. Two portions of the Nature Reserve, located near Newport Beach and Irvine, will be inter-connected by greenways, hiking paths and mountain ridges, creating recreational opportunities for an area that dwarfs San Francisco's Golden Gate Park or Manhattan's Central Park.

"I hope that Congress takes notice of these accomplishments in southern California," Babbitt said. "During more than three years of grass-roots planning in Orange County, Congress has been debating and holding hearings and making impassioned speeches about the Endangered Species Act, but nothing has been passed. They need to realize that these NCCPs are good for at-risk and endangered wildlife species, but great for human species. There is certainty now for growth and development of a dynamic region, and there is certainty that the grandchildren of those signing this agreement today will have access to the majestic landscape that has drawn so many to select these communities as their home."

Secretary Babbitt will be joined at the signing by Douglas Wheeler, Secretary of the California Resources Agency; Roger Stanton, Chairman of the Orange County Board of Supervisors; Donald Bren, Chairman, and Monica Florian, Senior Vice President for Corporate Affairs, of The Irvine Company.

-DOI-

A short radio actuality of Secretary Babbitt discussing the Orange County NCCP is available by calling 800-521-3370, or 202-208-4777 in the DC metro area.



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 6, 1996

Stephanie Hanna (O) 202/208-6416

STATEMENT OF SECRETARY BABBITT ON HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS ACTION TO FUND HABITAT CONSERVATION PLANS IN CALIFORNIA

I am pleased to see that a majority of members of the House Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations are willing to give us funding for creative and flexible approaches that make the Endangered Species Act work better.

Last year, Congress placed a moratorium on any activities to list species, or to prevent them from being listed by taking steps to save their habitat. This moratorium turned out the lights on our ability to take action on the Endangered Species recovery process until this April when President Clinton lifted it.

Meanwhile, states like California took a much sounder approach, developing large, multi-species regional conservation plans (called Natural Communities Conservation Plans in California law) in concert with the Department of the Interior. In President Clinton's budget, \$6 million was requested for this purpose.

Yesterday, that request was cut by \$1 million, but it is still helpful that the Fish & Wildlife Service will be permitted to assist the State of California to develop, manage and acquire land for three large multi-species conservation plans in Orange and San Diego Counties, and a regional Habitat Conservation Plan in Riverside County.

The Clinton Administration has strongly favored working with states, counties, local government and landowners on long-range conservation plans that address the habitat needs of many species of wildlife, fish and plant species simultaneously, rather than looking at threatened and endangered species protection one species at a time. In only three years, this Administration has signed more than 140 voluntary agreements for Habitat Conservation Plans. More than 300 others are in the process of finalization. This compares with only 15 agreements signed during the ten preceding years.

Use of Habitat Conservation Planning agreements to provide longterm protection for multiple species is one of several steps the Clinton Administration has taken to make the Endangered Species Act work better, and be more flexible and responsive to local solutions nationwide. It is encouraging that the Subcommittee recognizes the common sense in this approach and chose to provide funding that will allow us to assist the State of California during FY 1997. It would be even more encouraging if states could count on the Congress to assist their conservation planning efforts in the future.



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 29, 1996

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INTERIOR SECRETARY TO SIGN SAFE HARBOR AGREEMENT FOR RED-COCKADED WOODPECKERS BEFORE U.S. GOLF ASSN. LADIES OPEN

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt today joined some of the nation's top women golfers at the Pine Needles Golf Course near Pinehurst/Southern Pines, North Carolina, to announce another participant in an innovative new program to encourage habitat conservation for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker. The Pine Needles Lodges & County Club becomes the 14th golf course signing an agreement with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service since the program was developed last year.

The Safe Harbor program is also known as the North Carolina Sandhills Habitat Conservation Plan. It is a first-of-its-kind program, designed to encourage private landowners to undertake actions that will benefit the red-cockaded woodpecker. Safe Harbors is one of the many new approaches taken by the Clinton Administration to work cooperatively with private landowners on habitat conservation for threatened and endangered species. The plan removes a regulatory impediment that has, in the past, caused some landowners concern that conserving an attractive habitat for an endangered species might restrict the use of their property in the future. The plan was developed by the Service and representatives from the Environmental Defense Fund, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, the North Carolina State University's Red-Cockaded Woodpecker Research Program, and the Sandhills Area Land Trust.

