



NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

WEDNESDAY, MAY 3, 2000

billingsgazette

Wednesday, May 2, 2000

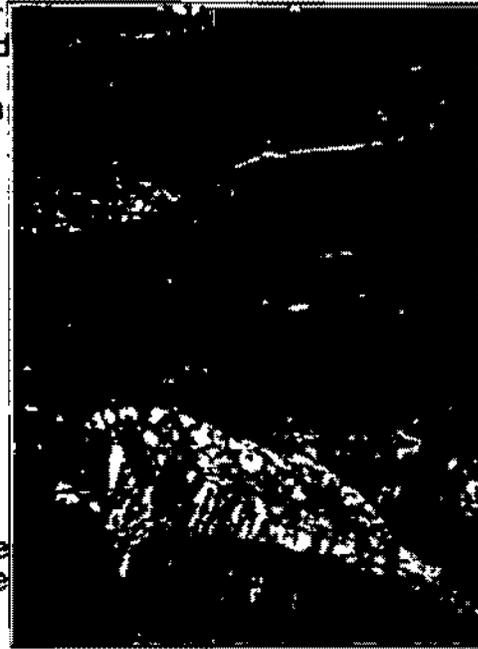
Missouri Breaks

Babbitt urges delegation to guard area

GREAT FALLS (AP) – Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt would prefer to work with Montana's congressional delegation on a legislative solution to protecting the Missouri River Breaks, he told a public meeting here Tuesday night.

"I would prefer all of us to walk out of here tonight and say, 'We agree the Montana congressional delegation should introduce legislation, and that'll keep Bruce Babbitt and his monument crowd out of here,'" Babbitt said, drawing enthusiastic applause from the overflow crowd at the University of Great Falls.

Babbitt has been considering whether to recommend that President Clinton declare the Breaks a national monument. The river corridor from Fort Benton to U.S. 191 northeast of Lewistown now is protected as a wild and scenic river.



Gazette photo/LARRY MAYER

An aerial view shows the Missouri Breaks as the river winds across central Montana. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt was in Great Falls Tuesday to discuss a special designation for the area.

A national monument designation would carry more restrictions, but is only one of the available options for protecting the river corridor, Babbitt said.

"It's not the label on the package that's the real issue," he said. "The label is not important, but we do need to address issues that, ideally, need congressional legislation."

Babbitt said Congress has never actually defined the boundaries of the Wild and Scenic Missouri River corridor. He also said the issue of oil and gas development in the area must be addressed, and the status of wilderness study areas in the corridor must be finalized.

Babbitt said he wants traditional uses such as grazing and hunting to continue, and said he is open-minded about oil and gas development.

The interior secretary said he supports many of the recommendations put forth by a local advisory council. They include maintaining traditional uses of the area – such as grazing, hunting and fishing – and leaving control of the land with the Bureau of Land Management.

Another key recommendation was that the area be protected from excessive use and development.

Many at Tuesday night's meeting, however, pointed out that one of the big fears – subdivision of private property in the scenic river corridor – will have to be addressed by local governments, not Washington.

Babbitt arrived 25 minutes late for the 7 p.m. meeting after his Delta Airlines connecting flight from Salt Lake City was canceled. A plane was chartered to bring him to Great Falls.

He spent most of his time Tuesday night listening to comments from the public. All 457 seats in the University of Great Falls theater were filled, and perhaps 200 other people listened on speakers in the corridor and in a nearby lecture room.

Conservationists have applauded the idea of a national monument designation for the Breaks, saying the primitive region is threatened by oil and gas development, off-road vehicles and subdivision of privately owned land for luxury homes.

"I want to see this land protected for the people – not for corporations," said Elsie Tuss, a rancher and farmer from Floweree.

"Economic development will eventually destroy this area," said Dave Anderson, who identified himself as a physician and part-time rancher.

Wendy Whitehorn of Great Falls gave Babbitt petitions with

6,700 signatures supporting a national monument designation.

"Please keep intact this last vestige of the wild Missouri River. Future generations will thank you for it," Whitehorn said.

Other speakers Tuesday, including ranchers, leaders of agricultural organizations and oil developers, opposed the idea.

"The more federal management we have, the worse things are," said Terry Quaver, who said he has been involved in federal land issues for more than 20 years.

Paul Urban, area manager for Klabzuba Oil and Gas Co., said that his company has been operating responsibly in the Missouri Breaks for 20 years.

"We control the only pipeline that crosses the Missouri. I challenge you to find that crossing," he told Babbitt.

Brian Severin, who ranches east of Great Falls and is on the board of the Montana Stockgrowers Association, said the people who live along the Missouri River corridor have done a good job managing it. The MSGA has proposed a local management alternative dubbed "Undaunted Stewardship," he added.

"We can do a lot of things in house without having a big federal bureaucracy," he said.

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NEWS SUMMARY

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GREAT FALLS TRIBUNE NEWS

PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

TUESDAY, MAY 2, 2000

MAY - 1 2000

State awaits Tuesday visit by Babbitt

Montanans want land protected but differ on how to reach goal

By KARL PUCKETT
Tribune Staff Writer

Montanans are looking forward to face-to-face meetings with the country's top land

manager this week as S. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt visits to talk about management of the Missouri River Breaks.

Babbitt's trip to Big Sky could be critical in how one of the state's crown jewels is managed in the 21st century.

At Babbitt's recommendation, President Clinton has created four new national monuments in two states this year.

"Some are wondering if the Breaks is next.

"I think there are a lot of

people anxiously waiting to hear what the secretary is going to say," said Hugo Tureck, a farmer and rancher from Coffee Creek, who headed a local advisory council that studied Breaks management for Babbitt.

No pronouncements are scheduled during the secretary's second trip to the state in a year. (Babbitt canceled a stretch of the Missouri last spring.)

Officials with the Interior Department and Bureau of Land Management say the secretary's mission is solely to listen to different sides before he makes up his mind on what's best for the Breaks.

Meetings are planned Tues-

day and Wednesday in Great Falls, Lewistown and Fort Benton.

"The general consensus is they want to protect that area," said John Wright, an Interior Department spokesman. "The question is how? Basically, that's what these discussions are about."

The secretary will bring a track record of national monument recommendations with him, even if no announcement for the Breaks is imminent. And he's made it clear that in some fashion he wants to protect remote and pristine areas in the West that he contends are threatened by development and overuse.

The Breaks is among a handful of spots that he has singled out.

Babbitt says that he would rather work with the state's congressional delegation on legislation creating a good management prescription for the Upper Missouri. But he hasn't ruled out recommending a national monument.

In recent months, President Clinton, at Babbitt's recommendation, has used his authority under the Antiquities Act to turn four areas of federal land in Arizona and California into national monuments.

"He has always said that these areas are priceless, and that he would like Congress to develop legislation to protect the areas, but that he would do whatever he needed to preserve and protect those priceless areas," Wright said.

In Montana, a 149-mile stretch of Upper Missouri and adjacent federal land called the Breaks is under consideration. Located between Fort Benton and U.S. 191 in north central Montana, the Breaks is known for its geological treasures such as the White Cliffs, uniquely shaped cliffs that tower over the river. Its storied history includes the Lewis and Clark Expedition, which paddled through the region almost 200 years ago.

The secretary asked Tureck's BLM advisory council to study management of the Breaks and give him a recommendation on how it could be preserved, particularly in light of the upcoming bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark trip, which already is creating additional river traffic.

The council came up with several suggestions, which Babbitt has embraced, but members couldn't agree on an entire new land designation in a report that they turned over in January.

