

No Monument Plans for San Rafael

Wednesday, June
28, 2000

BY TOM WHARTON
THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

GREENSBORO, N.C. -- The Clinton administration has no plans to designate Utah's San Rafael Swell as a national monument, Bureau of Land Management Director Tom Fry said Tuesday.

"Nobody has come to us and talked about a monument, and we are not considering one," he said.

But Fry said his agency supports the creation of a national conservation area at the popular central Utah recreation area.

Fry joined U.S. Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck at the Outdoor Writers Association of America annual conference here.

The BLM manages nine national conservation areas and seven national monuments. The designations are similar. Activities such as hunting, grazing and off-highway vehicle use are allowed in most circumstances, and the designations provide special planning and funding from the government.

While the BLM supported the national conservation area bill that Rep. Jim Hansen, R-Utah, pulled off the House floor recently, environmental groups opposed the San Rafael Swell bill, saying it doesn't offer adequate protection for the roadless areas they want designated as wilderness.

The debate over the San Rafael National Conservation Area marked one of the few times the Clinton administration and much of Utah's congressional delegation agreed on a public-land issue.

Little progress is being made in the fight over BLM wilderness designation in Utah. Fry pointed to the wilderness designation in Arizona as one way to get wilderness legislation moving. There, divergent interests fought for more than 10 years before sitting down to hammer out a compromise. He would like to see a similar event in Utah.

He said interest groups also need to get together to solve the growing impact of off-highway vehicles -- especially all-terrain vehicles -- on public lands in Utah. Different recreation and conservation interests fought for 10 years over OHV use in California's desert before agreeing to a management plan that set up areas allowing the vehicles. Led by the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, a coalition of environmental groups filed a federal lawsuit last fall to force the BLM to ban OHVs from millions of acres of wilderness study areas and other potential wilderness areas, and to increase regulation of OHVs on other BLM lands.

Though that lawsuit is pending, the BLM in March closed seven wilderness study areas in the San Rafael region of south-central Utah.

Fry said the solution to the problem will involve general guidelines for OHV use on public lands being established at a national level that can be used with more detailed plans by local land managers.

Fry said the contentious issue over who should own and manage rural roads in Utah -- the federal government or the counties -- might best be decided with a definitive court ruling.

In a separate interview, the U.S. Forest Service's Dombeck responded to criticism that too many public land issues were being decided on the national level instead of by people closer to the land affected.

"Certain issues are not resolvable at a local level," he said. "Part of leadership is setting the agenda for the local level. That is what we have tried to do."

He said too many forest issues were being solved by the courts and not by land managers.

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Opinions

ARIZONA REPUBLIC EDITORIALS

OPTIMISM FOR A PLEASANT EXCHANGE

Give-and-take
bodes well
for land deal

First there was the intriguing idea: Cobble together federal and state land parcels near Lake Pleasant and create a natural preserve of hundreds of thousands of acres of majestic desert mountains and valleys that would be off limits to development.

Next there was the inevitable suspicion and political intrigue. What is Interim Secretary Bruce Babbitt's hidden agenda? Would

the state be fairly compensated? Would these lands wind up as another national monument declared by President Clinton, with the state getting shortchanged?

Land exchanges are complex and, with the clock ticking on the Clinton administration, time is short. Moreover, the recent declaration of Ironwood National Monument northwest of Tucson damaged relations between the

staffs of Babbitt and Gov. Jane Hull working to come up with a fair exchange at Lake Pleasant.

Last week, things crystallized. The optimism that's been lacking was evident on a hike of the region by Babbitt and Peoria Mayor John Keegan, and later after a cordial and productive meeting between Babbitt and Hull. The governor said she wants to protect the lands around Lake Pleasant. "I hope to continue to work with the secretary to ensure the best possible result for the state of Arizona. I am optimistic Bruce will come through for Arizona," Hull said.

Babbitt, too, is hopeful. He's been accommodating to state concerns over choice developable lands that initially he wanted to be included in the preserve. They're out.

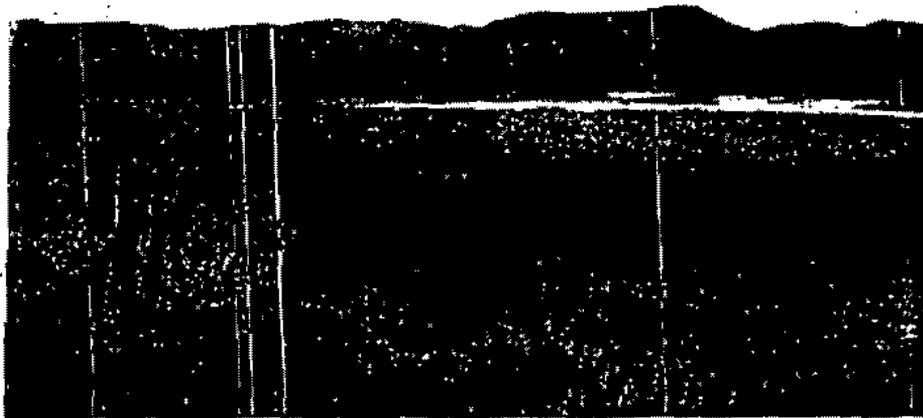
Babbitt has put on the table Bureau of Land Management property, south of Wickenburg, that's ripe for future development so that the state's constitutional requirement of maximizing revenue to benefit education would not be put at risk.

"I would like to select an appraiser who has the credibility of 12 bishops," says Babbitt, underscoring his commitment to ensure that a trade be of comparable value.

The planned preserve would be a wilderness in the West Valley for all of Arizona to enjoy. Though Babbitt won't rule out a national monument declaration, the way negotiations have progressed signals a desire to establish a preserve by consensus.

There's still work to be done, but the pieces are starting to fall into place.

These are lands that are beautiful and wild, full of views that awe and inspire, and make us realize that we must preserve what is left if we care about our heritage.



Secrets Slurr/The Arizona Republic

The mountains and valleys around Lake Pleasant may be turned into a preserve, one that all Arizonans could enjoy. Discussions so far have been positive.

Don't stand in the way

Coloradans thank U.S. Sen. Craig Thomas, a Wyoming Republican who chairs a key subcommittee, for holding hearings on a plan to upgrade Great Sand Dunes National Monument into a full-fledged national park.

The measure's prospects are good in the Senate but uncertain in the House — ironically because U.S. Rep. Joel Hefley, a Colorado Springs Republican, threatens a political roadblock.

The proposal, sponsored by U.S. Sen. Wayne Allard and U.S. Rep. Scott McInnis, has been endorsed by the rest of Colorado's congressional members, Gov. Bill Owens and Colorado Attorney General Ken Salazar. But Hefley, serves on a key U.S. House panel, so could nix the measure.

Hefley claims to oppose the proposal because the sand dunes don't merit national park status. However, Colorado Springs covets the San Luis Valley's vast underground water reserves, so his opposition could involve provincial politics more than policy concerns.

The danger is that Hefley could become prisoner of his own rhetoric.

Perhaps Hefley really doesn't com-

prehend why the existing monument doesn't fully protect the dunes' unique, fragile ecosystems — which could be endangered if they don't soon get additional, strong protection.

Hefley should visit the San Luis Valley. He should talk with scientists about why the plants and wildlife for miles around the dunes are part of the same natural system but could be at risk. He should listen to San Luis Valley residents describe why the natural groundwater there forms the life blood of their struggling communities. He should learn that even the area's geology depends on preserving the larger, ancient interconnected system of water and land: Without the groundwater, the dunes themselves would not exist.

Hefley's colleagues don't need his support, they just don't want him to stand in the way.

But if Hefley stood atop the great dunes and looked across the vast natural network that surrounds them, he might have his soul so moved, and his mind so filled with new information, that he too would understand the urgency of saving the entire, magnificent natural treasure.



NATION & WORLD

Saturday, June 24, 2000 - © Post Register



Babbitt faces divided crowd on Craters expansion

By Kelly Teal/Associated Press

RUPERT, Idaho - Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt faced an evenly split crowd when he returned to Idaho for the third time Friday to meet with people about his proposal to expand the Craters of the Moon National Monument to include the Great Rift.

Ranchers, hunters and recreationists generally opposed the expansion while environmentalists, tourism promoters and political pragmatists backed it.

It was the first time Babbitt met with people outside the area of the monument, where ranchers seem to grudgingly accept the proposal, viewing it as inevitable.

The administration proposed having the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service manage the expanded area jointly. Livestock grazing would continue in the shrubstep of the Great Rift managed by the BLM, but the area would be withdrawn from mineral entry and leasing. Vehicles would be limited to designated roads and trails. But hunting would be regulated by the state, and predator control would continue.

Even though Babbitt responded to most questions, he failed to deal directly with concerns about the expansion's impact on hunting or just when a decision will come on the proposal.

"I can give you an outside date of Jan. 21, 2001," he said to laughter and some applause.

Babbitt's latest visit came just after the Western Legislative Forestry Task Force adopted a resolution calling for a strategy to reduce forest fuels that contribute to wildfires. The task force criticized the administration's increasing use of monument status to protect public lands. Members say the policy exacerbates the possibility of catastrophic blazes.

Sheep and cattle ranchers said they worry the constraints accompanying the proposed Craters expansion will cut off access to water and limit their ability to protect stock from predators. Babbitt acknowledged their concerns and promised to address them.

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Recreationists complained that access to that public land would be denied. And Clark Collins of the Blue Ribbon Coalition said the government was trying to fix problems that do not exist.

"Frankly, if you're going to regulate sportsmen's access, you need to involve sportsmen," Collins told Babbitt. "We don't want to be overlooked."

Babbitt said he would "serve you up some language" that Collins could live with.

Perhaps the most vocal opposition came from one man. He evoked a hearty round of applause and shouts as he called the proposed expansion another example of government tyranny.

"Tyranny comes in many forms; some of them look palatable," he said. "But to tell my teenage sons they can't ride their ATV's in the desert, that's tyranny. I suggest we give Bill Clinton's legacy the Idaho version of one hell of a Boston Tea Party."

Despite the opposition, Babbitt heard from a number of people who support his crusade to expand the boundaries of the national monument.

A representative of the Idaho Environmental Council agreed with Babbitt that the Great Rift needs protection "because not all threats to it are currently perceived. It's high time."

Former Gov. John Evans reiterated his support for the expansion and credited Babbitt with the good sense to come to Idaho to hear peoples' comments, rather than making a decision in the isolation of Washington, D.C.

"It will benefit the community and the state with increased tourism and economic activities," Evans said. "I'm a strong supporter of the concept you've got here, for the betterment of Idaho."

Dennis Wright, a Blaine County Commissioner, said the proposal is one "all reasonable people can buy into."

"We believe the action will enhance livability and benefit future generations," Wright said to a round of applause.

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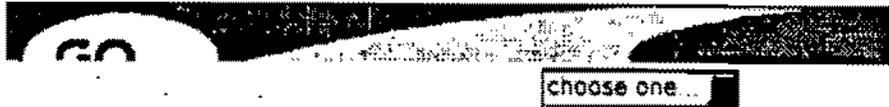
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Post Register

THE WEST

Saturday, June 24, 2000 - © Post Register



Interior Department gives conditional support for dunes

By Matt Kelley/Associated Press

WASHINGTON - Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt strongly supports transforming Colorado's Great Sand Dunes National Monument into a national park, an Interior Department official told a Senate panel Thursday.

But Babbitt would like several changes in a bill to create the park, said Stephen Saunders, a top Interior Department official in charge of parks. Still, the proposal "is an excellent example of what we can do when we work together," Saunders said.

The bill's sponsor, Colorado Republican Sen. Wayne Allard, said he did not think Saunders' concerns would scuttle the measure.

"This is a carefully crafted bill put together with a lot of interest groups in Colorado," Allard said. "We want to sit down and see where they (Interior Department officials) are coming from."

The proposal would expand the Great Sand Dunes National Monument near Alamosa by adding the adjacent 100,000-acre Baca Ranch. President Clinton's 2001 budget proposal includes \$8.5 million as a down payment for the ranch, which reportedly has an asking price of \$35 million.

The new national park would encompass 750-foot sand dunes, the streams and sand flats that help create them and surrounding forests and mountains. The Baca Ranch also includes 14,165-foot Kit Carson Mountain, one of two 14,000-foot Colorado peaks in private hands.

The dunes are formed from sand carved out of the mountains by the headwaters of the Rio Grande. Meandering streams carry that sand into large sand sheets, where the valley's winds blow it into huge, shifting dunes at the base of the Sangre de Cristo range.

If approved, the national park would be Colorado's fourth and the second to be created in the state in two years. Congress upgraded the Black Canyon of the Gunnison from a national

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monument to a national park last year.

Park supporters say it would boost tourism - the national monument gets about 300,000 visitors a year - and keep the region's water from being pumped over the mountains to cities in Colorado's Front Range or elsewhere. The Baca Ranch's current owners, the Stockman's Water Co., had announced plans to pump 150,000 acre-feet of water from the ranch each year but has not sought government approval.

Saunders said Babbitt would like to see 1,284 acres of the proposed park declared as wilderness. The areas are currently managed as wilderness, meaning that hiking, fishing and camping are allowed but logging, mining, bicycling and driving are not.

Saunders also said Babbitt was worried that water rights language in the bill could still allow the water under the Baca Ranch to be used outside the park. Allard said the water provisions were written with local, state and federal input.

"We don't want to bring something in that blows apart our coalition, but we'll take a closer look at it and see what their concerns are," Allard said.

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Idaho talks to Babbitt

Speakers voice suspicion, support, criticism of Craters plan

By N.S. Nokkenrved
Times-News writer

RUPERT — A proposed expansion of the Craters of the Moon National Monument could mean an addition to a state park at Box Canyon south of Wendell.

State Controller J.D. Williams Friday suggested to Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt a trade of state land in the expansion area for federal land at Box Canyon.

Babbitt was in town Friday — his third trip to Idaho this year — to discuss his April proposal for an expansion of Craters. Critics and supporters turned out for a public meeting in the auditorium of the East Minico Junior High School.

Along with suggesting the land swap, Williams asked for clear language that the Craters expansion would not include any implied water rights. Babbitt promised to work with department lawyers to ensure the expansion includes no additional or implied water rights.

Federal water rights are a potent political issue in Idaho, playing a key role in a recent Supreme Court race.

Others who spoke at the hearing voiced concerns about the process of creating or expanding a national monument, and about the effects of such an expansion on grazing, hunting and recreation.

"We're suspicious of what the government may have in store for us," Rupert sheep rancher Henry Etcheverry said. He and fellow ranchers are concerned about the land that lies inside the monument boundaries but which isn't on the lava flows. They're also concerned about continued access, predator control and noxious weed control.

Babbitt assured the ranchers that the red line on the map outlining the expanded monument would be for administrative purposes only.



Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt speaks to former Gov. John Evans after a public meeting at East Minico Junior High School in Rupert Friday.

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"With respect to livestock, the rules inside the red line would be the same as outside the line," Babbitt said.

The purpose of the line would be to delineate the area that would be closed to mining and land that could not be sold out of federal ownership, he said.

State BLM Director Martha Hahn said grazing permits in the area would be managed by a single district.

Inside the monument, federal officials also would exercise closer control over off-highway vehicle use, limiting them to existing roads and trails -- in anticipation of increased use that would come with a monument designation, Babbitt said.

Clark Collins of the Blue Ribbon Coalition said he resented the implication that off-highway vehicle use needs to be controlled.

"Our concern is that our recreation interests will be overlooked," he said.

Jerry Jayne of the Idaho Environmental Council said he has been involved in efforts to expand the Craters of the Moon for about 30 years. He supports protection of the area's unique geological features.

Perhaps there are no imminent threats, but not all future threats are obvious today, he said. An expansion proposal in the 1980s had little local opposition. But Congress has taken no action, he said.

"I'm glad you're doing it," Jayne said. "Our delegation hasn't done it."

A few people were critical of President Clinton and the federal government in general. And a number of people criticized the process by which Babbitt is proposing to expand the monument -- from its current size of about 54,000 acres to about 750,000 acres. Some have suggested the change should involve a longer, harder look by Congress.

But Congress has had a lot of time to look at the proposal already, supporters of the proposal say.

If Babbitt decides to move ahead, he'll refine the proposal and make a recommendation to President Clinton. Clinton then could designate an expanded monument under the authority of the Antiquities Act.

Some say the process is merely an end run around Congress. But Babbitt disagreed.

In 1906, Congress gave then-President Teddy Roosevelt authority to designate "objects of historic or scientific interest" on federal land as national monuments.

Since then the act has been used by every president except Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan and George Bush. Though Congress has tried, it has never taken the president's authority away, Babbitt said.

"Congress could do it, but people don't want them to, because presidents have used it to benefit the people of America," he said.

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Congress also has the authority to designate national monuments and has done so 29 times. And it has the authority to abolish national monuments but has redesignated only about 5,000 acres, according to The Wilderness Society.

Babbitt promised to make public his recommendation to the president.

Former Gov. John Evans, a Burley Democrat, thanked Babbitt for coming to Idaho to listen to people's concerns.

"He could have done it in Washington, D.C., but instead he came out here to listen to local users of the land," Evans said. The monument expansion would be "for the betterment of Idaho, the betterment of its communities and for the citizens involved."

Times-News writer N.S. Nokkenved can be reached at 733-0931, Ext. 237, or by e-mail niels@magicvalley.com

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IDAHO

Babbitt says Craters expansion likely

Interior secretary to visit Idaho again, then make decision

By Frederick Schmalzer
Special News Service

WASHINGTON — Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, who will make a return trip to Idaho on Thursday, said he is likely to recommend that President Clinton expand Craters of the Moon National Monument.

"Unless I hear something I have missed on previous trips, I'm leaning toward a recommendation," Babbitt said Tues-

day during an interview in his Washington office.

Babbitt is scheduled to arrive in Boise on Thursday evening and will hold a public meeting Friday in Pocatello.

Babbitt is leading the Clinton administration's push to protect scenic landscapes across the West, vistas threatened by urban sprawl and commercial development as the region's population swells.

Wishing a 1988 law that allows presidents to single-handedly set aside public lands, Clinton has issued or expanded nine federal monuments in the West this year alone, establishing a land-preservation legacy

that rivals that of Theodore Roosevelt.

But Clinton's actions have raised the ire of Western lawmakers, who accuse him of creating an end-run around Congress.

An issue in Idaho is a vast area of hardtop lava covering some 10,000 square miles in the south-central part of the state, a place where unique volcanic outcrops have left a desolate landscape that evokes an eerie noonscape.

Currently, 83 square miles constitute the Craters of the Moon National Monument, established in 1924 by President Calvin Coolidge.

Babbitt is considering expanding the area under federal protection and has met with area members to craft the general boundaries for the monument.

This week's trip, Babbitt's third to Idaho in recent months, is aimed at hearing from people who live near the southern reaches of the area.

Expansion of the monument, he said, will protect the unique landscape and could bring economic benefits to small communities that have seen visitors decline due to Yellowstone National Park.

But Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, whose congressional dis-

trict includes the Craters of the Moon region, said the administration should seek even more public input before it acts.

"This expansion of the Craters of the Moon may be an appropriate thing to do, and I'm not necessarily opposed to it," Simpson said, "but I don't want people to feel this is imposed down their throats."

And, Simpson argued, the Craters of the Moon area's social facts impede development therein.

"If there's not an obvious threat, the proposal should go through Congress," Simpson said. "It's more than willing to introduce legislation, so we can

have a debate on this."

Simpson has introduced a bill that would require congressional approval or rejection within one year of a president establishing a national monument.

The efforts of Simpson and other Western Republicans to curb the president's power on national monuments are not likely to become law this year.

Just last week, the House protected funding for new national monuments, voting 243-177 to kill a measure in an Interior Department spending bill that would have barred the agency from planning and managing any of the monuments designated this year.



NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

Summer 2000

PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

CPLP Stewardship Initiatives

"Canyons of the Ancients"

MONDAY, JUNE 19, 2000

The Prospects for Community-Based Stewardship

In May 1999, Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt came to Southwest Colorado to announce an initiative for enhanced protection of 164,000 acres of archaeological resources on BLM land in western Montezuma and Dolores counties. Following proclamation of the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument in Utah, the Secretary's announcement touched off a firestorm of controversy over how to respond to his challenge.

During summer 1999, a Working Group was appointed, which conducted six public meetings and issued a report on community input. In February 2000, legislation based on the Working Group report was introduced in the House and Senate to create the "Canyons of the Ancients National Conservation Area." In March, Senate hearings on the NCA legislation were abruptly canceled, largely due to student and persistent opposition by a property rights group who argued that NCA legislation was caving in to a conspiracy to kick multiple-use off public land and seize private property, and that it would be better to fight a National Monument Proclamation in court. In April, Secretary Babbitt, in a telephone call to the Montezuma County Commissioners, stated that he was forwarding a proposal to proclaim Canyon of the Ancients National Monument to President Clinton.

Given the reality that this episode began with top-down intervention, resulted in the proposal and withdrawal of Congressional legislation, and appears to be headed for a Presidential proclamation, what are the prospects that community-based stewardship can be an effective approach to the care and management of this landscape? Not only do the ingredients exist to develop a community stewardship strategy, but such an approach is the only way to ensure a future of productive harmony between contemporary uses of this landscape and extensive remains of the Ancestral Puebloans that inhabited the area before migrating out during the 1300s to be absorbed into other southwestern Pueblo communities.

The consensus in the Working Group Report, forged out of the stormy public meetings during the summer of 1999, goes beyond an inventory of concerns about multiple use, freedom of access and exploration, the protection of

private property rights and the sustainability of the local economy and tax base. The report also confirms the need to protect some of the highest concentration of archaeological sites known in the country from vandalism and unintentional damage from rising levels of recreational use.

The Working Group Report states that funding levels to BLM for managing this area are "woefully inadequate," but suggests that additional funding and staffing should support a management plan that has community stewardship as its centerpiece, rather than as an afterthought. Additional staffing should emphasize skills in volunteer coordination, recreation management, archaeological interpretation and visitor education. Building on volunteers who have already adopted sites, and tightening up communication networks with horseback and bike riders, hikers, grazers, oil companies and adjacent landowners is the only way to have enough eyes to watch over this vast and rugged area and respond effectively to threats to the resource.

Some people who participated in the public discussions emphasized the intrinsic value of the archaeological resources. Others primarily value the wide range of uses, rights, and freedom of access to this treasured landscape. People with both of these perspectives share a common interest in making sure that the archaeological resources and the landscape that has supported thousands of years of habitation are well cared for. The Working Group Report called for an advisory council made up of the full range of these interests to develop and help implement a community-stewardship oriented management plan.

The cliff dwellers of Mesa Verde National Park, which made the archaeological resources of Southwest Colorado internationally renowned, represent the last and most defensive stages of Ancestral Puebloan settlement which today are tightly managed by the Park Service. The Canyons of the Ancients, which cover both public and private land, supported more extensive and long-standing networks of extended family agricultural settlements. It is appropriate that the responsibility for care of the Canyons of the Ancients should be substantially vested in today's inhabitants of this landscape. Being able to extend this trust is the challenge to the federal government; living up to this trust is the challenge to the local community.

—Michael Preston, Associate Director OCS/FLC
Coordinator, Montezuma County Federal Lands Program

Valley lawmakers lose fight on sequoia monument plans

By Michael Doyle
Bee Washington bureau

WASHINGTON - Planning for the new Giant Sequoia National Monument can continue unhindered, after House action Thursday.

In a striking defeat for San Joaquin Valley lawmakers, an alliance of East Coast Republicans and most Democrats made sure that a \$14.6 billion Interior Department spending bill will permit continued planning for new monuments established this year. Those monuments include the 328,000-acre Great Sequoia National Monument, designated by President Clinton in April.

"This is a gift to our nation, just as Yosemite was a gift to our nation," said Rep. George Miller of Martinez, the top Democrat on the House Resources Committee. "America's wild lands and great environmental features should be protected."

By a 243-177 vote, the House eliminated a provision challeng-

ing the sequoia monument and a half-dozen others established this year. The eliminated provision would have prohibited federal spending on design, planning and new management. Forest Service officials would instead have managed the land as if it hadn't been designated as a monument.

The defeated measure would have stopped a new Giant Sequoia scientific advisory board and the drafting of a long-term management plan designed to protect 34 sequoia groves. Clinton administration officials had warned of a veto if Congress retained the prohibition on monument spending.

"This would put lands in national monuments in a state of limbo," said Rep. Sherwood Boehlert, R-N.Y. "Who could possibly gain from keeping lands in this kind of halfway-house condition?"

Feministic Valley lawmakers weren't active participants in the hourlong debate Thursday. Still, the stricken monument provision was a way to communicate displeasure over Clinton's unilateral

establishment of the Giant Sequoia monument.

"It's always good to put people on notice that there's dissatisfaction with the monument status," said Rep. George Radanovich, R-Mariposa.

Using the sweeping powers of the 1906 Antiquities Act, Clinton has established nine national monuments without having to go through Congress.

"I agree with many that the sequoia groves are national treasures that merit special care and attention," said Rep. Cal Dooley, D-Hanford, but "my vote today reflects frustration with the way the sequoia decision was made."

Dooley and Radanovich joined with Sacramento-area Republican Reps. John Doolittle of Rocklin, Doug Ose of Sacramento and Richard Pombo of Tracy in voting for the monument funding ban. Those voting against the measure included Reps. Wally Herger, R-Marysville, and Robert Matsui, D-Sacramento.

As in past environmental con-



George Miller

The Giant Sequoia monument "is a gift to our nation," says the Martinez Democrat.

troversies, Dooley and the Valley Republicans were facing not only the administration but a Boehlert-led team of moderate East Coast GOP members, whose states have little federally owned land. Previous legislative efforts challenging Clinton's use of the Antiquities Act have likewise failed.

Congress, however, isn't through with the monument issue.

House members included a provision in the Interior Department spending bill encouraging favorable consideration by the Forest Service for economic development requests from "communities adversely impacted" by the Giant Sequoia decision. Those communities include the small town of Dinuba, where Sequoia Forest Industries has already announced plans to close its sawmill and lay off 105 workers.

Monumental feud brewing

To many Coloradans, Vermillion Basin is undiscovered country. It is an enormous, lonesome spread of U.S. Bureau of Land Management property, sitting north of Rangely and east of the Green River's famed Canyon of Lodore. Magnificent wildlife herds roam its wide valleys, stark bluffs and rugged canyons.

Certainly, the Vermillion area represents an important grassland ecosystem. Sadly, it also may stir a needless political feud.

In recent months, U.S. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt has asked President Clinton to declare several new national monuments throughout the West. But local residents and some members of Congress complain the process short-circuits public input.

To his credit, Babbitt usually has sought public comment before seeking presidential action. Babbitt also has waited until it became clear that Congress would not protect ecosystems, landscapes or other resources.

For example, in southwest Colorado, Babbitt didn't seek a presidential order creating the new Canyons of the Ancients National Monument until congressional efforts to protect the area's archaeological treasures withered.

And Babbitt hasn't yet pushed for White House action on federal lands west of Grand Junction, because U.S. Rep. Scott McInnis, a Republican

who represents the Western Slope, is diligently working on legislation to protect the area as the Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area.

Now comes word that the National Wildlife Federation, normally a moderate environmental group, may ask Babbitt to ask Clinton to declare Vermillion Basin a national monument.

It's unclear what problem the federation thinks a monument declaration would solve. Regardless of what label gets slapped on a parcel of public land, the most important consideration is how the resources — wildlife, vegetation, landscapes or historic treasures — are being managed and protected.

In any case, the group's tactics could create political trouble. The federation hasn't built support for the idea among northwest Colorado residents. And local resentment could lead to congressional opposition.

By pushing for presidential fiat, the federation could, in fact, upend public input. An open, deliberative congressional process, such as the one that McInnis is using, would be a far better approach than an administrative declaration.

The federation promised to reveal a detailed proposal later this month. But by not generating local and congressional support, the group already may have undermined what otherwise could be a worthy push to protect public lands.

6/15/00

The Denver Post



NEWS SUMMARY

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JUN 16 2000

FRIDAY, JUNE 16, 2000

THE WASHINGTON POST

House Protects Monument Funds *Logging Interests Sought to Strip Money From Interior*

By ERIC PLANIN
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Clinton administration and environmentalists unexpectedly thwarted an effort in the House yesterday to bar the use of federal funds for designing and managing land designated by the president as national monuments.

In a sign of the potential potency of environmental issues this election year, the House voted 243 to 177 to kill a provision of the Interior Department spending bill prohibiting the agency from designing, planning or managing any national monuments designated since the beginning of the year. Forty-six Republicans, moderates and conservatives alike, broke ranks to support the president.

The issue has gained force since Clinton designated eight new national monuments and expanded an existing one since January. The monuments cover more than 1 million acres in Arizona, California, Colorado, Oregon and Washington state; the designation gives the government more leverage in protecting the areas from vandalism, new mining or logging activities.

Western Republicans have angrily complained that Clinton has used the 1906 Antiquities Act to engineer an unprecedented federal "land grab," locking up vast areas of federally owned land that face no real threat from development or degradation. Republican Gov. George W. Bush has made Clinton's conduct an issue in the presidential campaign.

"This administration is involved in a desperate grab of our federal lands," declared Rep. Helen Chenoweth-Hage (R-Idaho). "The biggest grab since the invasion of Poland."

But the administration and its allies charged that congressional Republicans were attempting to undermine long-standing presidential authority by nullifying recent monument designations. Rep. Norman D. Dicks (D-Wash.) argued that the restrictions would not prevent the president from making future designations—only keep the Interior Department from properly managing monuments already selected.

"This would be a bad thing for not only this president, which a lot of people in this chamber don't seem to like, but for the future president who may want to protect an important monument for the country," Dicks said.

Clinton already has threatened to veto the \$14.6 billion Interior spending measure because of a number of provisions. The House yesterday also voted to delete another section opposed by Clinton that would have slowed government efforts to tighten land use restrictions on federal lands along the Columbia River basin in the Northwest.

The vote on monuments highlighted a traditional split within the GOP between conservative western state Republicans vigorously opposed to federal land-management policies and moderates from the Northeast and Midwest closely allied with environmentalists. Yesterday's debate at one point pitted conservative Rep. James V. Hansen (R-Utah), the leader of the effort to block new national monuments, against Rep. Sherwood L. Boehlert (R-N.Y.), a leading moderate and environmental defender.

Environmentalists hailed yesterday's action but noted that they are facing scores of anti-environment provisions in other spending bills pending in the House and Senate. Moreover, Sen. Larry Craig (Idaho), a GOP leader, is pressing for passage of legislation that would require the president to obtain congressional and local approval for future National Monument designations.

"We will have big fights in the Senate," said Merljinda Pierce, Washington representative for the Sierra Club. "I hope the vote for Dicks sends a strong signal that people are willing to fight these riders."

The House worked into the night to attempt to complete work on the Interior bill, which would essentially freeze spending for the National Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service at this year's level and provide slight increases for the Indian Health Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Everglades restoration. Overall spending is \$1.8 billion below the president's request.

"We're very pleased that this Congress has chosen to recognize the president's prerogative to protect critical lands," said Linda Ricci, a spokesman for the White House budget office. "But overall, the bill still has real problems."



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The Denver Post

Canyons of the Ancients named a national monument

By Mike Soraghan and Electa Oraper
Denver Post Staff Writers

June 10, 2000 - WASHINGTON - President Clinton turned 164,000 acres of relic-filled desert canyons in southwestern Colorado into a national monument Friday, continuing his push to increase protection for federal lands before he leaves office next year.

But Republican leaders in Congress are pushing in the other direction, trying to block any federal money from going to the new monuments. That's setting the stage for a budget fight in Congress next week.

Clinton created the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument out of land already controlled by the Bureau of Land Management, commonly called the McElmo Dome. The land is 9 miles west of Mesa Verde National Park.

Admirers call the land a treasure trove of Indian artifacts, with the highest-known density of archaeological sites in the country. The resources include kivas and cliff dwellings from Native American settlements.

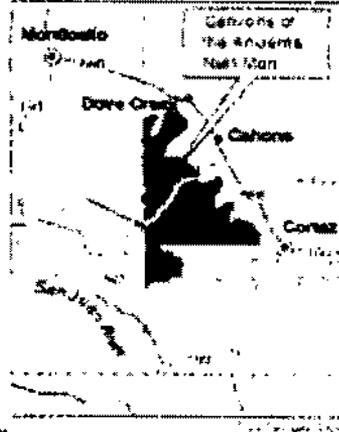
Administration officials say the area needs protection from vandalism and increasing tourism.

"The growth of population and tourism in this area definitely is threatening degradation and vandalism of these sites," George Frampton, acting chair of Clinton's Council on Environmental Quality, said at a White House briefing.

Clinton also created three other monuments on federal lands in Western states Friday: 135,000 acres of the Ironwood Forest west of Tucson; 52,000 acres in the Cascade-Siskiyou region of southern Oregon; and 200,000 acres along 51 miles of the Columbia River inside Washington state's Hanford Nuclear Reservation. With the designations, the White House said, Clinton has protected more than 3 million acres as national monuments, more than any other president.

It's official

President Clinton on Friday proclaimed the Canyons of the Ancients site in southwestern Colorado a national monument. Not everyone's happy about it.



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At Canyons of the Ancients, recreational off-road mountain biking and motorized uses would be banned. But drilling for oil, gas and carbon dioxide would continue until the current resources are tapped out. That could take 30 to 40 years. Exploratory drilling would not be allowed.

But some residents are concerned the government might try to forcibly acquire private land within monument borders.

"There are some big question marks that leave me quite troubled," Montezuma County commission Chair Gene Story said Friday.

He was disturbed that Clinton's proclamation didn't guarantee that the federal government will abstain from taking land from unwilling sellers. About 30 families have in-holdings, some up to 1,000 acres in size. Those families are worried that, even if they hold onto their property, they might not have unfettered access to it, Story said.

Administration officials stressed that none of the conditions on the land apply to private in-holdings, but they did not address how future acquisitions would be handled.

Story also questioned language in the proclamation that said the Bureau of Land Management will work with state authorities to obtain water needed for monument purposes. "There isn't any water out there" to speak of, he said.

Earlier this year, U.S. Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, R-Colo., introduced a plan to protect the McElmo Dome site as a national conservation area but dropped it less than two months later, blaming a lack of local consensus.

Campbell said Friday that Clinton is abusing his authority and engaging in a "frantic war on the West" during his last year in office.

"He has proven once again that governing by imperial decree is a lousy way to run a democracy," Campbell said.

U.S. Rep. Scott McInnis, R-Grand Junction, shared that criticism, but said he would not support efforts to block funding for the monument.

"That's the worst thing that can happen," said McInnis spokesman Josh Penry, "to force a monument on these people, then not give BLM the money to manage the land."

The provision blocking funding for new monuments was requested by U.S. Rep. James Hansen, R-Utah, who is frustrated with what he says is Clinton's abuse of power.

"It's the only control we have," said Allen Freemyer, a Hansen staffer.

Hansen's provision is contained in the proposed Interior Department budget, scheduled for a House vote next week. The administration is not yet threatening a veto of the Interior

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Department budget if the provision stays in, but the White House is clearly alarmed.

"I think this one sticks up pretty high on the radar screen," Frampton said.

U.S. Rep. Mark Udall, D-Boulder, may try to remove the provision during next week's expected budget battle.

Some local residents contend the monument designation is simply a federal land grab.

"We're going to keep fighting until there's no fight left in us," said McElmo Canyon rancher Chester Tozer, spokesman for the Southwest Colorado Landowners Association. The group is lobbying Congress to revoke the designation and has threatened to sue.

"Meaningful protection" But conservationists cheered Clinton's action, saying they got most of what they wanted.

"The administration has given meaningful protection with the monument designation," said Colorado Environmental Coalition spokesman Jeff Wideman.

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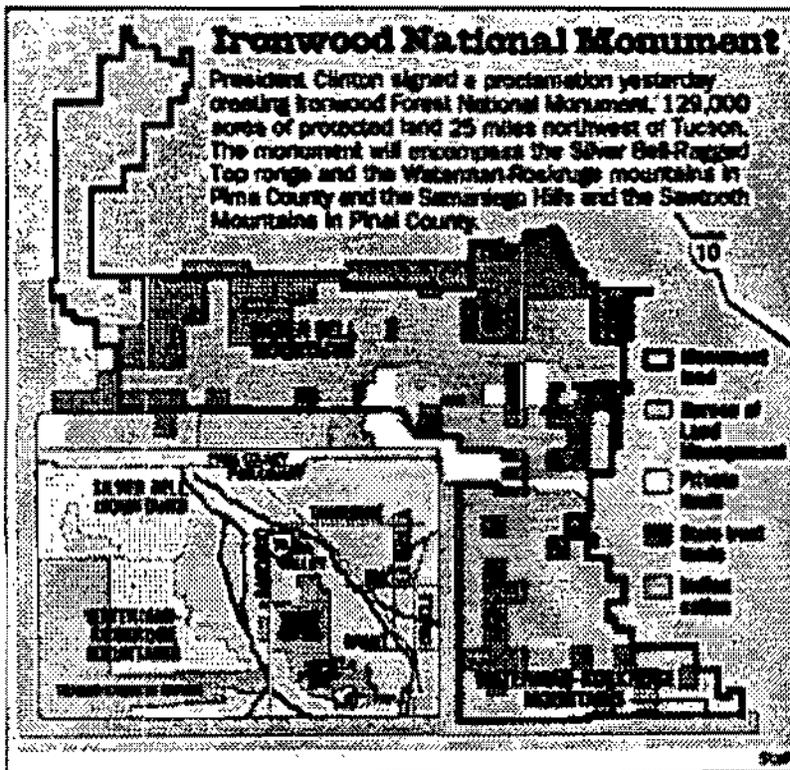
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Saturday, 10 June 2000

President quickly OKs Ironwood Monument

Clinton orders protection for 129,000 acres, but controversy will continue



By Tony Davis and Maureen O'Connell
ARIZONA DAILY STAR

What's in the monument

President Clinton yesterday capped one of the quickest debates ever over

* Silver Bell Mountains: Contain at least 675 animal

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one of the quickest debates ever over federal land protection in Arizona by proclaiming a new Ironwood Forest National Monument for Tucson's far Northwest Side.