"This is a great example of some of the exciting innovative approaches this Administration has taken to make the Endangered Species Act work better," Secretary Babbitt said. "We took a look at the fact that the red-cockaded woodpecker has been in a long-term decline both in the Sandhills and throughout its range in the Southeastern states, particularly on private land. That's because few landowners had an incentive to take any actions that would help the bird. Encouraging voluntary beneficial action by private landowners may slow, stop, or reverse its decline."

In addition to Safe Harbors, the Clinton Administration has worked continuously to respond to the concerns of private landowners in making the Endangered Species Act more flexible. Other examples include the 5-acre exemption for threatened species, that exempts 95 percent of American property owners in most circumstances from regulation. For larger landowners and others affected by the Act, there has been increasing reliance on cooperative Habitat Conservation Plans, and reliance on federal and state land as much as possible.

(more)

Safe Harbor provides an assurance to private landowners that if voluntary or incidental land management activities result in an increase in endangered species numbers or their habitat, they will not suffer undue restrictions in the future. Through a cooperative agreement between participating landowners and the Service, the amount of habitat and existing numbers of endangered species numbers is agreed upon, and anything above that level is considered a voluntary enhancement by the landowner. The landowner is, at anytime in the future, free to halt his habitat management actions, or to remove newly created habitat, as long as the overall level does not fall below the agreed upon baseline.

The plan is entirely voluntary. Only those landowners who wish to participate in the plan need do so. Thirteen golf courses in the area already participate in the Safe Harbor Program, including the famous Pinehurst courses Numbers 1-8, TALAMORE, Forest Creek Golf Club, Country Club of North Carolina courses 1 & 2, and Pinehurst Plantation. The longleaf pine forest type in the North Carolina Sandhills area has been identified by the red-cockaded woodpecker recovery plan as prime woodpecker habitat and as one of the 15 required locations to establish a viable woodpecker recovery population.

If a landowner decides not to continue participating in the program, the favorable habitat conditions created will not necessarily go away. They may persist for many years unless a landowner decides to eliminate them. A participating landowner is also free to sell his land and the buyer has exactly the same protective Safe Harbor as the previous landowner. Any landowner within the plan boundaries (parts of the six counties that comprise the North Carolina Sandhills) whose land exhibits potential nesting or foraging habitat is potentially eligible to participate in a cooperative agreement. The Fish and Wildlife Service is particularly interested in entering into cooperative agreements with landowners whose lands contain red-cockaded woodpecker clusters that are now abandoned.

There are 38 golf courses in the immediate Pinehurst/Southern Pines resort area, which celebrated its centennial anniversary this past year. At present, there are 49 breeding groups of red-cockaded woodpeckers on the golf courses, residential areas, and horse farms in this area. Red-cockaded woodpeckers need older, open, pine forests for establishing their nest cavities and foraging. Many sites formerly contained nesting red-cockaded woodpeckers that are now abandoned. The woodpeckers may have left because oaks and other hardwoods have grown up, transforming an open pine forest into a dense, mixed pine and hardwood forest, unsuitable for these birds. Landowners can "rehabilitate" these now-abandoned sites by controlling hardwood midstory, drilling new artificial cavities for the birds, and placing artificial restrictors over cavity entrances that have been enlarged by other species.

The land management practices encouraged for participants in the Safe Harbors program also will help to maintain a whole array of unusual and significant plant and animal life associated with longleaf pine forests, including bobwhite quail and southeastern fox squirrel. Additionally, , hardwood control will make it possible for landowners to realize the very substantial revenue from harvesting pinestraw, a multi-million dollar industry in North Carolina.