Montana's congressional delegation and Gov. Marc Racicot also have been cool toward a new designation, saying Montanans have long protected the area and can be counted on to address future management chal-

lenges such as increased tourism.

In a statement released in advance of his Montana trip, Babbitt said he was keeping a promise to return to talk about the Missouri.

"I look forward to working with you to recognize the great qualities of this spectacular and unique area, and ensure that it receives the protection and care that it deserves," the secretary said.

Montanans on both sides of the designation issue say they're encouraged by the secretary's visit. They're looking forward to lobbying Babbitt in person. Interest groups are encouraging members to turn out in force.

"I know a lot of people from the whole stretch of river, from Fort Benton to Winfred, feel the same way I do," said Matt Knox, a rancher who heads Missouri River Stewards, which opposes a new designation. "We would like the opportunity to sit down with him and discuss our concerns."

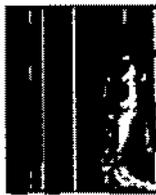
Last week, Knox still was hoping to land a spot on the list of people who will get to visit with Babbitt at the smaller gatherings in Fort Benton and Lewistown Wednesday. He wants to impress upon the secretary that ranchers have taken good care of the land for decades and can continue to do so without more federal rules.

Jim Vance, president of the Medicine River Canoe Club, said the majority of its 100 members support a national monument designation. Vance said increasing tourism is damaging the river.

"Without some active management down there, we think it's going to be pretty bad for the river, environmentally and aesthetically," he said.

Tureck said Babbitt already has informed the advisory council that he accepts many of the specific management recommendations that the group of ranchers, conservationists, county and state officials and industry representatives came up with.

Topping the list was that traditional uses be maintained, such as grazing, hunting and fishing, and that management remains in the hands of the BLM. Another key recommendation was that the resource be protect-



Babbitt

PUBLIC MEETING: Bruce Babbit will conduct a public meeting between 7 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Tuesday in the Fine Arts Center theater at the University of Great Falls. Babbit will meet with two smaller groups Wednesday in Fort Benton and Lewistown. Details of those meetings are expected to be mailed down Monday.

ed from too much development and overuse.

"The key question is, 'Can we do that without designation? Does designation add to the problem?' That's the debate being made right now," Turock said.

Dave Mart, an area OLM manager based in Lewistown, said Ushitt wants to visit a natural gas field to get a feel for the level and impact of development. Whether to allow continued gas production was a sticking point for the advisory council.

The meeting in Great Falls is open to the general public. The smaller gatherings in Fort Benton and Lewistown will include selected members from various interest groups.

"One benefit of the small meeting is more of an intimate discussion than you can get in a large public meeting," Mart said.

Babbitt likely to get an earful ... just as it should be

It promises to be a rip-roaring meeting tomorrow night when Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt comes to town.

Those wanting additional protection for a 149-mile stretch of the Missouri River see him as the possible savior of their cause.

Others see him as an ambassador of big government, come to Montana to strengthen federal control at the expense of personal freedom.

A few conspiracy theorists even swear he's coming on behalf of a hush-hush U.N. mission to turn control of the river over to some shadowy international cartel.

What's got people so worked up? The future management of the stretch of Missouri and adjacent lands from Fort Benton eastward to the Fred Robinson Bridge on U.S. Highway 191.

It's a spectacularly scenic

area that includes the popular White Cliffs stretch, badlands, prairie and rolling hills.



Scenic

The promise of heavier tourist use, combined with the possibility of further gas development and subdivision, has many Montanans

pushing for additional federal designation that will maintain and protect what is predominantly a wild area.

Others — some of whom have long enjoyed the privilege of using public lands almost exclusively for their own profit — pooch-pooch the notion that the river is threatened.

They want things to stay just the way they are, thank you.

But that's not happening and it's naïve to hope that the

river can be frozen in time.

That's why we support increased protection for the Missouri.

That's why the citizen-based Central Montana Resource Advisory Council has studied the issue at length and solicited opinions from hundreds of Montanans.

Based in large part on their recommendations, the following conditions should be included in whatever designation Babbitt eventually makes:

■ Hunting and fishing will continue to be allowed.

■ Grazing will be considered a legitimate use of the land.

■ Jet Skis will be prohibited from the 149-mile stretch and motorboat use will continue to face restrictions.

■ Commercial recreational overflights will be banned along the river corridor.

■ The federal government will appropriate funds to al-

low for more conservation easements along the river.

■ The Bureau of Land Management will seek additional funds to assist rural communities and emergency services affected by increased tourist use during the Lewis and Clark bicentennial.

■ A two-year moratorium on new river outfitters will be implemented.

The designation also must address the issues of oil and gas drilling and other development and commercialization along the precious stretch of river. Restrictions should be implemented, where appropriate.

Babbitt will face a tough crowd Tuesday night.

That's good. The presence of so many people from so many backgrounds will demonstrate just how important the Missouri River is to Montanans.

Venue could be problem

The organizers of tomorrow night's public meeting with Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt scheduled the event for 7-9 p.m. in the Fine Arts Center theater at the University of Great Falls.

It seats 357.

About 10 days ago more than 400 people, most opposed to a new designation for the Missouri River, jammed into a meeting in Lewistown.

Given the number of folks on the other side of the issue, it's hard to imagine that UGF's theater — nice as it is — can accommodate the possible

crowd.

That's a shame, especially since Babbitt has been routing this trip as an opportunity to get input from many Montanans. His later meetings in Fort Benton and Lewistown will be with invited guests only.

If there's any chance at all of moving this to a bigger facility — the Civic Center Convention Center or a high school gymnasium, for example — it should be considered, late as it is.

Otherwise, we advise those wanting a seat to arrive early.

Babbitt promises battle to close pumice mine

By Mark Shaffer
The Arizona Republic
April 26, 2000

FLAGSTAFF -- The huge, 100-foot-deep pit in the foothills of the San Francisco Peaks was anything but the way Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt remembered his childhood jaunts in the forest.

"I was nearly in tears when I saw what's going on here," said Babbitt, a Flagstaff native, who visited the pumice mine called White Vulcan on Tuesday.



Ferrell Secakuku, former chairman of the Hopis, and Bruce Babbitt, secretary of the Interior Department, talks about the damage done to the San Francisco Mountains by the White Vulcan Pumice Mine north of Flagstaff.

[Click here for a slideshow of more photographs.](#)

In his final year in office, Babbitt is putting all of his weight behind an effort to try to close the mine, which produces the light, chalky material used in producing stone-washed blue jeans but which environmentalists say defaces the area, creating a scar that will last for decades.

But while 250 protesters at the mine cheered the effort, it won't be an easy battle for Babbitt, who has moved recently to solidify his environmental legacy, carving out large parcels to create the Agua Fria National Monument north of Phoenix and the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument north of Grand Canyon.

The Sierra Club has made the White Vulcan Mine its showcase target in its national campaign to change the Mining Law of 1872.

Organizer Andy Bessier of the environmental group's Save the Peaks campaign has also

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- [Two more areas on Babbitt's list \(4/26\)](#)

enlisted officials of Indian tribes from throughout northern Arizona, who oppose the mining on religious grounds.

The battle pits environmentalists against two long-standing adversaries: the powerful American Mining Association and Western senators who enthusiastically back the 128-year-old mining law.

The law, passed to help produce precious minerals for a fledgling nation, still allows mining interests to claim and mine land owned by federal taxpayers for \$5 an acre if they can prove there are marketable minerals on the site. They can then later patent the land for a nominal fee.