Less than three months after Pima County asked for creation of the monument, Clinton used an executive order to set aside 129,000 acres of federal land in northern Pima County and southern Pinal County to save the ironwood tree and its surrounding desert ecology.

The land in question includes low-lying hills and rugged, rocky mountains, stark desert cliffs and densely packed stands of saguaros and ironwoods.

It was one of four monuments in the West that Clinton created yesterday with the controversial, but so far legally unchallenged, tool of setting them aside under the federal Antiquities Act.

His order came less than 90 days after Pima County's Board of Supervisors started pushing for the monument, and barely a week after Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt proposed it. With a pen stroke, Clinton has forever barred this area to future mining claims and off-road vehicle use.

While the U.S. Bureau of Land Management must draw up a plan for its operation, its officials have already said grazing will continue in the monument area for the foreseeable future.

And while the federal land was already barred from development, Clinton's action laid the groundwork for preserving an additional 61,000 acres of state and private land within monument boundaries. Those lands won't join the monument until the federal government buys or trades for them.

Environmentalists and county officials wanted the monument designation to protect the land from urban growth.

and plant species, including bighorn sheep and 63 other mammal species and 57 bird species. More than 200 Hohokam-era archaeological sites.

* **Sawtooth Mountains:** Contain 209 plant species, a bighorn sheep herd, desert tortoise, numerous lizard species, deer, coyote, fox, burrowing owls, antelope, jack rabbits and 18 archaeological sites.

* **Ranching:** Estimated six to 15 ranchers graze at least 1,000 cattle in the monument area.

* **Minerals and development:** State Land Department estimates that its 54,000 acres within the monument boundaries are worth \$50 million for mining and development rights.

* **Two areas on National Register of Historic Places:** Los Robles Archaeological District and Cocoraque Butte Archaeological District.

* **Remnants of the Mission Santa Ana:** Built in 1811 for the Papago Indians by Father Juan Bautista Lorens, priest who also completed construction of Mission San Xavier del Bac in 1797. Last Spanish mission built in Pimeria Alta, the upper region where the Pima Indians historically lived.

Sharon Bronson, supervisors' chairwoman, said she was surprised at the swiftness of Clinton's action but is pleased at the outcome.

"It will be a keystone for the success of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan," said Bronson, referring to the still-brewing county proposal to save more than 400,000 acres to protect endangered-species habitat.

The monument arrives three years after county Parks and Recreation officials first discussed protecting much of this area as part of a mountain park system. A formal park-preserve proposal surfaced in early 1998. The early drafts of the Sonoran Desert plan proposed setting aside parks in the Waterman-Roskrige Mountains in northern Pima County and the Sawtooth Mountains in southern Pinal County.

The monument has drawn strong support from environmental groups, Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum scientists, some neighborhood groups living near the Silver Bell Mountains, the Tohono O'odham Nation and the Pinal County Board of Supervisors.

But its future isn't guaranteed. U.S. Rep. Jim Kolbe has strongly opposed it, largely because the Clinton administration bypassed Congress in creating it. Kolbe supports a budget proposal that would forbid the administration from spending money on designing, operating or drawing up a management plan for the monument.

Kolbe wasn't available for comment yesterday. His press secretary, Keith Rosenblum, expressed concern that Clinton moved so fast to create the monument.

"There was not really any public participation," Kolbe, a Republican, said last week. "There was a study that came out a few months ago stating that this was an important ecosystem, but that doesn't mean we had to make it a national monument soon thereafter."

The administration has repeatedly done end-runs around Congress on monument issues because of the difficulty of getting preservation proposals through the business-friendly Republican Congress.

Until yesterday, Clinton had created five other national monuments, including two in Arizona, without congressional approval. With the four new monuments, Clinton said yesterday that he has protected more land as national monuments in the lower 48 states than any other president.

The three others named yesterday are:

* Washington's Hanford Reach, a 51-mile stretch of salmon-rich

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waters and sloping sandstone bluffs.

* Oregon's Cascade-Siskiyou, including Soda Mountain and nearby lands where plant and animal life are abundant.

* The Canyons of the Ancients, nine miles west of Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado.

If Ironwood Monument funds are barred, "We will be in tough shape," said Tony Herrell, assistant field manager of Tucson's BLM office. "It will make it very hard to manage."

The bureau will need 25 new staffers in the coming year to prepare the monument's first management plan and operate it, Herrell said.

The monument will have no formal visitor center. Officials soon will open a small visitor contact station near Avra Valley and Power Line roads to offer information about the monument to hikers and others. The monument will also interpret the area's mining history, which dates back 150 years, he said.

The government will try to buy or trade for the private and state land over the coming years, and make its top priority the lands most at risk of development, Herrell said.

"It's a lot of change, and it's very fast. I'm kind of taking it all in, and I'm not sure how to react," the BLM official said. "But I think the area is very scenic, and I like the fact that a lot of different groups have come together behind it."

But ranching is a potential conflict. Steve Lehning, a rancher who owns 1,000 acres within the monument boundary, teamed with five other ranchers as the Avra Valley Silver Bell Conservation Alliance when the ironwood proposal first surfaced. The group wants a guarantee that it has a future on the land, where ranchers graze a total of about 1,000 cattle on private and public property.

Carolyn Campbell, director of the Tucson-based Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection, was noncommittal on this issue, saying the pros and cons of grazing will be debated as the plan is put together.

"I don't know if grazing can continue at all on public lands, particularly riparian areas. But I think this process will be a place where we can find that out," Campbell said.

Regarding her coalition's stance, she added, "If the ranchers are talking about low-impact and sustainable ranching, I think it's up to them to ... prove they can do that."

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Lehning asserted that ranchers have been good stewards for more than a century. Just that the land is considered worthy of preservation proves that grazing has not wrecked it, he said.

Ranchers and environmentalists alike are pleased that the monument status secures some protection from urban sprawl but worry about the potential for damage that comes with visitor traffic.

If the plan nudges out viable grazing, Lehning said he would be tempted to sell his acreage to the "developer who comes through with the biggest pocketbook," since its seclusion could prove a magnet for luxury homes.

"If there are so many restrictions that we can't make a living as cattle ranchers anymore, what other options do we have?" he asked.



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Friday, June 9, 2000, 12:00 a.m. Pacific

Clinton to preserve Hanford Reach

by [Kevin Galvin](#)
Seattle Times Washington bureau

WASHINGTON - President Clinton today will designate 200,000 acres of Eastern Washington sagebrush country around the Hanford Reach as a national monument to protect the last free-flowing stretch of the Columbia River from future development, administration officials said yesterday.

News of the announcement, which officials were working to finalize before Vice President Al Gore visited the Tri-cities area this morning, drew praise from environmentalists.

But Eastern Washington officials condemned the move as a federal land-grab that runs counter to local public opinion.

There are 200,000 people in Grant, Adams and Benton counties, "most of whom are opposed to this designation," said Grant County Commissioner Deborah Kay Moore.

The 51-mile stretch of the Columbia around Hanford was never dammed because it runs alongside the Hanford nuclear reservation, which was a top-secret federal facility until recent years. As the last undammed portion of the Columbia above Bonneville Dam, it supports a healthy run of wild chinook salmon that, in turn, sustains tribal, commercial and sport fishing.

Fisheries authorities consider the reach to be a biological



Tom Rees © The Seattle Times

The Columbia River flows past the majestic white bluffs of Hanford Reach.

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model that could be critical to restoring the salmon runs up and down the river. Ancient Native-American cultural and religious sites also are found along the stretch of river.

"This will be a tremendous action that saves a regionally and nationally significant treasure," Bill Arthur, the Sierra Club's director in the Northwest, said of the monument designation. "It allows for protection of a bigger part of this incredible landscape that you could not have achieved otherwise."

The Hanford Reach national monument will be double the size of the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, at 110,000 acres, and almost as big as Mount Rainier National Park at 235,000 acres.

Officially, White House and Gore-campaign spokesmen would say only that the vice president plans an "environmental event" when he ventures out to Eastern Washington.

But administration officials speaking only on condition of anonymity told The Seattle Times that Gore, the Democrats' likely presidential nominee, would highlight the decision when he visits the Washington State University campus in Richland and cruises the river by boat with Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash.

Gore also was expected to tout the creation of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument around Soda Mountain in Oregon.

Murray, whose father grew up in the Tri-Cities and who vacationed in the environs of the river as a young girl, has made protection of the Hanford Reach a top priority. She said she hoped the president's designation would preserve both the area's wildlife and its history.

"When they make the announcement," Murray said yesterday, "it will really change the Northwest view, the nation's view of this beautiful area, and it will make it a destination.

"It's been a lot of work by a lot of people and it truly, to me, is a historic moment," she said.

Local officials, however, see the designation as a political power play by the Clinton White House. By approving the Hanford Reach as a national monument, the president does not need to rely on support from a Republican Congress.

"We have been advocating shared management - state, local, tribal and federal," said Benton County Commissioner Max Benitz. "Now local citizens are being excluded from the process. I call that dictatorship."

Benitz said he and others have been denied a chance to

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meet with Gore during his visit today.

County officials support preservation of the river and of the spectacular white bluffs that line much of the north shore. But they argue that some level of irrigated farming should be allowed in the arid, sagebrush area across from the Hanford nuclear reservation.

Local and federal officials and citizens have negotiated for several years, trying to find a compromise on how to protect the area and who should control it. But Murray asked the administration to step in earlier this year when talks broke down.

Yesterday, Sen. Slade Gorton, R-Wash., criticized the administration's action. In a conference call with reporters organized by the presidential campaign of Texas Gov. George W. Bush, Gorton chided Gore and accused him of interfering in local affairs. He noted that it was Gore's first visit to the eastern part of the state in years.

Clinton's monument designation for Hanford is likely to become a flashpoint in this year's elections.

In his re-election campaign, Gorton has sought to strengthen his backing in Eastern Washington by arguing that proposals to breach dams on the Lower Snake River and preserve the Reach are proof of the federal government's top-down intrusion in local affairs. And many residents have long complained that the federal government already controls too much land in that part of the state.

"The only justification for unilateral action would be an immediate threat to the Reach," Gorton said, noting that the Department of Energy still controls the area and that development is not an immediate concern. "The only emergency is that the president is going to be out of office soon."

Clinton has used the Antiquities Act of 1906 to protect more land in the continental United States than any other president except Theodore Roosevelt. This year alone, he has set aside 3 million acres through the expansion or creation of national monuments, including the Grand Canyon and the Sequoias in California.

"The president has done this as a last resort when Congress has failed to act to protect pristine national resources," said one administration official who confirmed the decision.

Clinton hadn't signed the Hanford declaration before he departed on a 36-hour trip to Japan and back for the funeral of former Prime Minister Obuchi, officials said. He was due back in Washington last night and expected to give final approval to the Hanford and Soda Mountain declarations upon his return.

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Jim Watts, a local union official who had been tapped to broker a compromise between Tri-cities community leaders, environmentalists and tribal leaders, applauded Clinton's expected move.

"The community had their chance, and unfortunately they didn't take advantage of it," he said. "It's a unique, extremely unique piece of property. It is the last true wild section where salmon are spawning in successful numbers."

Watts also said he hoped the added attention because of the Reach's new status would focus public attention on the effort to finance cleanup of the Hanford nuclear site.

The town of Hanford was evacuated in World War II to make way for a top-secret nuclear-research facility. Senator Murray's father was wounded in the war, and he returned to find the town transformed. He told her preserving the area would be an appropriate gesture of thanks to the community.

"He said to me that he thought it was really wonderful, that I was giving back something to a community that had given so much," Murray said.

But Moore, the Grant County commissioner, offered a different perspective on that history. When the government took over the land in 1943, it paid "literally pennies" to the landowners, but promised it would be returned to farmers when it was no longer needed, she said.

"If you make a promise," she asked, "shouldn't you follow through?"

Times staff reporter Ross Anderson contributed to this report.

Kevin Galvin's phone message number is 206-164-2772.

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seattle **PI.com** Northwest

Clinton to announce monument for Hanford Reach

Gore tours area today; 3 others will be designated

Friday, June 9, 2000

By JOEL CONNELLY and CHARLES POPE
 SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER REPORTERS

As Vice President Al Gore tours the Hanford Reach this morning, President Clinton will designate a national monument along the 51-mile undammed stretch of Columbia River in Eastern Washington, sources in Washington, D.C., confirmed last night.

The president will use his executive authority to create a 200,000-acre Hanford Reach National Monument, along with a Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in the Soda Mountain area of south-central Oregon.

Clinton is expected to establish a Canyon of the Ancients National Monument in Colorado, protecting America's highest known density of archeological sites, and an Ironwood Forest National Monument in uplands of Arizona's Sonoran Desert.

Gore is scheduled to take a boat trip on the Hanford Reach and later deliver a speech on environmental preservation at the Tri-Cities campus of Washington State University.

The Clinton administration has moved in less than three weeks to resolve a two-decade controversy over the free-flowing river, its dramatic bluffs, and wild shrub and grassland habitat flanking what was one of America's great nuclear weapons manufacturing plants.

The Hanford Reach is the spawning ground of the last great wild salmon runs of the Columbia River. It is the only non-reservoirized stretch of river remaining between Bonneville Dam, east of Portland, and the Canadian border.

Sen. Party Murray, D-Wash., long an advocate of protecting the reach and adjoining wildlands on the 560-square-mile Hanford Nuclear Reservation, would not confirm Clinton's pending action.

"I will say this: We will see from the secretary of the interior and the Clinton administration a commitment to making sure local people have a say in writing the management plan for the reach," Murray said.

Republican Sen. Slade Gorton yesterday tried to upstage Gore by predicting that the vice president would announce the national monument

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predicting that the vice president would announce the national monument during his three-city swing through the state today.

Gorton spoke to regional reporters in a telephone briefing set up by the campaign of Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush. He argued that the reach is not threatened, and that the administration's only urgency is that Clinton is about to leave office.

"This administration is doing things to people rather than with people. . . . Instead of working with the local people, the administration says, 'We don't care what you want, we're going to do it.'" Gorton said in a separate interview.

The designation "is designed more to get the approval of The New York Times than anybody else," Gorton added.

Clinton has used the 1906 Antiquities Act to designate a series of national monuments in the American West. The law was first used by President Theodore Roosevelt early in the 20th century to protect such places as the Grand Canyon and the heart of Washington's Olympic Mountains. Both areas are now national parks.

Earlier this year, Clinton moved to protect wild canyonlands of the Arizona Strip, north of the Grand Canyon, and giant Sequoia trees in California.

The Hanford Reach has remained natural largely because, in 1942, the great bend of the Columbia River north of Richland was taken over by the Manhattan Project to make plutonium for nuclear weapons.

Eight shut-down nuclear reactors sit along the south and west banks of the river, a legacy of Hanford's four decades in bomb making.

The wilder north and east sides of the Columbia River are marked by the White Bluffs of Hanford. The undammed river is a major bird habitat, home to a big fall chinook salmon run, and contains important Indian archeological sites.

The Hanford Reach, and the Wahluke Slope just to the north, have seen a succession of development proposals in the last quarter-century.

The Army Corps of Engineers campaigned in the 1970s to dam the river for reservoirs. In the 1980s, the Corps proposed to dredge a navigation channel down the middle of the river to make Wenatchee a barge port.

Local officials in Grant County have long supported some amount of agricultural development on the Wahluke Slope, a chunk of the Hanford reservation now managed as a national wildlife refuge.

The Interior Department began to examine preservation of the reach in 1979, even as the Corps continued to lobby for damming and dredging. The campaign for its preservation began in earnest in 1995 when Murray proposed legislation to give the area federal protection under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

As he toured the river last month, U.S. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, himself a geologist, voiced alarm at erosion of the White Bluffs by existing irrigation in areas adjoining the Hanford reservation.

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Gore will ride the Hanford Reach today with Richard Steele, a Hanford technician who has spent nearly 40 years fighting efforts to dam and dredge the river, and irrigate adjoining lands.

Steele has cited the example of a wide, gravel-covered bar in the river where he fished in the early 1970s that is now covered with silt up to three feet deep. "How is that good for salmon?" he asked.

In a letter to Clinton on Tuesday, five Democratic House members from Washington argued for immediate designation of a national monument. They cited the Hanford Reach as critical habitat to the "only harvestable runs of chinook salmon in the Columbia Basin."

"We believe that Senator Murray has exhausted all reasonable alternatives in her efforts to negotiate a compromise with those who are unwilling to take the necessary steps to protect this vital resource," they wrote.

"Unfortunately this Congress, like the Congresses before it, has again failed to act," they added.

Upon learning that monument designation was imminent, however, GOP Rep. Doc Hastings, whose district includes the reach, described it as "an insult to this community which has worked too hard for too long on a balanced solution to have the decision unilaterally taken out of our hands."

Murray argued that national monument designation will transform the image of Hanford, long associated with bomb making and the nation's largest volume of high-level radioactive waste.

"It will be an amazing transition," Murray said. "People will see the Tri-Cities, as I did growing up, as a wonderful place to live, surrounded by natural beauty, and a historic place that helped win World War II. Families . . . will see the opportunity to visit a new national monument."

Gore is making his 15th visit to the state since the 1996 election, but only his first venture into Eastern Washington.

After his river tour and speech in Richland, Gore will fly to Seattle for a Democratic National Committee fund-raising luncheon at the Columbia Tower Club, and a speech to the U.S. Conference of Mayors meeting in Seattle.

Gore will then fly to Spokane for a speech to a dinner preceding the Democratic State Convention. After a 14-hour day of appearances, he will fly back to Washington, D.C.

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Babbitt backs Pinal's desert conservation plan

Source: AP - AP Wire Service

Jun 03 03:04

TUCSON, Ariz. (AP) _ Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt has backed Pinal County's budding effort to follow Pima County in creating a desert conservation plan.

Babbitt on Friday acknowledged he was wrong in April when he waved off the idea of putting Pinal County land inside his proposed Ironwood Forest National Monument.

He recommended Wednesday that President Clinton create a 200,000-acre monument that includes two mountain ranges and an archaeological district within Pinal County. That proposal has drawn support from Pinal County officials, who also have asked Babbitt to find funding for a separate conservation plan.

Babbitt said he was visiting Pinal County because he was "behind the curve" on the county's issues. "I've been away too long," the former Arizona governor said.