Under the Safe Harbor Cooperative Agreement signed by Secretary Babbitt today, Pine Needles is agreeing to enhance habitat in the area that is presently occupied by red-cockaded woodpeckers. They have also agreed to restore an unused 500-acre tract of land which has a problem with hardwood encroachment in the midstory of the pine forest. Pine Needles provides habitat for 5 breeding groups of red-cockaded woodpeckers on its Pine Needles and Mid Pines golf courses and resort area.

"In my search for new approaches to help these marvelous symbols of the rich biological history of the Southern states make their comeback, I have seen red-cockaded woodpeckers actually flourishing amidst the combat missions of some of the military's toughest troops at Fort Stewart and Camp Lajeune," Babbitt said. "It is a great pleasure to kick off another Safe Harbor agreement among some of America's toughest and most seasoned golfers. There is no reason why woodpeckers and activities that benefit local economies, military readiness, or professional golf cannot thrive side-by-side. I hope to be able to stand here sometime during my tenure as Secretary of the Interior and be able to proclaim the red-cockaded woodpecker as one of the greatest Endangered Species Act success stories of this Administration."

-DOI-



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, D.C. 20240

March 14, 1996

Dear Fellow Arkansans:

Enclosed is a camera-ready article written by Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt especially for Arkansas weeklies and dailies. I hope you will consider publishing it.

Sincerely,

Michael Gaudin
Director of Communications
U.S. Department of the Interior

Enclosure

Endangered bird finds support at home

Arkansas, South shows nation how it's done

By Bruce Babbitt
Secretary of the Interior

Too often the phrase "endangered species" conjures up images of an exotic fish, bird or animal that brings controversy to the part of the country or the planet where it's vanishing. In those other places, it seems, the creature splits its surrounding community in two camps, favoring either jobs or the environment.

As it turns out, however, America's classic example of an endangered species may quietly live right here in your own back yard: a rare, black and white Arkansas native called the red-cockaded woodpecker.

Yet for some good, sound reasons, that bird brings no controversy, no division, no costly litigation, no political wrangling, and no economic stagnation. If anything, it's boosting jobs, restoring ancient forests, and bringing people together.

In short, the woodpecker is proving the Endangered Species Act works exactly as it was planned.

I know because I've seen it working — firsthand — in the forests and woodlots all across the South. I've seen this bird coming back on Southern military bases, from Ft. Stewart outside Savannah, Georgia, to Eglin Air Force Base in Florida, to Camp LeJone, North Carolina, where the Marines have a unique slogan: "We're Saving a Few Good Species."

But I've seen it work best in the rural towns and longleaf pine forests of Arkansas, for it's there that timber companies like Georgia Pacific and Potlatch Corp. are charting an entirely new course in endangered species forestry, setting an example for America to follow.

In Arkansas, I have seen a refreshingly vigorous commitment to find, protect and recover the red-cockaded woodpecker, and, in the process, to restore Arkansas' rich natural forest heritage — a heritage that nearly vanished.

At the beginning of this century, the entire state was covered by the greatest old growth pine forests on the continent. A traveler could ride from Texarkana to Memphis shaded by the



great native pines — longleaf, loblolly, shortleaf and slash — the entire way. Nor would he be lonely, for the entire range was filled with the staccato and sight of the red-cockaded woodpecker.

Then came the northern timber barons, moving south from the cut-over lands around the Great Lakes, stripping the state's trees and leaving a ruined landscape in their wake. The native woodpecker vanished at the pace of the



clearcuts, for it can nest only in cavities excavated from tall, old pines whose interior wood has been softened by a fungus called red heart disease.

Only one thing kept this native creature from extinction: the 1973 Endangered Species Act.

After it was listed in the 1970s, southern timber industry skeptics predicted a replay of the "jobs vs. environment" train wreck caused by the Northern spotted owl. Thanks to Arkansas loggers, they can tell a quieter, subtler tale, with a different ending.

That tale began three years ago, when I met with Pete Correll, president of Georgia Pacific, to avoid a southern standoff like that in the Pacific Northwest. Pete made a suggestion that I quickly agreed to: Get his local land managers and our federal biologists in one room, tell them of our desire for consensus, and keep their feet to the fire until we worked out a solution.