Babbitt said he would demand once again that Congress change the law. He said he would also be working with the U.S. Forest Service on a process to have more than 70,000 acres of the San Francisco Peaks removed from mineral activity. Babbitt also said he would be pleading and cajoling to convince Tufflite Inc. of Phoenix, which operates the mine, that "it's time to go home."

If that doesn't work, Babbitt said he would be poised for "a major political fight" to have the Interior Department given imminent domain over the San Francisco Peaks "to terminate this sacrilege in the courts of our land."

Ed Morgan, manager of the White Vulcan mine, said he's willing to give up the mine if someone wants to cough up \$10 million.

"We've talked land trades with the Forest Service for the last decade, but those talks have never gone anywhere," Morgan said.

He said Babbitt would be opening a "huge can of worms" with mining interests throughout the country if the federal government tries to claim imminent domain over the mine. "Personally, I just think that Babbitt is blowing smoke and trying to play buddy-buddy with the Indian tribes," Morgan said.

Allen Jones, a Navajo tribal member from the community of Leupp and a heavy equipment operator at the mine, was more cynical about the protest. He called it another example of "White people and the federal government screwing the Indians again."

Jones stared disdainfully at a group of Native American political and religious leaders gathered to hear Babbitt.

"A lot of those Native Americans haven't worked a day in their life," Jones said. "They're just being used for the White people's agenda. They are all so concerned about the sanctity of the land, but they wouldn't hesitate to put us in the unemployment line. Are they going to come up with a

Decent-paying job for us if the mine closes? Yeah, right."

Jones then pointed to the summit of Mount Humphreys. "They keep saying, 'Save the Peaks.' That's like 20 miles from here. We're not tearing down the mountain. We're not even in the mountains."

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A landmark recommendation

Chunk of Colorado
could be designated
national monument

By Michael Romans
News-Weekend Edition

4/25/00

WASHINGTON — Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, true to his word, will recommend that President Clinton designate a huge chunk of land in Colorado as the nation's newest national monument.

Babbitt made his intent clear during a visit last year to the pristine site in southwestern Colorado — approximately 164,000 acres in Montezuma and Dolores counties filled with cultural and historic treasures, including the famed Anasazi ruins.

He said Monday that the rugged canyon lands are "ripe for consideration" along with the ecologically diverse Soda Mountain, near the Oregon-California border, to become the fifth and sixth national monuments to be created by Clinton this year.

Colorado Republicans, including Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, have sharply criticized Clinton's use of the 1906 Antiquities Act, which allows presidents wide latitude to designate national monuments and restrict land use, including prohibitions on mining and logging. It could also extend to grazing and the use of recreational vehicles.

"We absolutely oppose the president's invocation of the Antiquities Act," said James Doyle, Campbell's spokesman. "Obviously, we oppose any similar action in Colorado. We don't think it incorporates the requisite amount of public input."

Babbitt's suggestion last year that the area warranted protected status triggered a battle with Campbell, who tried to sidestep Babbitt by sponsoring compromise legislation to make the land a national conservation area. Campbell's somewhat less-restrictive plan was intended to placate ranchers and farmers.

But Campbell abruptly abandoned that compromise about three weeks ago because of sniping by "extreme voices" on both sides — local property owners and businesspeople on one hand; environmental groups on the other. Neither seemed to like the senator's proposal.

"It's unfortunate that the local effort wasn't there to prevent this local taking," Doyle said.

In a dig at local property own-

“It's unfortunate that the local effort wasn't there to prevent this local taking.”

— James Doyle,
Sen. Campbell's spokesman

ers, Doyle said, "If they didn't like his (national conservation area) bill, they're going to love the national monument."

Mark Pearson, the Durango-based chairman of the Sierra Club's national wildlands committee, said the environmental community "enthusiastically" endorses Babbitt's action.

"It's not unexpected," he said. "These are certainly world-class, one-of-a-kind cultural resources that deserve the highest level of protection."

He said there is little practical difference between Campbell's conservation proposal and Babbitt's plan to confer national monument status on the land. In both instances, he said, there will be increased restriction on the use of off-road vehicles.

Pearson added that the designation would also allow Babbitt to argue more forcefully for an increased budget to help manage an area he said has traditionally been underfunded by the Interior Department.

"The one area of agreement on all sides," he said, "is that this area needs more money and more staff."

Contact Michael Romans at (303) 488-2712 or Romansm@denr.com.

Do-It-Yourself Desert

APR 30 2000

You're on your own at Arizona's new Agua Fria park. But that's good.

By JOHN BAYLEY
Special to The Washington Post

Agua Fria National Monument, 71,100 acres of desert 40 miles north of Phoenix, harbors an array of plant and animal species, a healthy perennial river (rare in Arizona), miles of challenging four-wheel-drive/mountain biking/hiking trails and—the main event—an unquantified cache of 13th-century Indian pueblos and rock carvings. Yet this newly designated park has no visitors center, tourist facilities, entry fee or promotional signage. And the Federal Bureau of Land Management, which oversees the monument, doesn't want to publicize the Indian ruin locations to the general public.

But it's precisely this lack of hard marketing and infrastructure that makes Agua Fria so alluring. The land is a scraggly expanse of gulches, hills and (usually) dry stream beds, shadowed by two massive mesas, which in turn are bisected by the aforementioned waterway, the Agua Fria River.

President Clinton created the monument Jan. 11 to help protect the Indian vestiges from scavengers and the river canyon from mining, development and abusive recreational use. The area is big, almost twice the size of the District of Columbia, but not unapproachable; rough, but not unattainable; and girl-next-door pretty, if not impossibly beautiful. And considering all the attention lathered on that colossal canyon 185 miles to the north, Agua Fria starts looking better and better.

Finding your way around the place isn't exactly easy. Earlier this month, as my friend Anne and I drove across Perry Mesa near the park's eastern edge, waves of whitish-yellow toboggan grass heaved in the wind, glowing like a Kansas wheat field before a red-clay promontory. We were trying to pick the correct unmarked turnoff, from among dozens, to Pueblo La Plata, an 800-year-old habitation we'd been told was the most impressive pueblo in the park: two stories, detailed wall construction, distinct rooms, pottery shards everywhere.

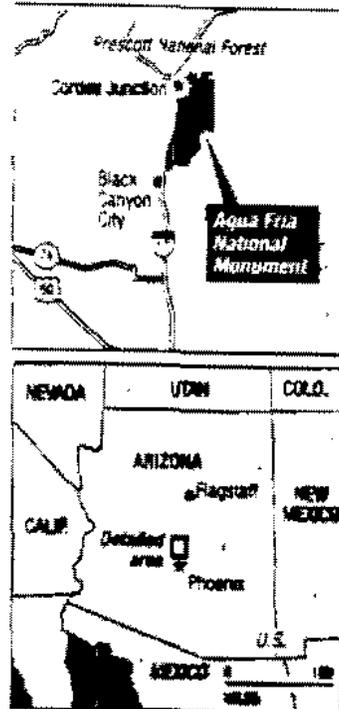
This description came from Bill Gibson, a Bureau of Land Management planning and environmental specialist. He and his colleagues will divulge ruin locations on an individual basis; the reluctance to broadcast the information stems from numerous unauthorized digs by freelance "archaeologists" through the years.

We followed Gibson's map through bouncy four-wheel-drive country, parked at the end of the road and ascended a small hill to what looked like a mound of churned earth, with grasses and rocks protruding from lumps of dirt.

Not until we stood atop it did we notice the intricately aligned stones that made up the pueblo's primitive walls and doorway, and the distinct foundation lines of what reportedly was a 150-room settlement. And indeed, tiny pieces of pottery lay everywhere.