Babbitt and nearly two dozen federal and Pinal and Pima County officials and environmentalists climbed the steep ironwood and saguaro-dotted Huerfano volcanic rock formation, about three miles northwest of the Tortolita Mountains.

They stood and gazed at undeveloped desert within Pinal _ land that stretches mile after mile toward the Tortolitas, the Santa Catalinas, the Silver Bell Mountains.

This followed a drive on dirt roads through saguaros, ironwood, mesquite and palo verde trees, and other desert vegetation among just a handful of homes.

"It's something to stand on the landscape like this, look at four horizons and see open space and beauty," Babbitt said as he stood on a butte just north of the Tortolitas.

Pinal County is attractive to the endangered cactus ferruginous pygmy owl, federal officials say. Much of the land north of the Tortolitas has a federal designation as critical habitat for the tiny bird.

This year, state and federal surveyors have found two adult pygmy owls in Pinal, with a month of surveying left. Last year, the surveyors found six adult owls, including two nests where parents raised and fledged three young birds.

Babbitt said he thinks there is a good chance that Pinal will get federal money to prepare a conservation plan, just as Pima County got \$1 million last year for its Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. He praised county officials for "starting to see the future before it runs over you."

He said the county's work on the plan will take two to three years, and advised county officials "not to short-circuit the process." After two years, Pima County soon will release the first draft of a conservation plan encompassing 400,000 acres.

Only a month ago, however, Babbitt seemed a lot less friendly toward preservation in Pinal County.

He had told the Arizona Daily Star editorial board that it might be hard to win support for a monument in Pinal County because of its long-held reputation as a conservative, pro-growth bastion.

AP-WS-06-03-00 0404EDT

Received Id AP1001557A83C3CE on Jun 03 2000 07:56

County OKs monument resolution

Source: AP - AP Wire Service

Jun 03 02:55

COCHITI PUEBLO, N.M. (AP) _ The Sandoval County Commission is asking the federal government to designate the Tent Rocks area near here as a national monument.

A resolution, approved Thursday by the commission, urges Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and President Clinton to make the designation.

County officials said making the area a national monument would help preserve and protect the area's fragile natural resources.

"This is exciting for the county," said Commissioner Mary Humphrey before the commission unanimously approved the resolution.

After the approval, County Manager Debbie Hays said she will be sending letters to Bernalillo and Santa Fe county commissions asking for their support of the designation.

The Tent Rocks, cone-shaped formations of pumice and tuff carved by wind and water over millions of years, are on 5,400 acres of public land in the foothills of the Jemez Mountains between the pueblo and private land.

The area is managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, but to reach it visitors must travel roads belonging to the pueblo.

The resolution says that while the Tent Rocks area is under the "capable direction and stewardship of the BLM, an increased financial and supervisory commitment is needed to assist the BLM in defending the fragile nature of the archaeological resources."

Cochiti Pueblo land supervisor Donald Suina said the partnership with the BLM has been a good one for the pueblo. Cochiti considers parts of the Tent Rocks area to be a sacred site.

Steve Anderson, BLM assistant field manager, said a decision about designating the site could be made quickly, probably by September.

"This is a special place, and without national designation it will not get much attention," Anderson said.

AP-WS-06-03-00 0354EDT

Received Id AP1001551EEA89B8 on Jun 03 2000 08:13



Governors Want Next President To Reorganize Resource Agencies

Friday, June 2, 2000

BY CHRISTOPHER SMITH
THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE



BOISE -- Western governors on both sides of the political fence say the country's next president should seriously consider combining federal natural resource agencies under one roof.

Such a consolidation, debated here Thursday during an annual Western lands policy symposium, would put the Forest Service -- now an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture -- into the Department of the Interior, which harbors the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and Fish and Wildlife Service.

It also would prune agencies with similar missions of managing natural resources from other bureaucratic branches and incorporate them into an entity that could speak with a singular voice on issues facing the West.

"It's a mystery to me why the National Marine Fisheries Service is in the Department of Commerce," said Montana Gov. Marc Racicot, whose close friendship with Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush has fueled rumors he could be appointed Interior secretary in a Bush administration. "It's an absolute mess right now, and I totally and wholeheartedly agree that we should look at consolidating these agencies."

Added another two-term Western governor, Democrat John Kitzhaber of Oregon: "There's a lack of logic in putting two agencies that manage timber -- the Forest Service and the BLM -- in two separate agencies. For states, it is impossible to determine what the federal position is."

In a sometimes freewheeling exchange that could have been billed "Governors Unplugged," two current and three former Western state CEOs pondered suggestions on how the next presidential administration should approach issues ranging from grizzly bear reintroduction to nuclear waste storage. The daylong discussion, punctuated by questions and

comments from a cross section of ranchers, conservationists, loggers, county commissioners and federal agency employees, will be distilled into a policy paper to be delivered to the White House in January.

"I will see that it is, in fact, given to the next president of the United States," said Cecil Andrus, the former four-term Democratic governor of Idaho and former secretary of the interior who hosts the symposium. "Whether he chooses to deal with it, I don't know."

The saddle-worn Western frustration of being subjected to the dictates of an absentee landlord peppered much of the commentary from the gubernatorial gallery.

"Obviously they will listen," said Norm Bangerter, Republican governor of Utah from 1985 to 1993, when asked whether the next administration would pay attention to Western concerns. "But the question is, will they hear."

Lacking the sheer numbers of inhabitants that translate into national political clout, governors past and present say better lines of communication must be forged between states and federal agencies to avoid unilateral pronouncements -- such as President Clinton's sudden creation of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Utah by presidential fiat.

Kitzhaber and Racicot said they have been working with Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt to legislatively protect areas under consideration by the Clinton administration for national monuments, to avoid a repeat of the Utah designation process.

"I don't believe consideration of a place for national monument status is necessarily a bad thing," said Kitzhaber, who added he is close to reaching an agreement with the Interior Department to protect Oregon's Steens Mountain area as a national monument.

"Our great hope is that we can accomplish protection from the bottom up instead of a top-down process," said Racicot of Montana, where the Missouri River breaks are slated for protection in the waning days of the Clinton presidency.

"At the end of the day, however, if we don't have something, he may be forced to act unilaterally."

The conference was rife with speculation on who might succeed Babbitt as Interior secretary in the new administration. Racicot downplayed any speculation he would join Bush's cabinet, and when pressed on

who might head Interior under a Bush presidency, he answered, "Mike Leavitt."

Utah's Republican governor did not attend the symposium.

Kitzhaber quipped that his failure to endorse Gore probably eliminated his chances of getting the Cabinet post under a Democratic administration, and when pressed for Gore's likely Interior choice he prompted a collective gasp when he answered, "Bruce Babbitt."

Former Idaho Republican Gov. Phil Batt said building trust between Western states and Uncle Sam would take time, given past federal edicts that seemed to ignore Westerners' concerns.

"I'm not sure they did a good thing when they brought the wolves back to Idaho and let them eat all our elk," Batt said.

While preaching conciliation toward the feds, two-time former Nevada Gov. Mike O'Callaghan recalled the federal injustice to the interior West of the 1950s and 1960s, when Nevada's desert was used by the Atomic Energy Commission as a nuclear bombing range.

"We would get up early and watch the explosions so bright you could see them in Denver," said O'Callaghan, a Democrat.

"The government told us we were being patriotic and everything was OK."

Interjected Bangerter: "And all that radioactive fallout was coming down in southern Utah."

"You go to the St. George graveyard and look at the names of all the families," continued O'Callaghan, mentioning the late Utah Gov. Scott Matheson as a potential victim of downwind fallout.

"And the graveyards down there show us everything was not OK."

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The Idaho Statesman

6/1/00

World

JUN 2 2000

Babbitt seeks monument status for Columbia's Hanford Reach

By Les Blumenthal
Scripps-McClatchy Western Service

WASHINGTON — Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt recommended Wednesday that the Hanford Reach — the last free-flowing stretch of the Columbia River in the United States — be designated a national monument.

The White House was expected to give quick approval.

The designation would include almost half of the Hanford nuclear reservation, which the Interior Department described as the largest remnant of the "shrub-steppe ecosystem" that once covered much of the Columbia River Basin.

But longtime Republican opponents of federal designation were livid.

"In one fell swoop, this administration is destroying years of negotiations, shutting out the concerns of local people and blowing any chance of protecting the Reach in a manner that accommodates the needs of all parties," Sen. Slade Gorton of Washington said in a statement.

The Hanford Reach was one of four areas Babbitt recommended be estab-

lished as national monuments under the Antiquities Act of 1906. His decision came little more than two weeks after the interior secretary floated the 51-mile stretch of river.

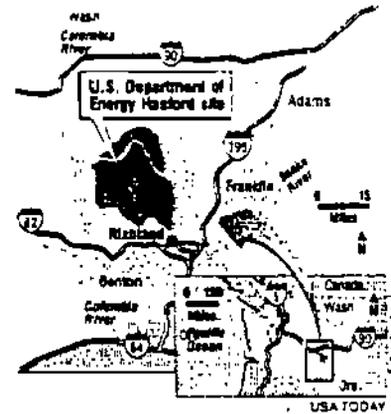
"These are priceless natural landscapes that have somehow remained almost untouched by exploitation, development and urban sprawl," Babbitt said in a statement.

"Protection of several of these areas, in one form or another, has been discussed for years, but no action has been taken," Babbitt said. "We may not have another chance before they are lost ..."

The designation of the Reach has been on a fast track, and Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash. — who has been fighting for federal protection of the Reach for more than seven years — said she expected President Clinton to act quickly on the recommendation.

Praising the announcement from Portugal, where he was meeting with European Union Ministers, President Clinton said each of the areas recommended by Babbitt represents "an exceptional, irreplaceable piece of America's natural and cultural heritage."

The other sites Babbitt proposed for



designation were the Ironwood Forest in Arizona, the Cascade-Siskiyou Mountains along the Oregon and California border and the Canyons of the Ancients in southwest Colorado.

If the Hanford Reach were designated, it would be only the second in Washington state.

In 1909, President Theodore Roosevelt created the Mount Olympus National Monument, one of the first in the nation.

It was eventually folded into the Olympic National Park.

Babbitt asks for four more monuments in the West

By John Hughes
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt on Wednesday asked President Clinton to declare four new national monuments, including one at the Hanford nuclear reservation in Washington state that would protect 200,000 acres.

The other three would protect nearly 351,000 acres of federal land

in Oregon, Colorado and Arizona. If Clinton approves the request, as expected, he will have used the Antiquities Act to protect nearly 3.7 million acres — the second most by a U.S. president.

"These are priceless natural landscapes that have somehow remained almost untouched by exploitation, development and urban sprawl," Babbitt said in a statement.

Clinton said he will carefully consider the requests. "Each of the areas recommended today represents an exceptional, irreplaceable piece of America's natural and cultural heritage," he said in a statement.

But some western lawmakers were upset, saying Clinton should go through Congress if he wants to protect land.

"This is not what the Antiquities Act was intended for," said Rep. Jim Kolbe, R-Ariz. "It was not designed for the creation of another Yellowstone."

Also Wednesday, Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush criticized the Clinton administration for designating state land for national monuments without close consultation with state officials.

"When it comes to Western states, the president ought to be consulting with members of the congressional and senatorial delegations from a state like Arizona before the president moves unilaterally to remove vast tracts of land," Bush said during his first trip to Arizona since he forced Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., out of the presidential race.

Gene Layette Journal
6-1-00



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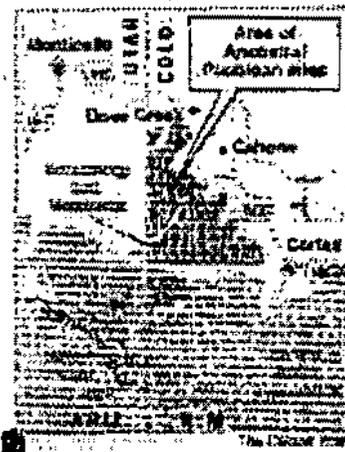
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New national monument closer to reality

By Mike Soraghan
Denver Post Washington Bureau

New designation?

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt recommended Wednesday that President Clinton designate 164,000 acres in Colorado's Four Corners region as a national monument, giving additional protection to desert canyons and mesas that are rich in ancient Indian artifacts.



June 1, 2000 - WASHINGTON - Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt recommended Wednesday that President Clinton designate 164,000 acres in Colorado's Four Corners region as a national monument, giving additional protection to desert canyons and mesas that are rich in ancient Indian artifacts.

That means that a Canyons of the Ancients National Monument is one government formality from becoming a reality.

Such designation would likely end mining on the federal property, and likely lure more tourists. But Babbitt is recommending that oil, gas and carbon dioxide drilling be allowed to continue on the land now called the

McElmo Dome.

The proposal makes good on Babbitt's promise to use executive power to protect the land if Colorado's congressional delegation didn't negotiate its own plan.

He also recommended that three other sites be designated as monuments - Ironwood Forest near Tucson; Cascade-Siskiyou in Oregon near the California border; and 200,000 acres inside Washington state's Hanford nuclear site.

Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, R-Colo., had introduced a plan to protect the McElmo Dome site as a national conservation area, but dropped it less than two months later, blaming "total absence of local consensus." Campbell criticized the administration Wednesday for moving ahead.

Campbell "opposes any land change that doesn't have local consensus, especially these 'ivory tower' executive declarations," said his spokesman, Chris Changery. "He preferred to withdraw and see if down the road we could reach consensus without forcing it on the residents of that part of Colorado." Montezuma County Commissioner Kelly Wilson said he doesn't see much difference between the Campbell and Babbitt proposals.

"We'll just have to think positive and work through it," said Wilson, a Democrat. "We knew it was coming." Wilson was gratified that drilling will continue, since it generates about \$2 million a year in taxes for the county, or about 30 percent of the county budget.

The Southwest Colorado Land Owners Association has threatened to sue if the administration establishes the monument. The group could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

Environmentalists were elated, although they would have preferred a ban on new oil and gas drilling.

"The enviros are pleased as punch," said Jeff Widen, associate director of the Colorado Environmental Coalition.

Widen said he interprets the language of Babbitt's recommendation to mean that existing reserves can be tapped, but exploratory drilling would be banned. Widen also wants to know more about what motorized uses would be allowed.

"Everything we're hearing from Interior is that we're likely to be happy with that," Widen said.

The site is estimated to contain more than 20,000 archaeological sites - the highest known density in the nation, according to the Interior Department.

The area was occupied by the Ancestral Northern Pueblo People, formerly called the Anasazi, between A.D. 450 and 1300. The resources that remain include villages, great kivas, petroglyphs and sweat lodges.

Making it a national monument probably would not make a dramatic difference immediately. But it could increase tourism, and it highlights the land as special.

"It draws a ring around it and says, 'This is a unique landscape,'" said Interior spokesman Mike Gaudin.

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June 1, 2000

Clinton Asked To Name Monuments

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Filed at 5:00 a.m. EDT

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt wants President Clinton to declare four new national monuments protecting more than 500,000 acres of federal land in Washington state, Oregon, Colorado and Arizona.

If Clinton approves the request as expected he will have used the Antiquities Act to protect nearly 3.7 million acres -- the second most by a U.S. president.

"These are priceless natural landscapes that have somehow remained almost untouched by exploitation, development and urban sprawl," Babbitt said Wednesday in a statement.

"Each of the areas recommended today represents an exceptional, irreplaceable piece of America's natural and cultural heritage," Clinton responded, also in a written statement.

"This is not what the Antiquities Act was intended for," complained Rep. Jim Kolbe, R-Ariz. "It was not designed for the creation of another Yellowstone."

Also Wednesday, Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush criticized the Clinton



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administration for designating state land for national monuments without close consultation with state officials.

The largest of the sites in Babbitt's latest recommendation -- The Hanford Reach National Monument in Washington -- would protect 200,000 acres along 51 miles of the Columbia River that is one of the largest, undisturbed river stretches in the United States and a critical spawning ground for salmon.

The other three monuments requested by Babbitt:

--Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, 164,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management land in Colorado that contains more than 20,000 archaeological sites -- the highest known density of such sites in the nation. The site's remoteness has helped protect it, but growing population and tourism requires more protection, Interior officials said.

--Ironwood Forest National Monument in Arizona, 134,750 acres of BLM land, includes stands of ironwood trees that can live more than 800 years, along with blue palo verde and saguaro blanket stands. The area needs protection because of urban expansion in the southern part of the state, officials said.

--Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Oregon, 52,000 acres of BLM land, including Soda Mountain, is one of the most biologically diverse areas in North America, home to 100 species of butterflies, eight species of bats and old growth habitat important for the threatened northern spotted owl.

The 1906 Antiquities Act allows presidents -- without congressional approval -- to safeguard objects of historic and scientific interest. President Theodore Roosevelt used the law to set aside the Grand Canyon in 1908 and President Carter used it to create large sections of Alaska wilderness in the 1970s.

If he approves Babbitt's request, Clinton will have used the Act to declare or expand 10

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monuments during his presidency. Only Carter has used the Act to protect more acreage, as he set aside 50 million acres in Alaska alone.

On the Net: Interior Department:
<http://www.doi.gov/doi/press/proposedmonuments.html>

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The Oregonian

NW areas on monument list

Thursday, June 1, 2000

By Michelle Cole and Jonathan Brinckman of The Oregonian staff

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt recommended Wednesday that \$2,000 acres surrounding Soda Mountain in Southern Oregon and 200,000 acres along the Hanford Reach on the Columbia River in Southeast Washington be protected as national monuments.

Babbitt sent the recommendations to President Clinton, along with proposals for national monuments in Arizona and Colorado that would protect almost 300,000 acres.

Enviro News

An archive of Oregonian stories related to environmental concerns, ranging from salmon protection and federal logging legislature to urban growth and water quality control.

"These are priceless natural landscapes that have somehow remained almost untouched by exploitation, development and urban sprawl," Babbitt said.

The protections the monument status would provide the four areas would be specified when the president designates them through his authority under the 1906 Antiquities Act. He is expected to do that within weeks.

The four monument recommendations are the latest in a series of sweeping environmental actions the administration has taken as Clinton nears the end of his presidency. The president already has used his executive authority to create five new national monuments and to expand an existing one. If he accepts Babbitt's recommendations, he will have protected nearly 3.7 million acres of public land.

"Each of the areas recommended today represents an exceptional, irreplaceable piece of America's natural cultural heritage," the president said in a news release from Lisbon, Portugal, where he is meeting with European leaders.

Babbitt recommended that the Soda Mountain area now managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management be

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designated the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument.

The proposed monument, 25 miles southeast of Medford where the Klamath and Cascade mountains converge, is neither as majestic as the jagged peaks of the Olympics nor as breathtaking as nearby Crater Lake. But it is one of the most biologically diverse areas in North America, home to 100 species of butterflies, eight species of bats and a host of rare plants.

The Department of the Interior has called the proposed monument lands "an ecological wonder," a region whose survival "depends upon its continued ecological integrity."