Our result? A landmark, common sense agreement whereby Georgia Pacific protects the old growth tree clusters that are active nesting sites for the approximately 100 remaining woodpecker groups that forage on 50,000 acres of the 4.2 million acres of company owned pine forest.

That step set up an example of how business could move from hindsight to foresight, from reaction to prevention. That agreement sets a path for dozens more to follow.

Just last October I went to Warren, outside Little Rock, to announce an agreement with Potlatch Corp. That timber company, which has the fourth largest population of woodpeckers on private land in the U.S., is managing 15,000 acres of its forested habitat for the rare, native bird. That means retraining its Arkansas land managers to identify, recognize, protect and even restore habitat for the 44 nesting woodpecker groups that live there.

It also means no train wreck. No lawsuits. No "us vs. them" rhetoric. Arkansas' timber industry and landowners, like the military, have made peace with the woodpecker, embracing it on their woodlots. There is a southern success story, demonstrating that jobs and the environment grow together.



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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**BRUCE BABBITT TO HEAR ABOUT 'BEAR NECESSITIES';
MEET WITH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC PARTNERS FOR BLACK BEARS**

Visit to Baton Rouge, Louisiana will follow speech by the President Monday on continuing our longtime American commitment to clean air and water

The successful partnership that has been a model for modern conservation--the effort to save the Louisiana black bear--could be imperiled if efforts continue to strip away Federal protection for conservation. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt will meet with people in Baton Rouge Tuesday, March 12, who are part of that extraordinary cooperative effort.

"What we have in Louisiana is a textbook, award-winning example of how to save a species," said Babbitt. "The Black Bear Conservation Committee is composed of scientists, government officials, timber companies, farmers--all the stakeholders. They are all winners--and so is the bear."

"Unfortunately, a number of people in Congress want to pull the plug on protecting wildlife in this country," Babbitt said. "They're on an extreme mission to gut the laws that our conservation ethic brought about. This has to stop."

Babbitt is in Louisiana to catch fish and to encourage cooperative efforts like the one that has led to an improvement in black bear populations. "Louisiana and black bear go together just as much as Louisiana and crawfish or bass," Babbitt said. "The bear inspired William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway and Theodore Roosevelt."

"Teddy Roosevelt saved a black bear cub here in Louisiana and instantly created the Teddy Bear. The current Congress dishonors Roosevelt's memory."

The Secretary will have a conversation about bear conservation plans with Murray Lloyd, a board member of the Louisiana Black Bear Conservation Committee; Dr. Bobby Fulmer, a New Roads general practitioner who's managing his private lands for bear habitat, Pat Weber, a vice president of the Crown Vantage forest products corporation, and others. They will meet at 10 a.m. Tuesday on the grounds of the State Capitol, 1500 North Third Street in Baton Rouge.

(more)

The Secretary's visit to Louisiana coincides with a speech President Clinton makes Monday, repeating the challenge he gave to Congress to "leave our environment safe and clean for the next generation." Babbitt's three-day Natural Heritage Tour of Louisiana takes him to New Orleans Monday, Baton Rouge and Lafayette Tuesday, and Shreveport Wednesday. All events are open to the public.

--DOI--

BRUCE BABBITT ON WHY ENDANGERED SPECIES MATTER

AS HUNTERS AND FISHERS, we have an obligation to protect not only fish and game, but all wild creatures. This has become increasingly complicated in the face of continued development and habitat reduction. Difficult choices have to be made. It is the job of Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt, as caretaker of



the nation's natural resources, to balance recreational and business interests with the needs of all species—from the greenback cutthroat trout to the bald eagle. Babbitt has recently encountered tremendous opposition to the Endangered Species Act, and here he speaks out not only as a politician, but also as a fisherman.
—The Editors.

Twenty years ago the greenback cutthroat trout was thought to be extinct, but right now there's one on my line.