But it wasn't nearly the 13th-century Metrose Place I had expected. "Two stories" seemed to mean two levels, one about three feet below the other. And a millennium of weather takes a toll on spaciousness: Every room was at least half-filled with earth, a still-life of the proverbial sands of time. Still, the walls stood low and lean and the entryways square and level, a humble testament to the survival skills of the people who occupied this land.

Another curiosity about Agua Fria: Nobody seems to know exactly which Native American tribes lived here. "It was occupied from about 1200 to 1400 A.D., but the pottery styles are not fully consistent with any one tribe that we know of," says Kathy Pedrick, a BLM resource advisor. "The local Yavapai Indians feel



BY LARRY FORDS—THE WASHINGTON POST

strongly connected to the land, but that's about all we have."

More recent history is less mysterious: Tucked throughout the park is evidence of 19th- and 20th-century mining, including the Richinbar mine, a lode on Black Mesa that coughed up 500,000 ounces of gold around 1900 (ergo Rich-in-bar).

But it was Indians we thought of as we stood on Pueblo La Plata on a tempestuous Saturday afternoon, without another person or vehicle in sight. The habitation sits on a rise, guarded to the north and west by a deep arroyo called Silver Creek and to the south by a far less significant gulch.

To the east lies the wide, lumpy mesa, a lonesome, exposed horizon that probably helped the Indians monitor the movements of enemies and animals alike. Leaving the pueblo area an hour later, we saw a coyote weaving through a maze of cactus and mesquite bushes, a desert mercenary starting his evening rounds.

Later we'd see signs of (more recent) human habitation—bullet holes freckling the few road signs

within the park. An abandoned pickup listing in a wash—as well as a herd of all-terrain vehicle riders, a foursome of photographers and a couple of passing SUVs. But for a few hours, the monument seemed ours alone. We might as well have been on the moon.

And, if you're willing to walk for it, a world's worth of solitude awaits in Agua Fria: Thousands of acres of the monument are not reachable by the dozens or so jeep roads that squiggle the monument map. Driving off of existing roads is prohibited, but you can walk wherever you want.

Again acting on an insider's advice, we hiked down Badger Springs wash toward its junction with the Agua Fria River, where, we'd been told, stunningly preserved petroglyphs (age-old pictorial carvings) adorned the rocks.

A faint hint of a stream dampened the ravine, quenching patches of green grass, sycamore willows and cottonwood trees, mere feet from where hostile cholla and prickly pear cactus clung to parched hills.

Where Badger Springs was a soggy tease, the un-dammed Agua Fria River flowed strong and free. Although it's narrower and more shallow than Washington's Rock Creek, the river struck a seductive pose, a sparkling emerald ribbon winding through the bluffs.

I scanned the higher cliffs in vain for petroglyphs, as though the ancient people would have rappelled down from the mesa to hew their art like free-range window washers. Then turning and facing back up the wash, we saw them on flat rock faces just a few feet up the hill (and, of course, in arm's reach of a person

standing on the ground): about three dozen etchings of mammals large (elk?) and small (mice?), people, the river and other scenes.

Though almost a century old, the work looked so fresh it took me a while to appreciate what I was seeing: crude and cartoonish, yes, but nonetheless telling and indelible renditions of primitive life in this harsh landscape. And right there in front of us, without barriers, explanatory plaques or other visitors.



Becoming a monument has changed little about how Agua Fria is used. Its monument status preserves grazing and other rights such as hunting, fishing (four native fish species ply the river), hiking, biking, four-wheeling and camping. New mining claims, road construction and driving (including all-terrain vehicles) off established roads are prohibited.

And it seems BLM officials enlisted extra help in enforcing the rules. Mildly lost one afternoon near Badger Springs, with rain clouds swirling to the north, Anne and I accidentally ended up in a dry wash. The gully, with preexisting tire tracks, was barely distinguishable from an

established road.

We were seeking a way out when we saw three of the monument's many grazing cows loitering amid stubby cottonwoods. One of the animals (a teenager, by size and temperament) abruptly charged from the passenger side. Unsure if our damage warner covered cow ramming, we hit the gas, the bovine in pursuit.

I won't say I was scared (crash tests favor the Chevy Blazer over small cows), but I will admit bafflement about my next move—we were, after all, still trapped in the wash. We were tentatively retracing our tracks toward Badger Springs when the heifer appeared again, this time almost lunging as it reared its head and snorted. (It is with great restraint that I refrain from a Mad Cow joke here.)

Hours later, as we lay in our tent, a baritone "moo" pierced the night, alarmingly close to camp. Not quite the call of the wild, but I'll take a moonlit bovine aria over the cacophony of swarming tourists any day.

John Briley last wrote for Travel about exploring Panama.

DETAILS ● Agua Fria

GETTING THERE: Agua Fria National Monument is about 60 miles from the Phoenix airport and 40 miles from central Phoenix, accessible from interstate 17 (exits 256 and 259). Most major airlines serve Phoenix from D.C.; fares start at about \$225, with restrictions (we flew Southwest during a sale and paid \$209 round trip, tax included, for nonstop service from DFW).

GETTING AROUND: A four-wheel-drive vehicle is necessary for access to Pueblo La Plata and some other sites, although Bloody Basin Road (Exit 259) could be driven in a two-wheel-drive car. We paid \$316 for a four-day rental of a Chevy Blazer from Alamo.

For a scenic return to Phoenix from Agua Fria, follow Bloody Basin Road east out of the monument and into the Tonto National Forest, then follow signs to Camelback Highway and I-17.

CAMPING: The monument can be visited in a day trip from Phoenix, but at least one night of camping is recommended to fully appreciate the area. No permit or check-in is required; there are no carrying facilities, it's all free-range. Buy food, water and camping supplies in Phoenix, as there are scant services near the park (a gas station and convenience store are about two miles north of Exit 259 on I-17). There is no charge for visiting or camping in Agua Fria.

INFORMATION: General information and maps are available from the Arizona Public Lands office in central Phoenix (222 N. Central Ave., 602-417-9300). For directions to interesting sites within the monument, call the Bureau of Land Management Phoenix field office (623-586-5500, www.az.blm.gov).

—John Briley

A Gem Field of Rocks

Beneath Its Surface, the California Coastal Monument Is a Deep, Deep Thing

By WILLIAM BOOTH

Washington Post Staff Writer

PACIFIC GROVE, Calif.

In his final months in the White House, using the powers vested in him by the Antiquities Act of 1906, President Clinton has been making a series of proclamations to ensure that America's magnificent landmarks are preserved. So far, the president has protected hoary groves of giant sequoias, otherworldly volcanic spires, grand canyons in the painted deserts.

These are splendid landscapes. Postcards printed by God. They are also no-brainers. Who doesn't want to save thousand-year-old trees? Raise your hand.

But the president slipped in a less obvious choice when he created the California Coastal National Monument, described in the shorthand of news accounts—when this afterthought of a monument has been mentioned at all—as a bunch of wet rocks.

"These are small, uninhabited islands," Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt conceded in December as he tried to explain to the pallid indoor types of the White House press corps. "In fact, many people think of them as rocks," he acknowledged . . . to laughter.

But these rocks are in fact sublime.

At first blush, the presidential proclamation seems audacious, like lassoing the wind, a Zen koan of Executive Order, because it's hard to describe, exactly, what is being preserved. A national park of stone?

At the urging of Rep. Sam Farr (D-Calif.), who keeps a house here on the coast and had repeatedly failed to have the rocks declared a wilderness area, the president gave federal protection to every island, pinnacle and exposed reef off the entire coast of California.