The Soda Mountain Wilderness Council first brought the area to Babbitt's attention last spring.

"We sent information to the Department of Interior saying, 'Boy, you've got something special here, and it probably qualifies as a monument,'" said Dave Willis, who has spent 17 years seeking to protect the area from grazing, logging, off-road vehicles and other human encroachment.

A handful of ranchers who have permits to graze cattle on or near Soda Mountain were among those who fought monument designation. Grazing will continue while the Bureau of Land Management completes a study on whether grazing is compatible with the ecological diversity of the area.

Bill Drewien, public lands chairman for the Jackson County Stockmen's Association, said Wednesday he hadn't seen the details of Babbitt's recommendation but considers the development a defeat. "What we're doing is locking up vast areas of our public lands," he said.

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, R-Ore., whose district includes the Soda Mountain area, said he didn't think monument protection was necessary. "I honestly believe that we can do a better job by crafting Oregon-based solutions than these one-size-fits-all monuments. We also manage our lands better than the government tends to do, as witnessed by the New Mexico fires that originated on a national monument."

The monument designation for the Hanford Reach, the longest free-flowing stretch of the Columbia River above Bonneville Dam, caps a bitter 15-year fight.

Conservationists want to protect the 51-mile stretch of river, which bisects the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, because the undammed section of river is the spawning grounds for 80 percent of the Columbia River's wild fall chinook. The run is crucial to the river's remaining sports and tribal fisheries. In addition, the arid rolling hills and sage steppes surrounding the reach are ecologically

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significant.

Local elected officials, including county commissioners and U.S. Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash., have resisted efforts to declare the reach a Wild and Scenic River. Such a designation would protect the river and a one-quarter mile zone along each bank.

"It's not too often in your political career that you can do something that will be here long past your lifetime. This is an amazing accomplishment," said U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., who has sought for seven years to protect the reach.

A national monument designation would accomplish even more than the wild and scenic river listing, said Rick Leumont, conservation committee chairman of the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society. "It's a wonderful day for us."

Advocates of salmon recovery called the monument designation a model for the kinds of things that must be done to restore dwindling fish populations in the basin.

"From the standpoint of protecting salmon, this is one of the best things possible," said Liz Hamilton, executive director of the Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association. "Give fish good habitat and they succeed."

But Hastings said many people in the region would be outraged. "This is an absolute insult to people who live in this part of the country," he said. "It is a desperate move to try and get something done in a way that ignores the normal democratic process."

Babbitt's recommendations on Wednesday included the proposed Ironwood Forest National Monument on 134,750 acres 25 miles from Tucson, Ariz. Ironwood trees, which can live for more than 800 years, are among the unusual plants found in that stretch of the Sonoran Desert.

The Canyon of the Ancients National Monument, on 164,000 acres 45 miles west of Durango, Colo., was the fourth on Babbitt's list. The Department of the Interior said the area contains the highest known density of archaeological sites in the nation.

Michelle Cole can be reached at 503-294-5143 or e-mail, michellecole@news.oregonian.com and Jonathan Brinckman can be reached at 503-221-8190 or e-mail jbrinckman@news.oregonian.com

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New monument closer to reality

Area rich with ancient Indian artifacts

By Mike Scraghan
 Denver Post Washington Bureau 6-1-00

WASHINGTON — Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt recommended Wednesday that President Clinton designate 194,000 acres in Colorado's Four Corners region as a national monument, giving additional protection to desert canyons and mesas that are rich in ancient Indian artifacts.

That means that a Canyons of the Ancients National Monument is one government formality from becoming a reality.

Such designation would likely end mining on the federal property, and likely lure more tourists. But Babbitt is recommending that oil, gas and carbon dioxide drilling be allowed to continue on the land now called the McElmo Dome.

The proposal makes good on Babbitt's promise to use executive power to protect the land if Colorado's congressional delegation didn't negotiate its own plan.

He also recommended that three other sites be designated as monuments — Ironwood Forest near Tucson; Cascade-Siskiyou in Oregon near the California border; and 200,000 acres inside Washington state's Hanford nuclear site.

Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, R-Colo., had introduced a plan to protect the McElmo Dome site as a national conservation area, but dropped it less than two months later, blaming "total absence of local consensus."

Campbell criticized the administra-

tion Wednesday for moving ahead.

Campbell "opposes any land change that doesn't have local consensus, especially these 'ivory tower' executive declarations," said his spokesman, Chris Changery. "He preferred to withdraw and see it down the road we could reach consensus without forcing it on the residents of that part of Colorado."

Montezuma County Commissioner Kelly Wilson said he doesn't see much difference between the Campbell and Babbitt proposals.

"We'll just have to think positive and work through it," said Wilson, a Democrat. "We knew it was coming."

Wilson was gratified that drilling will continue, since it generates about \$3 million a year in taxes for the county, or about 30 percent of the county budget.

The Southwest Colorado Land Owners Association has threatened to sue if the administration establishes the monument. The group could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

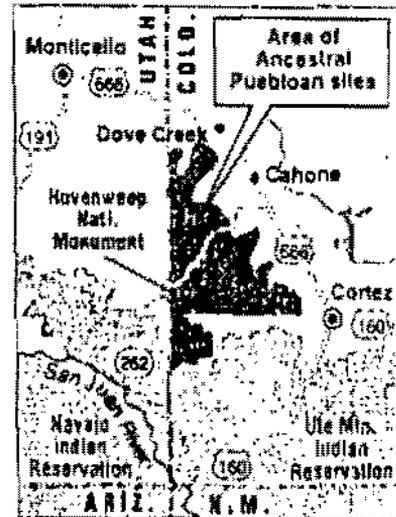
Environmentalists were elated, although they would have preferred a ban on new oil and gas drilling.

"The enviros are pleased as punch," said Jeff Widen, associate director of the Colorado Environmental Coalition.

Widen said he interprets the language of Babbitt's recommendation to mean that existing reserves can be tapped, but exploratory drilling would be banned. Widen also wants to know more about what motorized uses would be allowed.

Proposed monument

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt recommended Wednesday that the Canyons of the Ancients site in southwest Colorado be designated a national monument.



The Denver Post

"Everything we're hearing from Interior is that we're likely to be happy with that," Widen said.

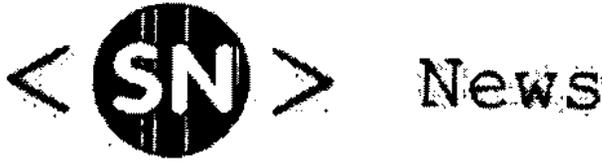
The site is estimated to contain more than 20,000 archaeological sites — the highest known density in the nation, according to the Interior Department.

The area was occupied by the Ancestral Northern Pueblo People, formerly called the Anasazi, between A.D. 450 and 1300. The resources that remain include villages, great kivas, petroglyphs and sweat lodges.

Making it a national monument probably would not make a dramatic difference immediately. But it could increase tourism, and it highlights the land as special.

"It draws a ring around it and says, 'This is a unique landscape,'" said interior spokesman Mike Gaudin.

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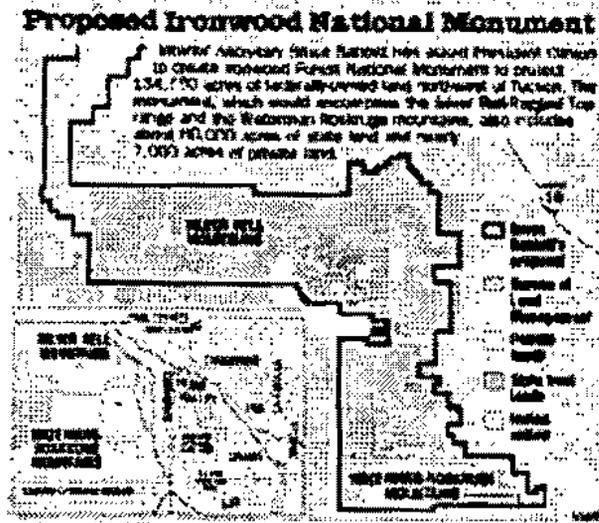


Thursday, 1 June 2000

Babbitt asks Clinton to protect ironwood forest

By Joe Salkowski
Arizona Daily Star

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt asked President Clinton yesterday to create a national monument for the protection of a stand of ironwood trees in mountainous desert northwest of Tucson.



The proposed Ironwood Forest National Monument would encompass the Silver Bell-Ragged Top range and the Waterman-Roskrige mountains west of Saguaro National Park-West. The land is home to the country's thickest population of ironwood trees, which provide critical habitat for the endangered pygmy owl and a variety of desert species.

"The area that has been designated is definitely worthy of preservation," said Pima County Supervisor Sharon Bronson, whose West Side district includes the proposed monument. "It's a national treasure, clearly something our children and our children's children deserve to be able to see and appreciate."

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Supervisors sought federal protection for the area as part of the county's Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan, which would safeguard 400,000 acres of land around the county.

At the supervisors' request, Babbitt included the ironwood stand among four proposed monuments he asked Clinton to create yesterday. The others are in southwest Colorado, south-central Oregon and in southeast Washington along the Columbia River.

"These are priceless natural landscapes that have somehow remained almost untouched by exploitation, development and urban sprawl. But we are losing open spaces every day," Babbitt said in a prepared statement.

"Protection of several of these areas, in one form or another, has been discussed for years, but no action has been taken," he said. "I am urging the president to protect these unique landscapes now for future generations of Americans."

Babbitt's announcement says the monument would include 134,750 acres of federally owned land.

But a map released by his department shows the proposed monument boundaries also include about 60,000 acres owned by the state and nearly 7,000 acres of private land.

The federal government would have to take ownership of that land through land swaps, sales or other proceedings before it could be declared a federal monument.

The area, which borders the Tohono O'odham Reservation on the west and the Pinal County line on the north, is a remote desert forest linked to civilization by rutted dirt roads.

In addition to ironwoods and other natural vegetation, the proposed monument is home to a number of ancient petroglyphs and the remains of a Hohokam village.

While Babbitt could have asked Congress to protect the land, he apparently decided it would be faster to simply ask Clinton to do so, Bronson said.

"I think he just wanted relatively fast movement on this," she said, "and the easiest way to achieve that is through presidential action."

The 1906 Antiquities Act allows presidents — without congressional approval — to safeguard objects of historic and scientific interest. It is the same law that President Theodore Roosevelt used to set aside

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the Grand Canyon in 1908 and President Jimmy Carter used on large sections of Alaska wilderness in the 1970s.

Clinton has angered some Western lawmakers and local officials by invoking the Antiquities Act on previous occasions to set aside millions of acres of land for special protection.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.



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seattle **PI**.com Northwest

Hanford Reach as monument gains ally

Babbitt recommendation is praised and rebuked

Thursday, June 1, 2000

By **JOEL CONNELLY** SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER NATIONAL CORRESPONDENT

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, citing the need to preserve natural landscapes of America's West, yesterday recommended creation of a 200,000-acre Hanford Reach National Monument on the last undammed stretch of the Columbia River.

The stretch of river in Eastern Washington was one of four national monument proposals. The others are Anasazi Indian ruins in southwest Colorado, Soda Mountain in south-central Oregon and a mountainous area of Arizona's Sonoran Desert near Tucson.

Babbitt's recommendation was welcomed by President Clinton and applauded by Gov. Gary Locke.

"Each of the areas recommended today represents an exceptional, irreplaceable piece of America's natural and cultural protection," Clinton said in a statement. Locke described the reach as "a national treasure. In so many ways, it remains a snapshot of an earlier time."

Capitol Hill sources predicted last night that Clinton, using his authority under the 1906 Antiquities Act, may act within a month to designate the national monument in Eastern Washington.

But officials in three Central Washington counties continued to oppose federal protection for the 51-mile reach, the only undammed stretch of the Columbia River between Bonneville Dam and the U.S.-Canada border. They are not satisfied with Babbitt's promise of an advisory role in monument management.

"This is insulting. It's an insult to the people of Central Washington." Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash., said yesterday. Hastings' district includes the Hanford Reach.

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Sue Miller, a Franklin County commissioner, said: "Nobody is required to take our advice. We know best of all what should happen out there.

"A large number of the people I represent do not feel federal control is in the best interests of the Hanford Reach."

Rick Leumont of Richland, head of the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society, rebuked Hastings. "I'm not insulted," Leumont said. "This is a great day for the Tri-Cities.

"This designation will change the image of our community. The world now sees us as a nuclear waste repository. This will show that we live amid natural beauty where fish thrive, near a great wildlife haven.

It says all the right things about us."

Democratic lawmakers said that attempts to work out a compromise have been scuttled by pro-development county commissioners and agricultural interests who want to irrigate part of the federally owned Wahluke Slope north of the reach. The reach is the last major salmon spawning habitat on the Columbia River.

"We tried, we worked and we pleaded," Rep. Norm Dicks, D-Wash., said yesterday. "If you're not going to take out the Snake River dams, you need to do something else to protect these fish. The Hanford Reach is an absolute priority. We had to take this step. It was very clear that our colleagues simply intended to block this."

But Sen. Slade Gorton, R-Wash., attacked Babbitt for the speed of his recommendation. The Interior secretary toured the Hanford Reach two weeks ago. Gorton argued that Babbitt "was simply paying lip service to the surrounding communities."

The national monument would include the Columbia River, the Wahluke Slope and still-wild areas of the 560-square-mile Hanford Nuclear Reservation.

If designated by Clinton, the monument would end 40 years of struggle over the reach.

Officials in Grant and Franklin counties have campaigned for more irrigation on the Wahluke Slope, despite water-caused erosion and undermining of the white bluffs that overlook the river.

"The (salmon) spawning area can only be protected if the Wahluke Slope is strictly off-limits to future development, including irrigation," Locke said yesterday.

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Under the Antiquities Act, a president can designate national monuments to protect places of historic significance and scientific interest. President Theodore Roosevelt used it to create 18 national monuments, including the Grand Canyon.

Clinton has aggressively used the act. Beginning with the 1996 designation of the Escalante-Grand Staircase National Monument in Utah's canyonlands, the president has protected landscapes ranging from giant

sequoia trees in California to

wild, flood-sculpted tributaries of

the Grand Canyon in northern

Arizona.

Last month, Republicans on the House Appropriations Committee amended a spending bill to take away presidential authority to designate new national monuments. Clinton has vowed to veto the legislation if it reaches his desk.

The Hanford Reach National Monument would be managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, under agreements with the Department of Energy. The Energy Department is overseeing cleanup of nuclear waste at Hanford.

Babbitt's monument proposal puts Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., on the brink of a major political triumph. A few years ago, Murray rafted the reach with a Hanford nuclear worker named Richard Steele, who has worked 40 years to preserve the river. She then introduced legislation that would protect it under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

"This place is history for a number of reasons," Murray said yesterday. "My dad grew up in the Tri-Cities. He told me before his death that we should give something back to a region that has given us so much. By doing this, we protect salmon, cultural artifacts, and the native plants and animals that came before us."

But Hastings delivered a scathing, unusually personal rebuke of a fellow member of Congress. "Either Senator Murray doesn't know what the residents of Central Washington want, or she doesn't care," he said.

Gorton said yesterday that the Hanford Reach "is under no immediate threat" from development and accused the Clinton administration of "destroying years of negotiations."

But Steele argued that protection can't wait. He said irrigation water has already done great damage to the reach and its prized salmon spawning

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beds.

"There's an area I fished 30 years ago, standing on a cobblestone beach up to 100 yards wide," he said. "When I returned last Thanksgiving, the whole bar was covered with silt up to 3 feet thick."

Rep. Jay Inslee, D-Wash., who represented Central Washington in Congress until he was ousted by Hastings in 1994, added that Congress will never protect the reach.

"Some of my colleagues have an ideological aversion to protecting public lands: It's time to apply the Teddy Roosevelt tradition," said Inslee, who now represents a suburban Western Washington district in Congress.

P-I reporter Joel Connelly can be reached at 206-448-8160 or joelconnelly@seattle-pi.com

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NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

THURSDAY, MAY 25, 2000 PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

Courage to do the right thing

Our secretaries of the interior must feel like the apple on William Tell's head.

The currently embattled secretary, Bruce Babbitt, was back in Montana recently for two more days of public meetings about how best to protect a stretch of the wild Missouri River. He was greeted by the usual western exuberance. Out here the water and land are a passion, not an abstraction.

Babbitt's visits remind one that we Westerners, like most

Americans, suffer from a kind of political Alzheimer's. We have apparently forgotten the actions of those who previously served as secretary of the interior. Some westerners seem to believe that Bruce Babbitt is the only one who ever

PAT WILLIAMS

acted in presidential direction, to encourage the preservation of land and water under national monument designation. America has had 48 secretaries of the interior. Since the passage by Congress in 1906 of the act that allows presidents to set aside and protect national monuments, we have had 24 secretaries.

Almost without exception, each of them has encouraged the president for whom they served to protect land and water under that act - the Antiquities Act of 1906. Every president since Theodore Roosevelt (excepting only Nixon, Reagan and Bush) has used the act to preserve critical national areas by declaring them national monuments. Teddy Roosevelt protected more than a dozen areas.

So did Woodrow Wilson, Herbert Hoover and Calvin Coolidge. President Franklin Roosevelt protected more than two dozen, setting aside nearly 2 million acres. President Carter gave lasting protection to the most public land - 56 million acres in 17 national monuments in Alaska in 1978.

In the tradition of those nearly 100 years, the current secretary of the interior, Bruce Babbitt, is engaged in a public conversation with us westerners. It is a patient dialogue that is far greater than any of his predecessors ever conducted, and he is doing it in an effort to give full public voice and participation to the matter of further protecting "objects of historic and scientific interest" as the Antiquities Act requires. He is meeting some predictable resistance here in the West from organized interest groups and individuals whose politics or finances or markets would be, they say, damaged by further national monument designations.

Some of the voices, particularly those of our more moderate and thoughtful cattle folks, should be listened to. Too many others, however, are shrill and rude. We recognize that crowd - deep voices and shallow logic, big hats and no cattle. These are the people who demand to continue using the public's land for their own greedy personal benefit. Those are the same voices that have resisted national monument protections for the last 94 years. They resisted other secretaries of the interior and other presidents, both Democrats and Republicans, when this identical designation was used to save priceless treasures: the Grand Canyon, Devil's Tower, Glacier Bay in Alaska, Bryce Canyon, Death Valley and California's beloved Muir Woods. Montana's wild Missouri is in that class. So are other proposed areas such as the Anasazi Indian ruins in Colorado and the Shivwits Plateau in Utah.

Missoulians

No, Bruce Babbitt isn't the first and, hopefully, he won't be the last interior secretary with the wisdom to propose what is right, the courage to make it happen, and the guts to give a damn.

Pat Williams, a former congressman who teaches at the Center for the Rocky Mountain West, is a frequent contributor to the *Missoulian's Opinion* pages.



NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

FRIDAY, MAY 26, 2000 PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

IDAHO STATESMAN

5/25/00

Babbitt's map of Craters plan draws rapid fire

Some ranchers, Sen. Craig object

By Rocky Barker
The Idaho Statesman

The release of Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt's draft map of the proposed expansion of Craters of the Moon National Monument brought a flurry of protest Wednesday.

Babbitt said he had reached consensus with ranchers and local community leaders on continuing grazing, predator control and hunting in the sagebrush grasslands included in the 700,000-acre Great Rift monument proposal. But two ranchers left out of a follow-up meeting a week ago said Babbitt was protecting more land than they had accepted.

"The thin little line that Babbitt was talking about has turned into a 10-mile line," said Rochelle Oxarango, who with her husband, Robert, runs sheep along the southern end of the Craters of the Moon Lava Flow.

And motorized recreationalists criticized Babbitt for proposing restrictions on off-road travel without involving them. One

of the ranchers who met with Babbitt, Idaho Secretary of State Pete Cenarrusa, said it's too early to declare consensus.

"He's not quite there yet," Cenarrusa said.

Babbitt wants to persuade President Clinton to protect the unique fresh black lava flows and 62-mile-long rift where only 2,000 years ago molten rock poured out over the Snake River Plain. He is considering adding about 400,000 acres of lava flows to the 54,000 acres protected in the Craters of the Moon National Monument.



Bruce Babbitt

This area would be managed by the National Park Service. The grasslands surrounding the lava rock and a 10-mile wide corridor connecting the three lava flows — about 250,000 acres — would be placed under the control of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

Babbitt had widened the corridor after talking with ranchers May 9. He decided to include the 10-mile-long Bear Trap lava tube, a cave formed by the cooling lava. It runs perpendicular to

the Great Rift, requiring the larger corridor, said Jim Morris, Craters of the Moon superintendent.

Ranchers at the follow-up meeting agreed with the inclusion of the geologic feature. But Oxarango and Henry Etcheverry who graze sheep in that area, were not at the meeting and do not agree.

"He's not living up to his end of the bargain," Etcheverry said.

Clinton has designated new national monuments in Utah, Arizona and California based on recommendations from Babbitt. Clinton has the authority to establish or expand a national monument under the Antiquities Act of 1906 without public involvement.

Babbitt said he will return to Idaho to meet with Idaho ranchers and others, partly in response to a request by Sen. Larry Craig and the rest of Idaho's congressional delegation for more public involvement in the decision. He has been to the state twice, meeting with more than 150 local officials, business leaders, ranchers, Gov. Dirk Kempthorne and the media to talk about expanding the monument.

"I think we have been responsive," Babbitt said Wednesday. "Given Sen. Craig's concerns about process, I will go back to Idaho."

Craig called Babbitt's proposal "dionysian" and "a complete affront to our representative form of government."

"Before any draft was proposed, it should have been presented to the public with guarantees that grazing, predator control, recreational vehicle

use and hunting can continue in the area," Craig said. "Idahoans have no reason to trust that these responsible uses of the public land will go forward under his proposal."

Clark Collins, executive director of the Blue Ribbon Coalition, a motorized recreation lobbying group, said he hopes to meet with Babbitt when he returns.

"It's typical of this administration to exclude our recreation interests from these discussions and then call the product a consensus agreement," Collins said.

Babbitt said the off-road restrictions were included partly because of concerns from the ranchers. John Peavey, a former Idaho state senator, said off-road vehicles were damaging rangeland and disturbing wintering elk in the Laidlaw Park kipuka, a sagebrush grassland surrounded by lava flows. "They just run wild out there," he said.

Peavey, a Carey Democrat, asked Babbitt to expand the monument to include all of his grazing allotment to better protect his use.

Under the plan, grazing, hunting and predator control would continue as allowed now in the BLM-managed area. All existing private property rights would be protected, including access across federal land. Mining would be prohibited, and the land could never be sold. Vehicle traffic would be confined to designated roads and trails except for emergency and administrative use, including that of ranchers, Babbitt said.

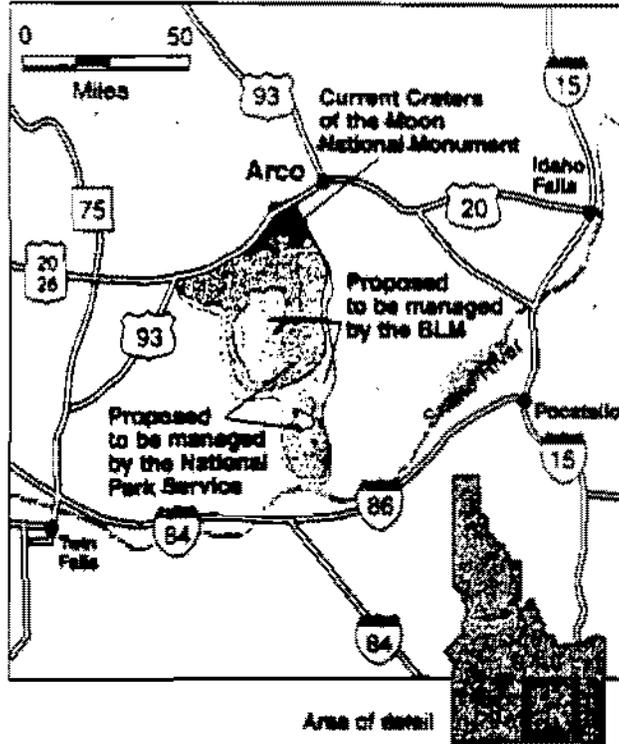
"I don't see anything negative with this," Peavey said.

Contact Rocky at 377-6684 or rbarker@boise.gannett.com

Thursday, May 25, 2000

Babbitt proposal

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt has proposed expanding Craters of the Moon National Monument to include two other lava fields and surrounding Bureau of Land Management land.



Tri-City Herald

Tri-City Herald opinions for May 18, 2000

Murray, delegation must steer any Hanford Reach plan

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Murray, delegation must steer any Hanford Reach plan

Those who hoped for a regional, legislative solution on the future of the Hanford Reach have every right to be upset about Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt's decision to recommend declaring the Reach a national monument.

Go ahead. Be mad. Stomp your feet.

But get over it - quick.

Then, everyone should unite to make sure the declaration works for the region's benefit. Interior Department bureaucrats will shape a management plan for the Reach after the president declares it a national monument.

That means the Northwest congressional delegation must exact assurances the management plan will be responsive to the interests of the Mid-Columbia. And our delegation members must unite in their resolve to hold Babbitt's successor in a new presidential administration to the promises Babbitt made to the people of the region this week.

That burden should weigh heavily on U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, a Seattle Democrat. Frustrated after seven years of ineffective attempts at a Reach management compromise, Murray exercised the influence that comes with sharing the president's party and kicked the decision upstairs.

The burden also should be felt by Republican U.S. Sen. Slade Gorton, who, in February, apparently contributed to the scuttling of a promising negotiated agreement between environmentalists and

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representatives of Benton, Franklin and Grant counties.

And U.S. Rep. Doc Hastings should feel it, too, having made the miscalculation that Murray would resist inviting an executive solution if a legislative compromise could not be crafted.

It should also be of concern to Gov. Gary Locke, who needs to weigh in on this major development in his own state.

Babbitt, whose notoriety as an enthusiastic dam-breacher makes his standing in the Mid-Columbia tenuous at best, suggested national monument status for the Reach could offer opportunity for the Mid-Columbia.

First, he theorized, the urgency of protecting an adjacent national monument might strengthen support for Hanford cleanup.

Second, during meetings Tuesday and Wednesday, Babbitt made a number of promises. He vowed to protect existing property rights, including water rights; hinted there might be room for new water rights; promised to make allowances for economic activities at Energy Northwest and in north Richland; and said he was as concerned about ensuring public access to the Reach as he was about protecting the 51-mile stretch of undammed river and adjacent land.

Those promises, however, are little comfort for a community that grew up near the Hanford nuclear reservation and is used to seeing bureaucracy-level follow-through fall far short of cabinet-level pledges.

Babbitt encouraged those skeptical of his impending action to look to the successful management plan established for the 1.7 million-acre Grand Staircase National Monument. Babbitt said he promised the governor and the commissions of the three affected Utah counties that the management plan would not be implemented until it met their approval. After two years, he said he had fulfilled that promise.

For all Babbitt's promises about the Reach, he won't be signing any Hanford Reach management plan or shaking hands with county commissioners in mutual agreement.

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Rather, it would be his successor - a new administration's secretary taking on an agency burdened by the raft of national monument declarations President Clinton - struggling to salvage some kind of positive environmental legacy - is expected to make before he and his Interior secretary of eight years leave office.

Babbitt says he intends to include a specific amount in his agency's 2001 budget request to pay for the first year of crafting the management plan. And his replacement will be obligated to follow the directions laid out in any national monument declaration, but the successor might not choose to follow Babbitt's promises about details.

That's why the pressure is on the congressional delegation to ride herd on Interior Department officials charged with drafting a management plan to make sure what evolves is right for our region. Murray, for one, seems committed to making sure the Mid-Columbia has a strong voice in shaping the future of our Hanford Reach. Everyone else should join her.

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The Seattle Times



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EDITORIALS

Begging for progress on Hanford cleanup

WHAT does it take to make anything happen at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation? All Washington residents and U.S. taxpayers get are excuses and the bills.

How about declaring the entire cleanup project to be a new form of environmental receivership or environmental contempt — and let a federal judge oversee everything? However legally improbable, it fits the current mood of frustration.

U.S. District Judge William Dwyer scolded the daylight out of the state over its management of treatment centers for violent sex offenders. Even the residents acknowledged improvements. Why not do the same for nuclear waste?

The latest soap opera involving the Federal Department of Energy and British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. is a variation on a theme: confusion, expense and delay.

Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson fired BNFL almost two years to the day after the company was selected to design and build a plant to turn highly radioactive waste into glass cylinders that could be buried in steel wrappers.

The 1998 winning guarantee of \$8.9 billion morphed into \$15.9 billion before Richardson announced he was really, really ticked off.

The contract had been signed in the midst of intense derision and scorn. The feds had attempted to privatize the deal, whereby BNFL would arrange its own project financing, and then bill the government. Part of the theory was that the business would hold down its own costs. Honest, people said that out loud.

BNFL was hired to design a plant that would be operating by 2007 and have 10 percent of the muck cleaned up by 2018.

What the state and DOE have now is an agreement to try again, backed up by a consent decree. Existing deadlines, 2007 and 2018, will still be in place for whoever gets the new contract, and the state can ask for a federal judge to crack the whip if important milestones slide.

Attorney General Christine Gregoire points to another consent decree involving leaking single-shell tanks that has had the desired salutary effect on DOE behavior. One can only cheer her optimism.

Washington residents are hostages. Fifty-four million gallons of nasty stuff is in 177 tanks in our back yard. We get the rhetoric and the excuses. We get the song and the dance. Hanford is supposed to be cleaned up by 2048 at a grand total of \$56 billion. What's that — 101 years after the end of World War II?

We are hostages, but Congress writes the checks and increasingly has every reason not to be abused. Hanford went into cleanup mode in the 1960s. Progress, on an admittedly difficult and obviously lucrative job, has been zip. What if Congress refuses to write more checks?

The muck in our back yard just keeps moving toward the Columbia River. Who is on our side? Does it take a no-nonsense federal judge to get it done?



NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2000

seattle **PI**.com Northwest

Babbitt backs Hanford Reach, but locals want control

Wednesday, May 17, 2000

By JOEL CONNELLY SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER NATIONAL CORRESPONDENT

RICHLAND -- Pledging that the Clinton administration will "have closure" on long-running Western land battles before it leaves office, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt yesterday toured the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River and came away committed to its preservation.

Later in the day, however, Babbitt stood in a crowded Richland hotel ballroom and heard officials from three counties argue that local control is a better way of protecting the wild stretch of river than having President Clinton designate it a national monument.



Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt discusses the Hanford Reach, a 51-mile stretch of the Columbia River near Richland, yesterday with Thomas Morning Owl of the Umatilla Indian Tribe.
AP photo

The good-natured crowd, by its applause, appeared evenly divided on the monument proposal. Babbitt argued the intricacies of water law, showed a detailed knowledge of Hanford's history, joked about bureaucracy and promised that mid-Columbia residents would have a major say in managing a monument if he recommends that path to the president.

"I will make every provision I reasonably can to be responsive" to

local concerns, Babbitt pledged. "What you want these places to be is assets to the community."

Babbitt described as "overwhelming" and "staggering" the 51-mile stretch of undammed river, where hawks and falcons swoop down from chalk-white bluffs on one side of the river, and deer and elk browse amid shut-down nuclear reactors of the Hanford Nuclear Reservation.

"This really is the last wild place on the Columbia River to tidewater," he said.

"What I see out there is a fabulous salmon spawning ground unequalled in North America."

He declined to say whether he will recommend designating the Hanford

He declined to say whether he will recommend designating the Hanford Reach a national monument. Using presidential powers pioneered a century ago by Theodore Roosevelt, the administration is preparing monument designations from the Santa Rosa Mountains of California to the Missouri Breaks of Montana.

After four hours on the river, Babbitt returned to Richland to meet with the county commissioners and irrigators who fervently oppose unilateral federal protection of the river.

"We feel the federal government would be better off letting local people have a part in this," said Sue Miller, chairwoman of the Franklin County Commissioners.

But Babbitt left no doubt that the Hanford Reach must be protected, and that he is impatient with Congress for failing to act for six years on proposed Wild and Scenic River designation. After observing bluff erosion along the reach yesterday, he voiced concern at threats to habitat of the Columbia River's last great wild salmon runs.

"You can see many of the conflicts coming at us -- the erosion and destruction of bluffs, the off-road vehicle tracks going straight uphill and the water from irrigation seeping through the bluffs," Babbitt said.

The Hanford Reach has remained undammed and surrounded by wild grasslands due to a World War II decision and years of political infighting.

The 560-square-mile Hanford reservation was claimed by the federal government for the Manhattan Project.

The government needed water, readily accessible power and privacy to develop the atom bomb. Yesterday, Babbitt passed the reactor that made plutonium used in the bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan, on Aug. 9, 1945.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Army Corps of Engineers first tried to flood the Hanford Reach with its proposed Ben Franklin Dam, and later in the 1980s to dredge the river for barge traffic.

As he stood by the swift-flowing river, its flow swelled by spring runoff, Babbitt talked to Richard Steele, a Hanford technician who has sought for 40 years to preserve the Reach.

"We can't preserve the river unless we protect the uplands," Steele told Babbitt.

Babbitt, a geologist, said he understood how irrigation could undermine one of the major natural features of the reach. "The White Bluffs are

clearly a very common, loosely consolidated, Pleistocene-era sediment," Babbitt said. "If you put water on that land in large quantities, you get soup."

The struggle over the Hanford Reach mirrors major public lands controversies in the Northwest dating back to the Columbia Gorge battle of the 1980s, the Alpine Lakes Wilderness faceoff of the 1970s and the creation of the North Cascades National Park in the 1960s.

Federal protection has won support from national conservation groups, local hunters and fishermen and Indian tribes. Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., has championed protection of the Hanford Reach, and invited Babbitt to consider creating a national monument after efforts at legislative compromise broke down in the late winter.

"The end goal is what we are looking at. . . . Whatever tools the administration must use to keep man-induced change from destroying this, the Yakama Nation would support," said Randy Settler, a member of the Yakama's tribal council and head of its fish and wildlife committee.

Lined up in opposition -- as they were in past battles -- are local county commissioners, agricultural groups, irrigation districts and property rights advocates. In the national monument battle, they have found an ally in Sen. Slade Gorton, R-Wash.

In an angry letter to Babbitt, an old friend, Gorton said yesterday: "Unfortunately, I fear that the real reason for your visit -- much like visits you and President Clinton have made to Utah, California, Arizona and Oregon -- is to add the Hanford Reach and the Wapluke Slope (north of the river) to the growing list of monuments that the president has chosen to designate by fiat," Gorton wrote.

Gorton said "the local community" should resolve the future of the reach "without a decision being forced upon them by Washington, D.C."

Babbitt insisted last night that he was seeking to listen and appreciate local concerns. He pointed to the administration's work with the state of Utah to develop management plans for the 1.7 million-acre Escalante-Grand Staircase National Monument.

The monument in Utah's canyonlands was designated by Clinton in 1996 in the face of furious local opposition.

Babbitt met privately yesterday with irrigators and county commissioners, then held the hourlong evening public meeting in Richland.

Emotions have run strong over the reach.

A Pasco couple, Carl and Doris Mansperger, showed up at the meeting with a letter for Babbitt.

"A stated reason environmental groups want federal control over the reach is so that they can dictate through bureaucrats' actions restricting irrigation and PUD power generation based on their perception of harm to the reach," they wrote.

LeRoy Allison, a Grant County commissioner, said his constituents are still smarting over Clinton's "unilateral action" last November, which transferred 57,000 acres of the Hanford reservation to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service management. Local commissioners have favored "multiple use" including some agricultural development for the area.

"I've had constituents saying, 'Look what a job the National Park Service has done in New Mexico,'" Allison added, referring to the controlled burn that devastated the town of Los Alamos and threatened a federal nuclear laboratory there last week.

Steele, the longtime conservation advocate, says opponents of federal designation have one real goal in mind, particularly for lands adjoining the reach.

"They want control, they want to farm it," he said.

On his tour of the reach, Babbitt moved from the 3,500-foot summit of Rattlesnake Mountain to an Indian archeological site along the river. A coyote stared at him. He saw numerous deer, and bird life from tiny swallows to large pelicans and blue herons.

The former Arizona governor noted that America has created parklands to protect mountains, glaciers and forests. "When we settled the West, we brought European ideas of scenery with us," he said. Ignored, in Babbitt's view, were great natural places like the Sonoran Desert of Arizona and the Snake River plain in Idaho.

"We have overlooked ecologically important lands of the West," he said. "It is not about legacies. It is not that we are out thinking of things to do. These issues have been with us for years. The issue is to finish up what we came to do, to have closure on issues that must be faced."

Clinton recently preserved big chunks of the Arizona desert as well as giant Sequoias in California. He still has a long way to go if he wants to match Teddy Roosevelt, who proclaimed 18 national monuments, including one in Washington's Olympic Mountains.

"Obviously, the president makes the final decision," Babbitt said.

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Hanford lands likely to get monument status

By Mike Lee
Herald Staff Writer

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt stormed ashore at Murray's Beach on Tuesday, all but claiming the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River as a national monument.

At day's end, the only question seemed to be how much of the Hanford reservation would be included in the secretary's recommendation to President Clinton about future protection of the river and surrounding lands.

"I think this is something that would stand as a legacy to (Clinton's) administration," said Randy Settler, Yakama Nation tribal council member. "It will stand longer than his name."

One likely possibility is that virtually all the Hanford lands — not just the river corridor or the existing wildlife refuges — would gain additional federal protection under an executive order.