We are working our way up a small freestone stream in the heart of Rocky Mountain National Park, casting simulator flies for a wild, native fish that by all odds simply should not exist here. It is called the greenback cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki stoumulus*), and for several decades in the middle of this century, it was considered to be extinct.

Most anglers in this part of Colorado have heard enough about the greenback to know that it was the first fish to be listed under the 1973 Endangered Species Act. But they've also heard a lot of rhetoric that the act doesn't work, or that it's so flawed it actually results in the decline of endangered species.

So I set out on a perfect August morning to see if the Endangered Species Act could actually put a greenback on my line.

Up here above the falls, within sight of the summer snowfields on Ypsilon Mountain, the water is churning through a boulder-studded channel. If you want to see the greenback, Colorado is the only place you can do so. They don't (and never did) live anywhere else. Greenbacks entered these headwaters when, after the Ice Age, dry weather and erosion caused "basin transfers" that isolated the Rocky Mountain front-range basins from other drainage to the west.

With less than 10,000 years to adapt, the greenback is far more sensitive to its natural habitat than most trout. That means it's wilder, but it's also more vulnerable to anglers and other threats to its survival.

Just upcurrent from me stands Bruce Rosenlund, greenback recovery project leader of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the last 14 years. Bruce knows the past, present and near future of this fish, and tells me that the greenback cutthroat was once so common that it was the meal of choice for miners in Leadville, Central City and other mining towns. At the turn of the century anglers here caught up to 1,000 greenbacks over a three-day fishing trip.

But after several hours on the river this morning, I haven't caught one. I've been casting short, dropping the fly in the eddies that separate the driving torrent from the quiet pools along the banks. There are a few bites, but I am slow to set the hook and the fish are gone. Too much time deep fishing in lakes; I am forgetting to watch the fish surface to take my fly.

We break for lunch in a clearing bordered by new-growth lodgepole pine, aspen and the last pure-growth of August. Rosenlund brings me up to the fall and rise of this fish.

One time the only trout in these waters, the greenback fell prey to mine drainage, as well as min-

ers' appetites. Then came the devastating introduction of aggressive non-native trout like the rainbow and brookies and browns, which spawned earlier and edged the greenback out of prime food and range. By 1937, the Denver Museum of Natural History pronounced the greenback extinct.

But in the mid-1960s, biologists traced reports of "funny-looking" trout to a few hundred greenbacks

After lunch, I go on a fly-fishing hopper which is easier to follow through rushing water. I cast upstream at a small boulder that has created a swirling pool just below it. The fly drifts down into the pool, and there it is again—a flash of color. I raise my rod up quickly, the rod bends, and I am playing my first greenback to the bank.

Watching a greenback cutthroat coming out of the water is like spotting a scarlet tanager flying out of the forest; the colors are so brilliant, so unexpected, that for a moment it seems unreal. Mine is a male, still in spawning colors, stained bright red-orange on the jaws and underside. But I don't see much green on the back or anywhere else; this one at least should have been named the scarlet belly cutthroat.

I carefully unhook the fish, hold it in the water, then watch it shoot back into the current and disappear. In this moment the native trout reveals to me that it is a manifestation of divine purpose. My task, our task, is to preserve these fish for generations to come.

There is still a ways to go: Historically, the greenback populated the watersheds of the Arkansas River and the South Platte River from elevations of 5,000 feet up into the tributaries at

RECONSTRUCTING THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

Restoring the greenback cutthroat is only one example of what the Endangered Species Act has accomplished. Bald eagles, grizzly bears, gray wolves, California condors, whooping cranes and a host of other creatures have also benefited from ESA protection and recovery programs.

Critics say it imposes a regulatory and economic burden on businesses and private landowners. The Clinton Administration has implemented a number of changes, including concessions for small private landowners and a "safe harbors" program to encourage habitat conservation on private lands.

Meanwhile, Congress has prohibited the listing of any more species until the act is reauthorized. Legislation that Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and environmentalists say would "effectively repeal" the ESA has been introduced in the House (HR 2275) and the Senate (S 760).