Exempting those islets already under other,

superseding stewardship, that's every rock that rises above the high-water mark, beginning just offshore (you could roll up your pants and walk to them) and extending to the continental shelf a dozen miles out. That's 340 miles of coastline, as the raven flies, and many, many rocks.

The inventory includes broad-shouldered, guano-streaked stacks the size of a K Street office building. Others are no bigger than a couch, with just enough space for a seal.

Question: How many rocks?

Answer: Unknowable.

Because new rocks forever continue to appear, as great and small cobbles tumble into the surf from the bluffs, and as others are cleaved and split, reproducing from one into two, and two into three. And others disappear, erased by erosion, swallowed by wave and water like doomed mariners.

It is hard to conjure this coast without the rocks. They make the place. They define the interface, the antechamber from water world to land world. Here in the tidal pools is where life answered an evolutionary tug, and desired to grow lungs and breathe air, and in a story too long and too familiar to tell, led to us.

The rocks give scale to the ocean. They offer data, from a mile away as you stand beside your rental car on the coastal highway, on how unpacific the Pacific can be, even on a calm foggy morning. This long jagged lee shore still scares the bejesus out of sailors, and it is the rocks that scare them most of all. The place is a graveyard. Golden Fleece. Yankee Blade. New World.

The rocks are boat-eaters.

Tomstones.

You can make your way down through the spring wildflowers to a sandy beach and contemplate the rocks. When the swell drops and the wave crest comes, you can hear the fireworks from a long way away: the startled inhalation, the sucking-wound sound of the recoil, the boom of the wave shock as it hits the rock, then the rising and falling spray, the sigh. It is a magic trick: The rocks turn blue water white.

The rocks are foam-makers.

In the center of all these urges and tugs, all the secret sexual and predatory goings-on in the hidden crevices, is Stanford University's Hopkins Marine Station in Monterey, the second oldest such lab in the country, after Woods Hole. It was founded by the university's first president, who was himself an ichthyologist, a fish man.

The sun, hidden all morning by fog, is out again when Alan Baldrige comes to meet us. Baldrige was for many years the librarian at Hopkins, but now he is retired, and recent medical challenges have left him leaning a bit to starboard, an old ship but still afloat. In his circle, he is a respected naturalist.

We take a seat in the seaside library, and through a bay window, Baldrige points out double-crested cormorants, western gulls and the black oystercatchers working the air above the rocks.

"They have the eyes and an orange bill and bright red overalls," he says. "Their bill is shaped like a chisel, and they stubbornly insert it between the adductor muscles of the mussels, clams and limpets, and—snip!—they gobble them up." He smiles at the fine detail work of evolution.

The courtly Baldridge is most pleased that the rocks have garnered interest from the wider world. They are important habitat for hundreds of thousands of seabirds, sea lions, seals and otters, which have all made a dramatic recovery along these shores.

Baldridge notes that the rocks also offer, along their shelves, life-sheltering tidal pools. . . . The mention leads him down a tangent of memory, to stories about a marine biologist who worked here named Ed Ricketts, and his friends, the novelist John Steinbeck and the religious scholar Joseph Campbell.

Ricketts is the least known of the three, all dead now, but he is the most interesting—a scientist, mystic, workaholic, bohemian and the character Doc in Steinbeck's books. He and Steinbeck would sit around at night and philosophize and get tight on cheap jug wine down on Monterey's Cannery Row, where Ricketts ran his Pacific Biological Laboratory.

Ricketts made his living not in academia, but through the hard work of collecting specimens of the invertebrate creatures of the tide pools for use in classrooms. He called the subjects of his life's work "the good kind sane little animals." He was the lead author of the 1939 science classic "Between Pacific Tides," still used by marine biologists and one of the first popular works not only to introduce the public to the tide pools, but to see the rocks and pools as an ecological unit, an interconnected "superorganism" and, as he wrote, "possibly the most prolific life zone in the world—a belt so thickly populated that often not only is every square inch of area utilized by some plant or animal but the competition for attachment sites is so keen that animals settle upon each other—plants grow upon animals, and animals upon plants."

A rain forest in a puddle.

But to understand what is going on here, you have to know about this: Ricketts and Steinbeck went together on a famous collecting trip down the coast, which became the subject of the 1951 work "The Log From the Sea of Cortez." In the book, the two men describe the same little animals they collected, but they also give flesh to Ricketts's ideas about why humans should wander these pools and rocks.

For too long, Ricketts believed, science had been the province of academics he derided as "dryballs," clinicians obsessed by "a world wrinkled with formaldehyde," who catalogued but did not describe the awe, the mysteries.

Ricketts was after bigger game.

In a new introduction to "The Log," Richard Astro, professor of English at the University of Central Florida, wrote that Ricketts's thirst was to understand not the parts of life but the sum. Ricketts described it as "breaking through," seeing life as a whole—in the pools and rocks, in the slopshouses and bars, in the oystercatcher's eyeball and the seal's cat-foody breath. Ricketts called the object of his hunt "the deep thing."

It's what the rocks taught him.

Later in the afternoon, when the tide is out, Hopkins biologist Jim Watanabe takes us out among the tide pools and rocks. A hard-bodied man, an expert diver, wearing a Ford Trucks gimme cap and hip waders, Watanabe points

out a pathway of stones that leads from the bluffs above to the pools below. "We call these the presidential steps," he explains. The scientists put them in a year ago before Bill Clinton and Al Gore visited. How did the president like the pools? "He seemed to enjoy them," Watanabe recalls. "but, you know, he really didn't have much time."

Down by the water, one suddenly realizes that the rocks are covered with harbor seals and their pups. There's a dozen of them, speckled gray, brown, black and white, sneezing and snoring like spent hunting dogs. They arch an eyebrow, then go back to sleep. We hop

from rock to rock, careful not to slip on the mats of green sea grass; beneath our rubber boots comes the sound of acorn barnacles, popping and crunching like gravel.

We apologize, but Watanabe says not to worry. "This is one of the toughest habitats on Earth," he explains. "You can see how everybody here has managed to nail themselves down to hold on." The creatures here are exposed not only to pounding waves, but the clockwork of tides, when they are alternately covered by blasts of ice-cold water, then exposed to air, then to a beating sun. Unprompted, Watanabe quotes Steinbeck. "He called the tide pools 'fiery with life.'"

Watanabe points out a tube snail, which spins, casts a net of mucus, then reels back what it catches, and black turban snails, covered with a species of limpet that lives its whole life grazing on the algae that grows on its host's back, life upon life, just as Ricketts wrote.

There are obscenely shaped sea cucumbers, and sea squirts, sea spiders, sea hares, sea lettuce. We stop to examine a starfish glued to a crevice, a large specimen whose lustrous purple body looks like a velvet cape covered with sequins, a real rock star. Watanabe guesses that it is 30 years old. When people pick them up, and carry them in to the beach, their colors immediately begin to fade. By that point, they are already dying.

"Oh, over here, there are some great snails I want to show you!" Years in the pools, and Watanabe is still a kid. "These are owl limpets," *Lottia gigantea*. Each one, as big around as a silver dollar, is holding fast to the exposed rock, waiting for the tide to come back.

"See how spread out they are?" Each owl limpet voraciously defends its own pasture of algae, an area that Ricketts in his "Pacific Tides" revealed was 156 square inches, which the limpet keeps trimmed as short as a suburban lawn. Competitors are driven away by fierce but slow-motion battles, two bulldozers pushing for all they are worth.

How has this place changed since Ricketts collected here, Watanabe is asked. We should pay attention to the answer. It seems the composition of species has shifted—dramatically, rapidly. It once was a community dominated by Northern animals, and now is one owned by their Southern relatives. "Ocean warming," Watanabe shrugs, as if, you know, global warming—ever heard of it?