"You can't meaningfully protect the river and its resources without dealing with the valley on both sides," Babbitt said.

Besides, he said, monument status would create a "powerful incentive" to make Hanford cleanup a higher national priority. "This area ought to be and can be and will be a shining example of what restoration is about," he said.

**“
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... a shining
example of
what restoration
is about.”**

Interior Secretary
Bruce Babbitt

”

They stopped for lunch at a beach on the Reach named for Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., who prompted the secretary's visit in her bid for permanent protection of the best fall chinook spawning grounds on the Columbia River. The beach sits near the northwest edge of the Reach, about 40 miles north of Richland

and a few miles east of the Vermita Bridge.

Rick Desimone, Murray's chief of staff, said he hopes the issue is resolved quickly by the administration. The Reach's future has been debated since at least the early 1990s, and Desimone sees decisive action as a boost to the region's salmon recovery efforts.

"It's important that we take the step now to prove that we are serious," he said.

Babbitt stopped short of publicly saying he would recommend national monument status under the Antiquities Act of 1906, but the river and the surrounding lands clearly intrigued him.

"It's an exceptional place," he said. "It's really an unimaginable vignette of what this whole country must have been like at one time."

"This is the last place."

Babbitt's Hanford stop was his latest in a string of visits to potential national monument sites across the West, many of which Clinton is expected to designate by the end of his term. To date, Babbitt said, "We have in many cases overlooked the most important places in the West."

Other sites under consideration are the Missouri Breaks in Montana and Steens Mountain in Southeastern Oregon.

Babbitt likely would visit the Reach, a 51-mile stretch of the undammed Columbia River that skirts the Hanford nuclear reservation, at least one more time if he recommends monument status but gave no indication Tuesday of when that might be.

Tuesday's tour included the flower-dotted flanks of Rattlesnake Mountain, the west edge of Hanford. Sernaded by horned larks and standing in a vast field of purple lupine, Babbitt waxed eloquent about the land's unique characteristics.

"This is as vigorous a steppe landscape as I have seen anywhere in the West," he said. "We are going to have to administer this very carefully."

Dave Goeke, retired Mid-Columbia official for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, narrated Babbitt's daylong bus and powerboat tours, describing the landscape from the top of Rattlesnake Mountain to the 300-foot-high White Bluffs north of Richland.

"I couldn't have asked for anything more," Goeke said. "(We said) everything we wanted to say."

Representatives from several environmental groups — including American Rivers, the Sierra Club and the Audubon Society — joined the tour lobbying for their longtime goal of permanent federal protection.

"We have felt for 30 years this is a national monument, a national treasure," said Jack de Yonge, representing the Washington Environmental Council.

Goeke was one of many in the environmental contingent who want to see vast stretches of the 360-square-mile reservation protected.

"The more the better," he said, noting the interconnectedness of the ecosystems.

Mid-Columbia county commissioners, avowed opponents of a presidential dictum on the Reach, got about an hour alone to try to persuade Babbitt their plan for federal-state-county management of the Reach was superior to national monument status.

"We didn't change his mind," said Max Benitz Jr., Benton County commission chairman, after the meeting.

Said Deborah Moore, Grant County commissioner: "His mind is made up."

Moore said commissioners gave the secretary several copies of a locally developed Reach management plan that went through multiple revisions and involved many people with a stake in the Reach. She hopes at least Babbitt will incorporate local ideas in the federal management plan.

At a public meeting in Richland on Tuesday night, Babbitt invited suggestions.

That didn't mollify Benitz. "There is no indication that he is going to utilize any of the input in making his determination," he said.

Others in the crowd of about 200 seemed more accepting of the secretary's overtures of cooperation to find "as much common ground as possible."

Babbitt tried to put to rest concerns of farmers that national monument designation would threaten their water rights. "I am skeptical about proposals to expand the (irrigation) project along the North Slope" of the Reach, he said. "But I am certainly willing to work any way we can to make a crystal clear commitment to existing reclamation projects."

Later, he added: "Private property rights would be unaffected. Period."

Babbitt also pledged commitment to existing research and industrial facilities at the south edge of Hanford, such as Energy Northwest's nuclear power plant and the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory operated by Battelle.

County plans, however, call for much more development of some Hanford lands over the next 30 years.

plans that likely would be stunted by monument status.

Mid-Columbians also raised concerns about public access to public lands.

"You are alienating the users of the very areas you are ... claiming to protect," said Bill Riley, with the Columbia Basin Environmental Council in Soap Lake.

Others wanted to make sure the pre-war settlement history of Hanford was not forgotten and that the B Reactor — the nation's first full-scale plutonium reactor — is preserved and opened to the public.

"Our history needs to be recorded," pleaded Annette Heriford of Richland.

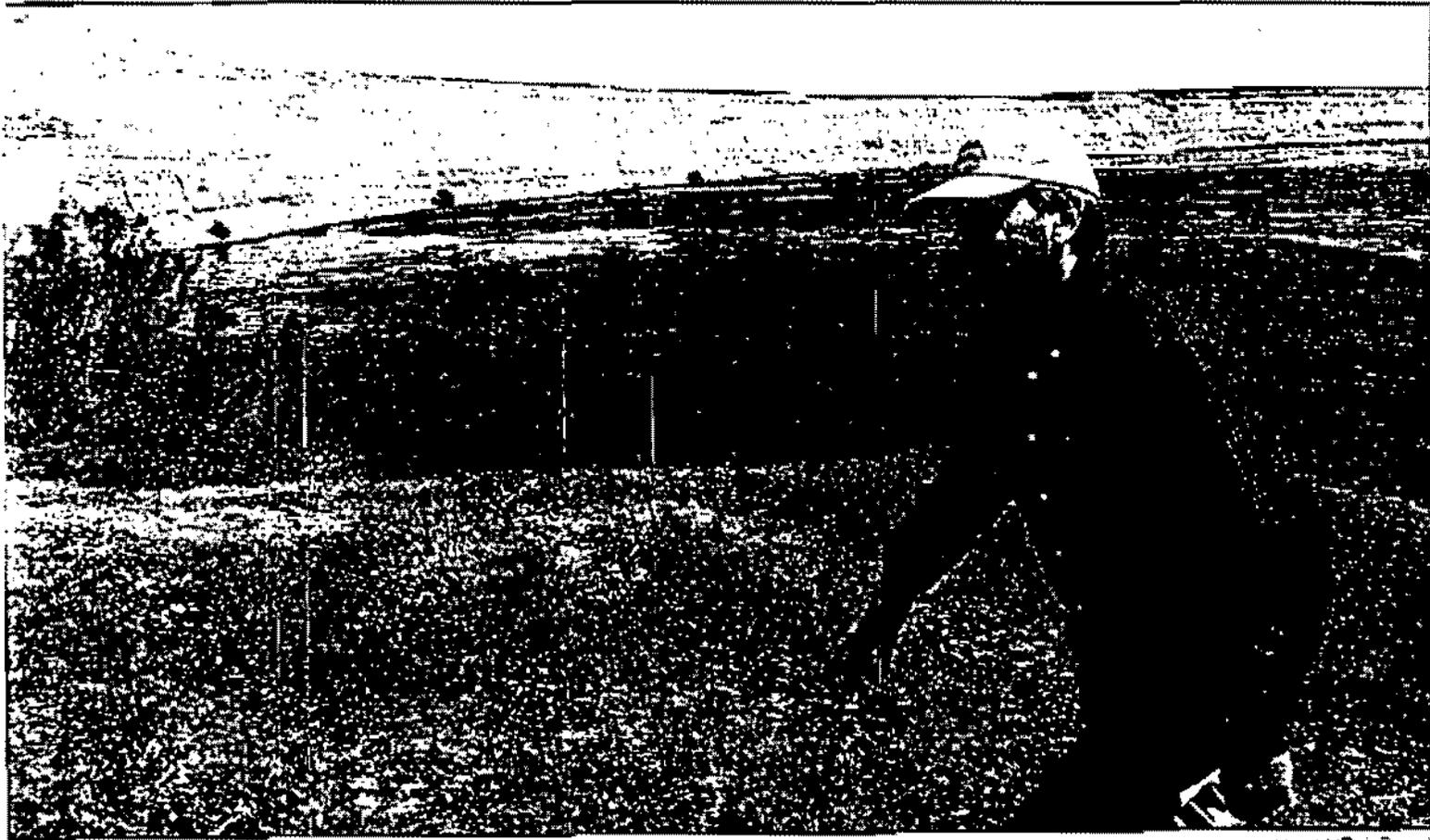
The secretary committed to including in his management plan a settlement history project. "This is a remarkable, many-faceted human story ... which should not be forgotten," he said.

Tim Arntzen, owner of the tour boat company that provided Babbitt's transportation, wanted assurances he still could operate his boats if the Reach is a monument.

Babbitt said Arntzen could — but that one of the issues in a management plan would be to determine which kinds of boats are allowed.

"There ought to be a maximum amount of public access because what you want this place to be is an asset to the community," Babbitt said.

Babbitt takes in Reach, more



Herald/Bob Brawdy

Above: With the White Bluffs and the Columbia River as a backdrop, Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt walks up a hill for a meeting Tuesday with representatives of Northwest tribes during a daylong tour of the Hanford Reach.

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Local News : Friday, May 12, 2000

Hanford Reach may get lasting protection

by Linda V. Mapes
Seattle Times staff reporter

The Hanford Reach of the Columbia River will be considered for permanent federal protection by U.S. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt when he visits Pasco next Tuesday.

The issue of long-term protection for the reach, the last free-flowing stretch of the Columbia, has simmered for years. The question has been whether the federal government or local jurisdictions should manage it.

U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., cheered Babbitt's involvement yesterday, saying the problem has defied legislative solution.

Babbitt will explore administrative solutions to protect the reach, including declaring it a national monument. That would put it permanently off limits to development. And it would do so without Congress getting involved, which Murray thinks a good idea.

"I began a long time ago trying to put together proponents and opponents to come to consensus only to have Congress not move on the legislation," Murray said. "I thought it was important for the people in the region to come up with a solution. ... It is time to do something to save salmon."

The reach is home to the last healthy population of fall chinook salmon in the state. The fish, called upriver brights, support the last commercially viable fishery in the Columbia.

"Salmon preservation is so important, this is a no-brainer," Murray said. "We have to move forward."

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Babbitt's involvement was cheered by environmentalists who have fought for years to protect the reach, and blasted by local officials.

"I am amazed, flabbergasted, surprised," said Grant County Commissioner LeRoy Allison. "It raises grave concerns of whether Senator Murray is listening to the people of the state."

Max Benitz, chairman of the Benton County Board of Commissioners, fears the move will derail the efforts of local officials to steer future management of the reach.

"They (the federal government) are coming into town and saying, 'We think this is in your best interest and we don't want any input from the people we work for.' That is disturbing," Benitz said.

Cynthia Bergman, a spokeswoman for U.S. Sen. Slade Gorton, R-Wash., said Gorton backs preservation of the reach but favors keeping local leaders involved.

"This is shocking," Bergman said. "The (Clinton) administration is just on a roll."

The administration also wants to ban road construction on 43 million acres of public forest land without the involvement of Congress.

Local environmentalists were thrilled.

"I have been working on this for 15 years," said Richard Leumont, conservation chairman for the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society.

"Senator Murray has made the right decision, a courageous decision, and we thank her for it. We are confident when Secretary Babbitt sees what's here, he will find a way to protect it."

Richard Steele of the Columbia River Conservation League said he has been fighting for protection of the reach since 1965.

"Now I believe it is finally going to happen," he said.

Lynda V. Mapes' phone message number is 206-464-2736.

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Ranchers, Babbitt map out plan for Great Rift national monument

Proposed area still allows cattle grazing

By Rocky Barker
The Idaho Statesman

ARCO — Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and a group of ranchers mapped out the boundaries for a proposed Great Rift national monument Tuesday.

Babbitt promised ranchers they could continue to graze cattle, kill predators and keep access to current grazing areas such as the picturesque Laidlaw Park range southwest of Craters of the Moon National Monument. Huddled around a map in a grove of quaking aspens, they agreed to general boundaries of both a Craters monument expansion and a new monument, which would be managed by the federal Bureau of Land Management.

"We want to stay out of the monument," Bud Purdy, a Pícabo rancher said. "But if you're going to do this, we want to be in on the planning."

Babbitt returned to Arco to meet with the ranchers, local officials and residents of this mostly agricultural area of South Central Idaho. He said he wants to convince President Bill Clinton to protect the unique fresh black lava flows and 62-mile-long rift where only 2,000 years ago molten lava poured out over the Snake River Plain.

Babbitt is considering placing all or most of the 618-square-mile Craters of the Moon Lava Flow and two smaller lava flows under the administration of the National Park Service, which manages the current Craters of the Moon monument. A second monument, under the control of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, would be designated to protect 126 square miles in Laidlaw Park along



The Associated Press

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt, pointing to map, discusses expansion of the Craters of the Moon National Monument and creation of a new national monument with area ranchers Tuesday in the Snowdrift Crater near Arco.

with a thin 10-mile corridor along the Great Rift connecting the lava fields.

Along with grazing, hunting

would be allowed in the BLM monument but not in the lava fields managed by the Park Service.

Currently, only 83 square miles of the area is included in the Craters of the Moon Na-

Babbitt proposal

MAY 10 2000

national Monument, created in 1924 by President Calvin Coolidge.

Clinton has designated new national monuments in Utah, Arizona and California based on recommendations from Babbitt. Clinton has the authority to establish or expand a national monument under the Antiquities Act of 1906.

Many Western members of Congress consider the act's powers to be too broad. U.S. Rep. Mike Simpson, an Idaho Republican, has introduced a bill that would require congressional approval within two years of a president's establishment of a monument.

In response, Babbitt has answered questions of Arco residents and public officials about his proposal. He promised to send maps out next week and to continue an open process.

"I want to sit on this landscape, work it out, do a map and send it out to you, take it to a point where we have the best understanding we can get."

He promised private landowners would not be affected and that they would get access across the lavas to meet their needs.

"I'll put it in writing," Babbitt said.

Bob Waddoups, an Arco rancher who has repeatedly been skeptical about federal wilderness and other protection, said he was satisfied.

"The answers you gave us gave me some peace of mind," Waddoups said.

The only new protections to the BLM monument will be a prohibition of mining and the assurance the land could never be sold.

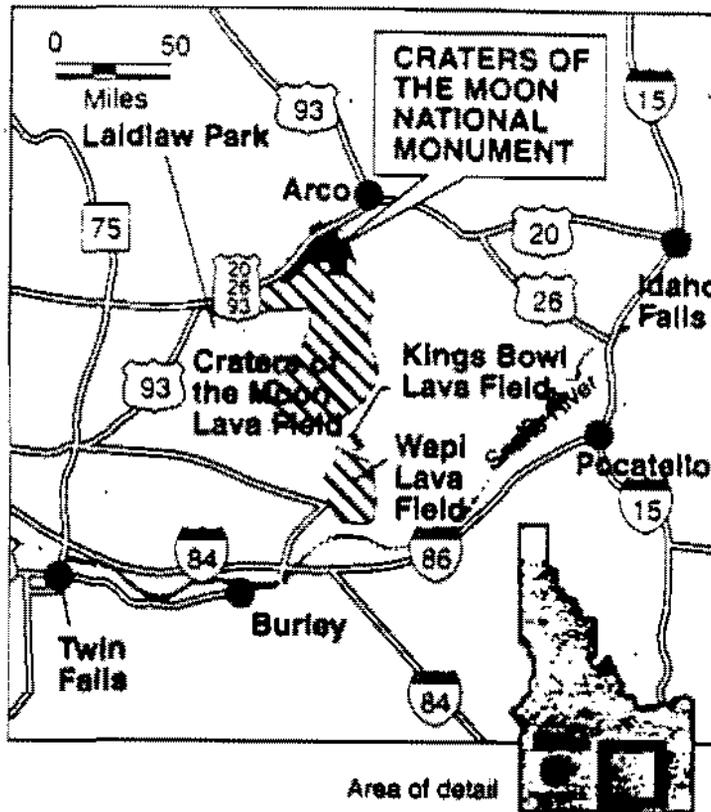
Babbitt also said he would limit motorized vehicle use to existing roads except for ranchers working their stock.

He also suggested a land swap with the state for lands along the Snake River so its lands would not be surrounded.

Secretary of State Pete Cenarrusa, whose sheep were grazing along the road into Laidlaw, agreed.

Clyde Molyneux, who owns 1,500 acres adjoining the lava field, said he doesn't believe Babbitt will protect his property rights. And he doubts he can get the monument designated.

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt has proposed expanding Craters of the Moon National Monument to include two other lava fields and turning surrounding Bureau of Land Management land into a second Great Rift national monument.



"This is the government," he said. "It doesn't get anything done in six and a half months."

Former Gov. John Evans, a Burley banker, has pressed to turn Craters of the Moon into a larger national park since 1980. He and other businessmen in Burley, Rupert, Arco and other communities surrounding Craters say it can bring tourism dollars into the rural area and diversify its economy.

"The concept is let's tie it together with Yellowstone, Teton and Glacier (national parks)," Evans said.

Craters of the Moon currently attracts 225,000 visitors a year.

Representatives for Sens. Larry Craig and Mike Crapo and Rep. Mike Simpson attended the meetings along with several Idaho legislators, county commissioners and mayors.

Michael Mathews a Craig aide from Twin Falls, said Craig wanted Babbitt to hold more public meetings around the state before he makes his recommendation to Clinton.

Babbitt will meet today with Gov. Dirk Kempthorne in Boise.

"When I send something to the president, you will be the first to know," Babbitt told the officials.

He urged local officials to work with the BLM and the congressional delegation to get funding for upgrading the roads in and around the monument and to offset the costs of providing services, such as search and rescue, in surrounding communities.

Butte County Commissioner Mark Stauffer thanked Babbitt for his meetings and involvement.

"I think that has relieved a lot of the fears that people had."

Contact Rocky at 377-6484 or rbarker@boise.gannett.com

What you should know

What is a national monument?

A national monument is federally administered public land set aside by the president under the authority of the Antiquities Act of 1906.

Is it a national park?

No, although the National Park Service serves as administrator for most national monuments. Only Congress can establish a national park.

What area does U.S. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt want to expand?

Craters of the Moon National Monument

- > Established: May 2, 1924
- > Size: 53,545 acres
- > Visitors: 225,000 annually

> Entrance fees: \$4 per vehicle, \$2 per person on bicycle, motorcycle or on foot
> Superintendent: James Morfe

For more information

www.doh.gov/mon/
Address: Craters of the Moon, P.O. Box 29, Arco, ID 83213
Phone: 1-208-627-3257

Babbitt back in state to talk about Craters

Interior secretary to meet with area leaders today

The Associated Press

ARCO — Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt returns to eastern Idaho's high desert on today to meet with local leaders about future management of the Craters of the Moon National Monument and possibly surrounding federal land.