Supporters of a strong ESA agree that changes are needed, but they object to provisions that will gut the act's ability to protect habitat, curtail the Secretary of the Interior's power to list even critically endangered species, and weaken protection of foreign wildlife, such as tigers and eagles.

At this writing, more moderate legislation to amend the ESA has been introduced in the House (HR 2374) and other bills may follow. The outcome of this struggle will determine the future of many wild species and their habitats.

lingering in Como Creek and the South Fork Poudre, both within the South Platte drainage. That set the stage for restoration efforts: the Endangered Species Act of 1973 set it all in motion.

To achieve healthy, naturally spawning greenback populations, biologists in the ESA recovery team found remote lakes and tributaries where competing species could be cleared out and isolated by downstream barrier waterfalls. This took the work of helicopters and hatcheries, foresters and fishermen, and public and private money. It also took convincing catch-and-eat anglers to release the greenbacks, and convincing catch-and-release anglers to eat the rainbows and browns.

It worked. Greenback numbers are rising; already, 247 acres of lake habitat and 89 miles of streams have been reclaimed for about 70,000 greenbacks.

At least, this is what Rosenlund tells me. I still haven't seen proof firsthand

about 11,000 feet, above which the spawning season is too short to support reproduction.

The goal is to restore the greenback throughout its historic range, and there are only 19 officially stable population sites, including these rushing waters of Roaring Creek. But it is a goal wishes reach.

The fish is also winning over the hearts of other Colorado natives. In 1993 the Colorado legislature designated the greenback as its state fish. The rainbow trout, the former state fish, is not even from Colorado—it's a transplant from California.

By mid-afternoon, each member of our party has caught and released half a dozen. No records broken here—many of the fish fall in the seven- to 14-inch class. "But," Rosenlund reassures me, "down lower with a longer breeding season, the greenback can grow to three or four pounds."

Never mind that. The mere sight of one of these fish on the end of a line—especially my line—is an experience to be had nowhere else in the world. ■

Foreword to The Yellowstone Wolf: A guide and sourcebook

Our ancestors came to the New World prepared only to conquer, and conquer they did. But each succeeding generation became increasingly aware that conquest takes its toll. One of the dearest of those tolls has been the loss of some of the world's most spectacular predators. Places like the greater Yellowstone ecosystem, with its vast tracts of wild land, now provide us with an opportunity to make timely mid-course corrections in our treatment of this land's ecological character.

The Yellowstone wolf recovery program is a milestone project, demonstrating that our society has matured to the point where we recognize that humans share the earth with many other species as deserving of existence as we are. Through projects like this one, we learn not only to appreciate animals we once abused in ignorance, but also to use the planet's natural resources in ways that sustain rather than exhaust them.

1995 began with one of the more memorable events of my lifetime. It took place in the heart of Yellowstone National Park, during the first week of January, a time when a layer of deep, pure snow blanketed the first protected landscape in America. But for all its beauty, over the previous 60 years this landscape had been an incomplete ecosystem; by the 1930s, government-paid hunters had systematically eradicated the predator at the top of the food chain: the American grey wolf.

I was there on that day, knee deep in the snow, because I had been given the honor of carrying the first wolves back into that landscape. Through the work of conservation laws, I was there to restore the natural cycle, to help make Yellowstone complete once again.

That first wolf was an Alpha female, and after I set her down in the transition area, where she would later mate and bear wild pups, I looked through the grate into the green eyes of this magnificent creature, within this spectacular landscape, and was profoundly moved by the elevating nature of America's conservation laws.

But my experience was only a single, brief fragment. Paul Schullery's book, with its gathering of many voices from many times, tells you the whole story, from the days when wolves roamed the primitive Yellowstone wilderness, through the hard struggle to eliminate them, to a more tolerant age, when we realized that wolves has much to offer the human spirit.

I encourage you to read this story with humility for what we were so slow to learn, with pride for the course we have chartered, and with hope for all we have yet to gain from our relationship with wolves.

Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of the Interior