When he thinks about what other things have changed, he says this: that the days of dryball science are ending, that soon the obligations of our species will be seen more clearly.

Meaning what? "We know a lot of stuff now," he says. "Not everything, of course, but we know how these ecosystems function. We know what makes them healthy, and so the question is what are we going to do about it?"

What are we going to do about it?

But the pools and rocks and sane little creatures who live here have also taught Watanabe something else. "Long after we're gone," he says, "nature will figure out how to recover from us."

The deep thing indeed.

Sunday, April
30, 2000

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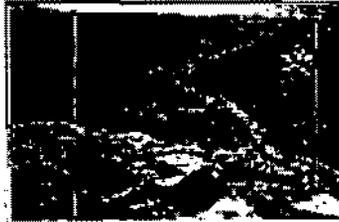
BY PATRICK
JOSEPH
UNIVERSAL
PRESS
SYNDICATE

Last October, a small ceremony took place on the south rim of Colorado's Black Canyon of the Gunnison River, a spectacularly narrow, darkly ominous cleft that cuts through the Colorado Plateau. The occasion was to celebrate a promotion; that is, what had been a national monument was suddenly a national park -- Colorado's third, the nation's 55th.

It was a big to-do for the locals. And judging from the cameras trained on the dais, the press was well represented. Journalists earnestly scribbled in their notebooks, trying to get the meaning of it all. The subtext of the day's narrative was obvious.

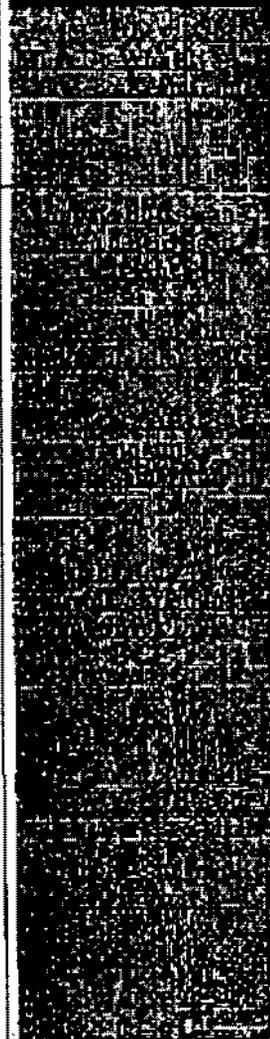
The politicians wouldn't say it, of course, but all the gold Montrose Lion's Club vests underscored the point: This was a victory party for local boosters, a campaign to get more visitors to Montrose and more tourist dollars into the town's economy. Only Ken Gayle, a former mayor of Montrose, put it in plain English.

"People plan vacations around national



Grand
Canyon-Parashant in
Arizona is the newest
entry on a burgeoning
list of national
monuments. The
political hot potato
seems popular with
public. (Bureau of Land
Management)

Today's Headlines:



parks," he said matter-of-factly, "not national monuments."

It seems that Montrose, Colo., which fancies itself The Home of the Black Canyon, had grown weary of watching tourists pass through on their way to trendier locales such as nearby Ouray, Telluride and Silverton -- charming little Switzerlands tucked away in breathtaking alpine splendor, former mining towns now given over, heart and soul, to the defining industry of the New West: tourism. How was a cow town in the valley to compete?

The answer seemed to be, "Name it and they will come," or rather, re-name it. Gayle had a point, after all. Fact is, most Americans -- geographically illiterate that we are -- don't know a national monument from a steel guitar. Any moderately informed sixth-grader could name at least three national parks -- Yosemite, Yellowstone and Grand Canyon immediately come to mind -- but national monuments tend to draw a blank.

If we think of them at all, we're liable to conjure Mount Rushmore, with its looming former heads-of-state -- a monument in another, more traditional sense. We don't readily think of Mount St. Helens, Devil's Tower or Muir Woods, all of which also carry the designation. There are, in fact, more than 75 national monuments arrayed around the country, areas that, while spectacular in some way or another, are generally smaller and less varied than their better-known cousins, the parks.

In January, President Clinton added three more monuments to the list -- two in Arizona, one in California -- a move roundly interpreted as a legacy-builder. Whatever the motivation, the action effectively doubled the protected area around the Grand Canyon with the formation of 1 million-acre Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument in the so-called Arizona Strip north of the canyon.

As for the other two: 70,000-acre Agua Fria National Monument is intended to protect an archaeologically significant area from rapidly encroaching Phoenix; and the California Coastal National Monument protects every rock, reef and island that pokes above mean high tide as habitat for animals chased offshore by generations of intense human settlement

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along the coast. Acreage is nearly impossible to calculate, but the monument stretches the length of the coast -- all 840 miles -- and spans an area 12 miles wide.

The move was greeted by the usual anti-federal outcry in some Western statehouses, but it seemed popular with the overall public, even in Arizona. In an era of rampant urban sprawl, it's hard not to be in favor of open space. Moreover, the land was in federal hands to begin with. Formerly Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands, all three monuments merely signify, as one BLM spokesman put it, "another layer of protection," namely, mining, logging and off-road vehicles are out. Existing grazing and hunting rights can stay. In an unusual move, the land will even stay within the purview of the BLM, rather than transferring to the National Park Service.

In February, Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt announced plans for a third kind of protected status for public lands, something called National Landscape Monuments that will revolve around large ecosystems, rather than one significant landscape feature or "curiosity."

So what, if anything, does all this mean for the recreationist? After all, the land was always out there for those adventurous souls who wanted to see it. Stephen Trimble, author and former forest ranger, gives at least one significant difference: "There's the interpretive quality that a monument adds. Unless you're intensely motivated to educate yourself, I don't think you're going to get as much out of visiting wide-open BLM lands."

Given our disconnect from that land, he's undoubtedly right.

More Information

-- The Bureau of Land Management may be reached at U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Office of Public Affairs, Room 406-LS, 1849 C St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240; (202) 452-5125; www.blm.gov.

-- The National Park Service may be reached at National Park Service, 1849 C St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240; (202) 208-6843; www.nps.gov.

LANDS MUST OFFER MUCH MORE TO SAVE ARIZONA DESERT

It's on Babbitt to make land deal happen

A month ago we implored Gov. Jane Hull to look beyond politics and focus upon the public benefit of a possible land exchange with the federal government.

She's done that.

Now the ball is squarely in the court of Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, and with the end of the Clinton era approaching, the clock is ticking. If Babbitt's idea of a swap of federal Bureau of Land Management Land for state-owned trust lands is to be realized, it's up to the secretary, a former Arizona governor, to find a way.

Babbitt has pared down his want list of state trust lands that he says would be under the domain of the BLM and protected from development. His sights are on consolidating and preserving 79,000 acres of wild desert, canyons and arroyos around Lake Pleasant and an extra 24,000 acres in the Silverbell Mountains region near Tucson.

Picking out landscapes for preservation is the easy part, and there's no denying that these lands are worthy. The lands near Lake Pleasant, for example, have incredible potential for development, and,

as such, their values are high. Establishing so large a preserve would be a lasting legacy, not just for Babbitt but for the Hull administration as well. It's the right thing to do if a fair deal can be worked out.

That's a big "if," because the state must receive in return approximate value for the lands it would relinquish. Babbitt thus far has offered Arizona only BLM lands in exchange, and state estimates put the value at less than one-tenth the value of lands that the feds would acquire — \$66 million vs. \$704 million.