Just two weeks ago, President Clinton's top natural resources manager hiked in the national monument and flew over the Great Rift that stretches far beyond it, expressing interest in finding a way to increase protection of the region's unique volcanic geology.

"I had an informative, eye-opening tour of this amazing area during my last visit," Babbitt said in a statement. "I am looking forward to a productive series of meetings during this visit."

The sessions are scheduled in Arco.

The administration has been looking for appropriate areas, especially in the West, where protection from development can be heightened under the 1906 Antiquities Act.

It allows the president, without congressional approval, to establish monuments on federal land to protect



Bruce Babbitt
interior
secretary

objects of scientific and historic interest.

President Clinton has already put more than a million acres in Arizona and California under national monument protection this year after using the act four years ago to preserve 1.9 million acres in southern Utah as the Grand Staircase-Escalante federal monument.

Babbitt, who labeled Idaho's Great Rift a world class ecosystem, has said he is about to recommend areas in southwestern Colorado and in Oregon near the California border for preservation under the law.

Opponents call the tactic a land

grab, claiming Clinton is running over local interests to establish an environmental legacy during his waning months in office.

And Republican Sen. Larry Craig has led criticism of any suggestion that further federal protections be imposed in the region.

Craig pointed out that there is little pressure on the Great Rift area that covers some 300,000 acres south of Arco.

Most is owned by the Bureau of Land Management, and cattle and sheep graze there. The agency does not keep count of visitors but says the area gets sparse traffic from hikers, cavers, off-road users and hunters.

But Babbitt says that threats to areas like the Great Rift too often go unrealized until it is too late to intervene.

Saturday, May 06, 2000

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Monumental Consequences

Word that President Clinton might create four new national monuments has drawn a predictable outcry from ranchers and other traditional users of the areas. But as he scours the Western wilds in pursuit of an environmental legacy, it is the environmentalists who ought to be crying the loudest.

With no management plans in place and no money to implement them anyway, Clinton has drawn bull's-eyes around some of the most ecologically sensitive areas in the country.

The proposed monuments -- Oregon's Soda Mountain, Idaho's Owyhee desert, Montana's Missouri Breaks and lands surrounding Colorado's Mesa Verde -- are little known outside the region and have not caused so much as a blip on the nation's summer vacation radar. Their anonymity has always been their best protection.

Until now.

That wasn't applause you heard after Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt heralded each area's grandeur last month. It was the roar of a million SUVs racing down to the REI map department.

Not that Americans shouldn't be allowed to visit these areas. It's just that putting out the welcome mat without a plan to handle the resulting hordes is a potentially greater threat to these fragile areas than the cattle grazing and other traditional uses that monument status is meant to curtail.

Clinton isn't the first or even the most prolific user of the 1906 Antiquities Act. He



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has used it five times since 1996, creating the Grand Staircase-Escalante monument in Utah and two each in Arizona and California. Teddy Roosevelt used it 18 times and Woodrow Wilson 12. Jimmy Carter proclaimed 15 monuments in Alaska in just one year.

But Roosevelt and Wilson lived in an era when merely reaching the new monuments could be a weeks-long ordeal. Carter's Alaska monuments are so remote that a visit poses a major logistical challenge even today.

Soda Mountain, however, lies within a half-day's drive of 12 million people. And a desert lover today can hop a morning flight in New York, rent a Jeep in Las Vegas at noon and be tearing up the cryptobiotic soil in the new Grand Canyon-Parashant monument by evening.

Because of the growing interest in the outdoors and the relative ease of traveling virtually anywhere in the Lower 48 states, protection for sensitive areas should be secured before the news releases go out.

Sometimes it is. Consider Arizona's Kartchner Caverns. Two friends discovered them more than 20 years ago but kept them secret for a decade until an agreement with the state was in place to protect them.

The Arizona Legislature acquired the caverns in 1988 and approved funds to study, develop and manage the masses. Today Kartchner Caverns State Park is one of the most heavily visited units in the state park system, and the management plan adopted beforehand has allowed millions to enjoy it without harming it.

What an example of cooperation and rational land management these patient spelunkers have provided. And what a contrast to the president. Like a stray dog, he dashes from tree to tree, considering nothing beyond leaving his mark.

Clinton's reckless pursuit of an environmental legacy has endangered the very lands he proposes to protect. For environmentalists, this is nothing to celebrate.

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FREE ANSWERS TO YOUR HEALTH QUESTIONS!

Thursday, May 4, 2000

'Let the Breaks be'

Many Montanans protest future of Missouri Breaks

By LORNA THACKERAY
Of The Gazette Staff

LEWISTOWN – Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt said Wednesday that he wouldn't be springing any surprises, but wants a decision on the future of the Missouri Breaks before surrendering his office in January.

Babbitt was on a two-day swing through Montana to discuss the fate of the 149-mile stretch of the Missouri River between Fort Benton and Fred Robinson Bridge on U.S. 191. The area remains today in much the same condition as when explorers Lewis and Clark journeyed through there nearly 200 years ago.

Babbitt hosted "roundtable" discussions with invited members of various interest groups in Fort Benton in the morning, then flew along the river corridor to an afternoon meeting in Lewistown.

A handful of protesters with a sign proclaiming "The Missouri ain't



Gazette photo/BOB ZELLAR

Dale Hankins, of the grassroots group Missouri River Stewards, protests Babbitt's proposal to make the Breaks a national monument.

broke" stood quietly outside the Wholefamily Cafe in Lewistown. Inside the tiny room reserved for the meeting, representatives of environmental, oil and gas, agriculture, local government and sportsmen's interests expressed their sentiments about the prospects of changing the designation of the area from Wild and Scenic to that of a national monument.

Babbitt is considering recommending the change in status to President Clinton, who has recently designated four new national monuments on federal lands in Arizona and California.

Many of the Fergus Country residents in the standing-room-only crowd were skeptical. Some told the secretary they were worried about how it would affect their land.

"Nothing we do is going to affect your private property," Babbitt said. "You can take that to the bank."

He acknowledged that if management of public lands changes, farmers and ranchers could see changes in the leases they hold on public lands. But the Bureau of Land Management, the Interior agency that manages federal lands along the Missouri River, has an incentive to work with private landowners to preserve the Breaks, Babbitt said.

Several local representatives at the meeting are either members or supporters of Missouri River Stewards, a grassroots organization aimed at securing local input into management of the area. The group is wary of any designation of the Breaks as a national monument, fearing that new restrictions will interfere with its current management for multiple use.

Babbitt said he came to Montana without any predetermined notions, but with an eye to future threats to the pristine condition of the area. Tuesday, at a public meeting in Great Falls, he said that he would prefer to work with Montana's Congressional delegation on legislation to protect the Breaks. He also promised to consult Gov. Marc Racicot. But he told the gathering that he sees some urgency in getting something done.

If he decides to recommend that President Clinton designate the Breaks as a national monument, Babbitt said he hoped the recommendation would represent a consensus of all the varying interests with a stake in the decision. Babbitt said the designation is really a matter of a new label. If the president decides to take action to preserve the area, the only way he can do that is under the Antiquities Act, the Secretary said. The Antiquities Act uses the word monument. The president would have "complete discretion" to say what is in the monument package, he said.

Babbitt said a local resource advisory council appointed to work with BLM reached agreement on many of the major issues

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affecting management of the Breaks. Recommendations from that council could serve as the basis for a consensus, he said.



Bruce Babbitt speaks at a round table discussion on management of the Missouri Breaks at the Wholefamily Cafe in Lewistown Wednesday afternoon.

"The resource advisory council got us down to the 10-yard line," he said.

Everyone who spoke to the secretary Wednesday in Lewistown agreed that the Breaks should be preserved as they are today.

"I want to see the river as it is now for my grandchildren," Ron Moody, who represented the interests of sportsmen, said. "I also want to see the agriculture community preserved. I don't think I have to harm them to achieve my ambition."

About the only real conflict among the various interests was on the subject of oil and gas development on the public lands within the corridor. Bob Decker, executive director of the Montana Wilderness Association, said Babbitt should closely study the consequences.

"We don't think natural gas development is benign," he said.

He said even with the most assiduous attention to the environment, oil and gas development comes with a price — more roads; more disruption of the land and a loss of wildness.

Vince Larsen, the oil and gas representative invited to the

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roundtable, said he resented attempts to malign his industry.

"I am a geologist," he said. "I'm also an environmentalist."

Larsen said the same people who want to prevent all development also like to have a warm house and hot water.

Babbitt said he was optimistic that something could be worked out.

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Babbitt says he plans to come back to state

By KATH PUCKETT
Tribune Staff Writer

After two days of meetings in other northcentral Montana towns, U.S. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt left the state Wednesday planning to return to talk to state wildlife agency officials in the Yellowstone Basin Breaks.

And he said he would improve his efforts to work with the state's congressional delegation about coming up with a new management plan through federal legislation.

When the meetings were over, Babbitt traveled from Yellowstone in Billings, where he was scheduled to catch a flight to Colorado.

Surprising even his staff, he promised to come back. Details of what would be his third trip to Montana in a year haven't been arranged.

"I'm not going to walk away," Babbitt said.

Following a Tuesday evening meeting in Great Falls that drew more than 300, Babbitt on Wednesday met with small groups of fewer than 15 in Fort Benton and later in Lewistown.

In between, he flew to a Breaks natural gas field. Whether restrictions are needed on natural gas has been controversial, and Babbitt said he hasn't made up his mind.

The secretary continued to insist that either legislation by Congress or a proclamation by the president is needed to come up with a new management plan for the Breaks between Fort Benton and U.S. 101.

At the least, the boundary of the 140-mile wild and scenic portion of the Missouri River should be formalized, he said. He also said hard-rock mining in the river corridor needs to be addressed, and possibly natural gas development, the largest extraction industry in the Breaks area.

In an interview in Great Falls Wednesday morning, before setting out for Fort Benton, Babbitt said he wants

have a Breaks plan in place before he leaves office Jan. 20, preferably a legislatively created plan.

"I'd like to try to keep pushing in developing consensus," he said.

A new land designation for the Breaks would bring with it financial assistance, he said, which could be put toward plans dealing with an increasing number of tourists because of the Lewis and Clark bicentennial.

He said \$5 million was appropriated when the 1.7 million-acre Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Utah was created. The aid can help surrounding communities with road maintenance, visitors centers and other management needs.

A new land designation would not prevent subdivision, which can only be addressed by local government regulations. But Babbitt said a designation would bring in additional money that could be used to purchase conservation easements from willing sellers.

Anti-designation signs were placed in several windows of businesses in Lewistown and a few protesters with signs stood in front of The Whole Foodstore Cafe.

When Babbitt arrived at Bob's Riverfront Restaurant in Fort Benton, several sign-carrying people with Missouri River Sewards, which opposes a new national monument, greeted him.

Most were across the street from the restaurant, a stone's throw from the Missouri River. Babbitt went in the back, but two other protesters greeted him in the alley. The secretary raised briefly and shared a laugh with the pair.

Babbitt used humor in the two meetings to diffuse tension. So did Montana.

When Fort Benton Mayor Rick Morris offered the secretary a peace medal necklace, Babbitt asked, "Is that a noose?"

Laughter followed the comment and Morris' response: "It may or may not be interpreted that way."

Babbitt wore the necklace the rest of the meeting.

When rancher Joy Crawford noted where she lived in the Breaks, Babbitt recalled his canoe trip through the area last August. "So I was trespassing on your land?" Babbitt said.

"That's why we're here," Crawford despaired.

Babbitt heard many of the same points in Fort Benton and Lewistown that he heard the night before in Great Falls.

Ranchers and local government officials and politicians said they don't believe a national monument is necessary, and expressed concern about how a new land designation would affect private property.

"We would like to work with the BLM and you to maybe establish something else besides a monument," said Chouteau County Commissioner Ken Evers in Fort Benton.

But conservationists said a monument is necessary to permanently protect the area.

"We don't think national gas development is benign," Bob Decker, of the Montana Wilderness Association, told the secretary in Lewistown.

Jack Lepley, the Fort Benton museum director, said the discussion of a new land designation shouldn't leave our business people and communities that rely on tourism dollars. He said tourism and outdoor need to be protected.

"It's our lifeblood," he said of the river.

As Babbitt was leaving Fort Benton, Morris, the town's mayor, said the secretary's willingness to listen impressed him.

Babbitt crowd fired up

Hundreds listen to secretary pitch protection for Breaks

By KARL PUCKETT
Tribune Staff Writer

Calling it a world-class resource, U.S. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt reiterated to an overflow audience in Great Falls Tuesday evening that the Upper Missouri River needs more protection, but he said he didn't come to town with a specific proposal in mind.

He said that he isn't bent on recommending that President Clinton declare the Upper Missouri River a national monument. And he said a number of options are available to preserve the river corridor and the surrounding Breaks.

His preference is to have Montana's congressional delegation — U.S. Sens. Conrad Burns and Max Baucus and Rep. Rick Hill — introduce legislation to Congress.

That option, he said, would "keep Bruce Babbitt and all his monument crowd out of here."

"Isn't it possible that Montanans, in all your feisty, wonderful tradition of duking it out over lots of subjects, might see a little area of consensus we can take to the delegation?" Babbitt asked during one point.

At least 550 people turned out for Babbitt's appearance at the Fine Arts Center theater at the University of Great Falls. The theater seats 357, and every spot was filled. Some people stood in the back and another 140 people listened in from an overflow room next door. Another 50 or so sat in the lobby and listened.

Toting signs, land designation supporters and opponents from all over the state started showing up

more than an hour before the secretary's 7 p.m. starting time.

"It's just one needless designation after another," said J.B. Stone, a computer salesman and gold prospector from Whitefish, holding a sign that said "Missouri River Breaks Aren't Broken."

Not so, countered a sign carried by Aart Dolman, of Great Falls, a member of the Montana Wilderness Association and Sierra Club. The sign proclaimed, "National Monument Protects Our Land."

Babbitt has recommended this year that Clinton name four new monuments in California and Arizona.

But he told the signless crowd (signs weren't allowed in the auditorium) that other possibilities to protect the Breaks are a national conservation area, a monument created legislatively or just legislation that doesn't have a name. "The label isn't important," he said.

He said there were three issues he thinks the congressional delegation should address legislatively.

One is the boundary of the wild and scenic corridor, created by Congress in 1978. The boundary never has been formalized. Second is limiting or eliminating hard-rock mining and oil and natural gas exploration in the river corridor.

He said he wasn't sure about natural gas exploration throughout the entire Breaks. Gas production is the biggest extraction industry in the area. Babbitt plans to visit an exploration area today.

More funding to handle increasing use of the river should be addressed in the legislation as well, he said. And, "now that we've got everybody riled up," now might be a good time to finally act on the five wilderness study areas in the Breaks.

Dressed casually, he occasionally joked with the crowd. Mayor Randy Gray, who offered a Montana gift basket to the visiting Clinton cabinet member, introduced him.

Babbitt arrived late because of a plane cancellation, but he listened to testimony for more than two hours.

Great Falls Police and U.S. Park Police were on hand for security, and bags were examined at the door to the theater. No clashes occurred outside of the building, although Babbitt's staff did tell two men holding huge flags that they had to move into the "first amendment area," a place roped off for protesters.

Babbitt told the audience that he first began focusing on the river after reading Stephen Ambrose's book about the Lewis and Clark expedition, "Undaunted Courage." By chance, he ran into the author three or four years ago. Ambrose told him that he should visit the river. Babbitt finally did last summer.

"It's a world class resource," he said. "There's nothing quite like it."

To show his appreciation for their work on studying management of the Breaks, he gave pictures of the river to members of the Bureau of Land Management advisory council.

He said he agreed with the council's recommendation that grazing should continue to be allowed on public land, as well as hunting and fishing. Private property rights would be respected. "This isn't about some kind of acquisition program," he said.

He was impressed by the council's consensus that river overflights and Jet Skis should be reigned in.

But he said threats to the river, such as noxious weeds and subdivision, led him to believe that "we need to make some changes on this river that require some authorization or legislation."

Those who spoke raised many of the same points that had been expressed at previous public meetings. Applause often followed speakers on both sides of the designation issue.

Some said the area needed more protection from mineral exploration, off-road vehicles and people visiting the river. Others said Montanans could come up with their own solutions to managing problems and that a new designation wouldn't solve threats such as subdivision.

Those were the lucky ones. Some people didn't even get in to have their say.

"You can't speak your piece out here, so we're going to leave," said Ken Gebhardt, a retired Great Falls man, standing outside the theater and unable to get a seat.

"They should have gotten a bigger auditorium," added Joe Eger, also a retiree from Great Falls.



"We're letting people know what we stand for — we're standing for a national monument."

— Aart Dolman, Great Falls, holding a sign that said, "National Monument Protects Our Land."

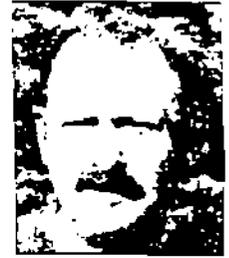


"Our footprint we make when we drill is so small."

— Paul Urban, Klabzuba Oil & Gas



Babbitt spoke to about 550 people gathered for a public meeting at UGF Tuesday.



"Clinton is trying to make a bigger legacy for himself. That's what the whole thing is about."

— Jack Eades, Great Falls



"We have a designation we like, the one we have, Wild and Scenic."

— Joanne Witt, Carter

Roundtable talks scheduled for Fort Benton, Lewistown

By Tribune Staff

U.S. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt will hold two invitation-only roundtables, in Fort Benton this morning and Lewistown this afternoon, to further discuss managing the Missouri River Breaks.

Participating in the Fort Benton talk will be state lawmakers John Witt, Bill Thomas and Jon Tester; insurance agent Steve Vielleux; outfitter and farmer Larry Cook; rancher Joy Crawford; Dave Dittloff of the Mon-

tana Wildlife Federation; Chouteau County Commissioner Ken Evans; Jerry Jovanovich of the chamber of commerce; museum director Jack Lepley; Big Sandy Mayor Rick Morris; Steve Pilcher of the Montana Stockgrowers Association; and attorney Dennis Tighe of the Montana Wilderness Association.

Participating in the Lewistown roundtable will be Fergus County Commissioner Kathie Bailey; The Lewistown News-Argus publisher Dave Byerly; Bob Decker, executive director of the

Montana Wilderness Association; rancher Matt Knox; Vince Larsen, oil and gas; sportsman Ron Moody; rancher Mark Peterson; architect Jeff Sheldon; outfitter Don Sorenson; J.R. Strand, president of the chamber of commerce; and Kim Lacey of the Central Montana Resource Advisory Council.

Babbitt also will tour a natural gas field with Mark Good of the Montana Wilderness Association and Ralph Gailey of Macum Energy.



Tribune photos by Mark Sterkel

Steve Funke, left, of Kalispell, was one of several people carrying signs expressing their views outside the University of Great Falls Fine Arts Center theater, where U.S. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt later listened to Montanans' concerns about the Missouri River Breaks Tuesday evening.