Obviously, that's not a good deal for Arizona. In time, federal holdings conveyed to the state would be sold or leased for development, with the proceeds earmarked for public education, as required. Anything short of approximate value could pose a legal sticky wicket for Arizona.

There are other options, but up to now, Babbitt seemingly has dismissed them. One is cash payment to make up the difference. That was part of the deal that Babbitt forged with Utah Gov. Mike Leavitt as compensation for Utah lands encircled by the Grand Stair-



Associated Press

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt wants to preserve some lands in Arizona, but he has to make it happen by increasing what the federal government is offering for the lands.

case-Escalante National Monument.

The state has raised other possibilities "from the remotely possible to the absolutely outrageous," in the view of Babbitt's staff. They include lands under federal buildings, which the state then would lease back to the feds; Forest Service lands; rights to more water; relief from critical habitat designations; and debt relief on the Central Arizona Project.

Babbitt ought to reconsider and put a mix of these or other

ideas on the table for the state's consideration.

This is a grand opportunity to establish a couple of breathtaking preserves before it is too late. Of course, there would have to iron-clad guarantees that, once transferred to the BLM, the lands would not be used as trade bait for development, and Congress would have to give its blessing.

The opportunity for something special is now. Let's not let the idea of a state-federal swap fade for a lack of attention.



NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

APR 25 2000

Washington Times

Babbitt may push 2 more monuments

Oregon, Colorado officials concerned

By Audrey Hudson
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt said yesterday he is eyeing two new areas for national monument designation, despite heavy criticism from lawmakers who say the administration is ignoring local opposition to the proposals.

Mr. Babbitt said "at the top of the list" for new monument recommendations to President Clinton are the ecologically diverse Soda Mountain in Oregon and 165,000 acres containing Indian ruins in southwest Colorado.

Mr. Babbitt said both were "ripe for consideration" to become the fifth and sixth monuments created by Mr. Clinton this year. He did not say when he would forward his proposals to the White House.

Recreation such as hiking and horseback riding would be allowed, but off-road vehicles like dirt bikes and snowmobiles would be restricted and logging and mining banned.

The administration's use of its power to create new monuments has been harshly criticized by Republicans and at least one Democrat, Rep. Cal Dooley, whose California district encompasses part of the Sequoia National Forest Mr. Clinton recently announced.

Mr. Dooley said he was "deeply disappointed" the Clinton administration ignored strong opposition by local residents. He said monument designations restrict recreation and development and are intended to bolster Mr. Clinton's environmental legacy and improve Vice President Al Gore's support among environmentalists.

Local officials in Oregon and Colorado also question whether monument status is needed to protect those areas.

"It could eliminate all of the multiple uses — grazing, timber harvest, recreational vehicles — anything but hiking," said Sue Kupillas, a county commissioner who lives near Soda Mountain. "If this area is so valuable today, and we've had multiple use all these years, why should we change it now?"

Oregon legislators were concerned that an ongoing public process to protect Soda Mountain might be interrupted by a sudden decision to designate the area as a monument.

"I hope that [Interior Secretary Bruce] Babbitt will consider [that] a lot of people depend on multiple use of this land."

—Rep. Scott McInnis

A spokeswoman for Sen. Gordon H. Smith, Oregon Republican, said he was disappointed to hear the administration may be short-circuiting the public process.

"The senator would like to say he's surprised by this, but he's honestly not," said spokeswoman Mary Healy. "This is just Clinton trying to leave a legacy, and unfortunately Oregon is ground zero."

Colorado officials, who have been discussing how to protect ancient Indian ruins in the southwest corner of the state, had been alerted that the administration might designate the area as a national monument.

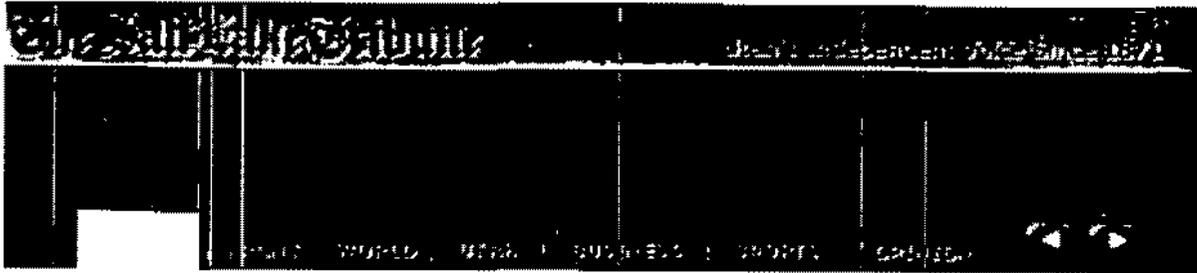
"I hope that Babbitt will consider [that] a lot of people depend on multiple use of this land," said Rep. Scott McInnis, Colorado Republican.

Mr. Clinton has created five monuments and expanded another — Pinnacles National Monument in California — since he first took office by using the Antiquities Act of 1906. The law gives presidents emergency authority to protect threatened federal lands or "objects of historic and scientific interest."

Mr. Clinton has set aside more than 3 million acres as national monuments, more than any president in history.

He created the Grand Staircase-Escalante in Utah in 1996; Grand Canyon-Parashant in Arizona, Agua Fria in Arizona, and the California Coastal monument in January; and most recently, a 328,000-acre national monument in California's Sequoia National Forest.

* This article is based in part on wire service reports.



More Monuments? Babbitt Considering Land in Colorado, Oregon

Tuesday, April 25, 2000

BY MATT KELLEY
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON -- Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt indicated Monday that he is on the verge of recommending that President Clinton declare new national monuments in Colorado and Oregon.

A swath of canyons dotted with American Indian ruins in southwestern Colorado and ecologically diverse Soda Mountain near the Oregon-California line are "ripe for consideration" to become the fifth and sixth monuments created by Clinton this year, Babbitt said.

Clinton has created two new monuments each in California and Arizona this year, prohibiting mining and logging in sequoia groves, the Grand Canyon watershed, an arid Arizona mountain valley and hundreds of small islands in the Pacific.

Babbitt has discussed recommending the Colorado and Oregon monuments before, and they are now "at the top of the list" as the Clinton administration works to fill out its environmental legacy, Babbitt said in a telephone interview.

He would not say precisely when he would ask Clinton to declare the new monuments.

The 1906 Antiquities Act gives presidents broad power to create monuments and decide what uses should be restricted there. Clinton's monument designations have banned mining and logging, and restricted off-road vehicle use.

Both proposals win cheers from environmentalists and opposition from some local residents.

"It could eliminate all of the multiple uses -- grazing, timber harvest, recreational vehicles -- anything but hiking," said Sue Kupillas, a county official near Soda Mountain. "If this area is so valuable today, and we've had multiple use all these years, why should we change it now?"

Western Republicans have repeatedly criticized Clinton for creating national monuments, saying the president has ignored the wishes of Congress and local officials to lock up federal lands.

"This is not about the environment. It is about the constant abuse



The Cliff Palace in Mesa Verde National Park draws visitors from around the world. Land near the park might be designated a national monument. (Ellen Jaskol/Rocky Mountain News)



of power by the Clinton-Gore administration," said Rep. George Radanovich, R-Calif., the chairman of the Western caucus in the House.

Babbitt has been openly talking about monument recommendations to officials and residents in two areas for at least a year.

"It's an abuse of the Antiquities Act, but it's happening and I think we should face reality," said Republican Rep. Scott McInnis. "Those counties down there are real dependent on multiple use [of federal land], and a monument really locks the gate on those lands."

Babbitt said he would have preferred congressional action to protect the area, but "it's the protection that's important, not the label."

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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

PUBLICITY RECORD

News paper and Location	Section and Page Number	Date of Publication
Press Enterprise, Riverside	A-11	4-23
Submitting Office		Date sent to WO-130
BLM-CDD, Riverside, CA		4-25

Monument is the final step in protecting the stately sequoias

By John Krist
Scripps-McClatchy Western Service

They are not the tallest trees in the world, or even in California. That distinction belongs to the redwoods, soaring more than 360 feet into the misty North Coast sky. Nor are they the oldest; bristlecone pines in the White Mountains, gnarled and polished by the wind, snow and sunlight of 40 centuries, own that title.

But giant sequoias combine bulk and age in a package so overwhelming that their effect hardly can be conveyed in words or photographs. Thicker and less tapered than the related coast redwood, sequoias are the arboreal champions of sheer mass. To stand in a grove of the ancient giants, which can reach 300 feet in height and exceed 100 feet in circumference, is to suffer a scrambling of the senses. Awe is reason enough to protect most of the remaining giant sequoias by establishing a new national monument in California's mountains, as President Clinton announced he intends to do.

So is rarity: sequoias grow only on moist, glaciated slopes between 5,000 and 7,000 feet in elevation, and occupy only 75 scattered groves in the central and southern Sierra Nevada. But there also are urgent political and biological reasons for the declaration. Despite their fame and more than a century of protective efforts, giant sequoias remain imperiled. That has been their status almost since white men first stumbled across them.

When reports of these remarkable trees began to trickle out of the Sierra in the mid-1800s, the initial public response was

disbelief. This quickly was supplanted by the urge to chop them down. Loggers swarmed over the mountains during the Gold Rush, feeding the mining camps' insatiable appetite for lumber, and they eagerly embraced the challenge of felling Earth's most massive trees.

It could take several days to saw by hand through a mature sequoia, and when it fell the brittle wood often shattered on impact. If it remained intact, the trunk was so enormous that it could not be handled using the primitive technology of the day, and loggers sometimes used explosives to break it into smaller pieces. Up to 75 percent of a sequoia downed this way was wasted; the rest typically became fence posts, grape stakes and roofing shakes.

It was an inglorious end for a glorious creature, like shooting a black rhino for its horn, or harpooning a whale to make pet food of its flesh. The wasteful practice stopped in the 1890s only when the most accessible remaining groves were placed off limits by creation of Yosemite, Sequoia and General Grant (later renamed Kings Canyon) national parks.

But the threat to sequoias did not end with these efforts at preservation.

Although mature giants have not been felled in decades, timber harvest continues in Sequoia National Forest, which includes about half the remaining sequoia groves. Until suspended temporarily in the 1980s and 1990s by a series of lawsuits and administrative challenges, that logging removed every surrounding tree in several sequoia groves, leaving a handful of the

giants isolated in patches of clearcut. Even today, forest administrators retain the authority to allow such activities under the guise of "fuel reduction" to minimize fire hazards — a great irony, since sequoia reproduction requires periodic fire to clear the soil and stimulate seed release.

Logging near the trees may doom them as surely, if not as quickly, as cutting them outright. Sequoias lack taproots, relying for water and support on a network of fine roots spreading 100 feet from the trunk but penetrating only 3 to 5 feet deep. Denuded slopes lose their surface moisture to evaporation, depriving the trees of water. Heavy logging equipment compacts the soil and damages the roots. Weakened and robbed of the buffering effect of thick forest, solitary sequoias suffer the full force of winter gales and become vulnerable to the only force capable of killing them: blow-down.

The proposed national monument would end commercial logging near the sequoias and protect the broader ecosystem on which they rely. It represents the completion of an effort begun in 1890, when President Benjamin Harrison — heeding the pleas of John Muir and Visalia newspaper publisher George Stewart — withdrew 76 square miles of forest land from public sale, protecting the heart of what would later become Sequoia National Park.

To conservationists, 110 years may seem a long time. To a sequoia, already a thousand years old when Christ was born, it is inconsequential.

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BLM lands need protection

By Jim Baca

President Clinton triggered tired cries of a "war on the West" from a handful of politicians when he recently created national monuments on Bureau of Land Management landscapes. These objections ignored the fact that 75 percent of Arizona residents favored the new Grand Canyon-Parashant and Perry Mesa National Monuments. And that 77 percent of Westerners support Clinton's use of the Antiquities Act to establish monuments generally, slightly more than the enormous average national support.

As a mayor of a major Western city, I applaud Clinton for creating monuments and I hope he prescribes more. Yet as former director of the BLM, I believe these actions should not overshadow the remaining 260 million acres the agency manages in the Western states, an acreage nearly equal to that of the National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service combined.

These BLM lands include 14,000-foot peaks in Colorado, Utah's Redrock Canyons, the lonely Basin and Range country of Nevada and the Georgia O'Keeffe deserts of New Mexico. Mining, off-road vehicles, oil development and urban sprawl all threaten these publicly owned lands.

It is estimated that approximately two-thirds of what was once wilderness on BLM land in the contiguous states is now gone.

The roots of the BLM wilderness issue reach back to 1976, when Congress instructed the BLM to inventory all of its land and to safeguard pristine areas until Congress made a final wilderness decision. Instead, the BLM omitted millions of acres of deserving lands from its survey. Subsequent work by conservation groups in Oregon, Utah and Wyoming demonstrated that two to three times more wilderness

exists than the agency claimed. The BLM is on a slow course to a more enlightened management strategy that values wilderness, and now admits flaws in its old inventory work. But despite this welcome transition, millions of wilderness acres Congress intended to be protected remain open to development because the original study was flawed.

BLM lands hold unique and important values. The BLM oversees 4 million to 4 1/2 million archaeological sites, the "largest, most varied and scientifically most important body of cultural resources" in the United States. These lands harbor 228 plant and animal species listed as threatened or endangered, and more than 1,500 "sensitive" species. Antelope, bison, bighorn sheep and elk use 90 million acres of key habitat in the lower 48 states, and 400 species of song birds rely on all 175 million acres. An estimated 85 percent of the West's wildlife depends on riparian areas for their survival; the BLM administers 180,000 miles of riparian-lined streams and 16 million acres of wetlands.

BLM lands need protection. Dated plans allow BLM lands prized for recreation and open space to be sold for development. The agency hands out development rights to oil companies in Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah without complete environmental studies, which is how 2,363 new oil wells came to be drilled on BLM land in 1999. Dirt bikes and all-terrain vehicles tear across fragile soils due to BLM decisions to close only 6 percent of its lands to this abuse.

Clinton should direct the BLM to re-inventory for wilderness and to prepare plans, with public comment, that conserve these lands. Because the work will take

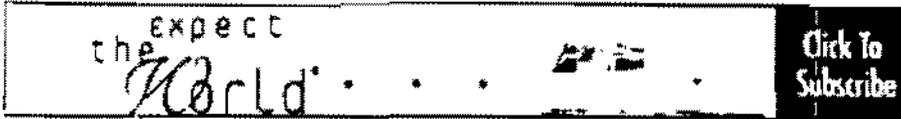
time, the studied lands should also be temporarily withdrawn from mining and oil drilling in order to preserve planning options pending completion of the inventories.

The public already supports this concept. A recent national poll showed that nationwide 88 percent of Americans favor protecting the estimated 60 million acres of BLM wilderness in the Western states.

A president can establish an enduring public lands legacy, despite an anti-environment Congress. President Theodore Roosevelt established 98 million acres as National Forests, created 50 wildlife preserves and five national parks. President Carter set aside more than 55 million acres as national monuments and withdrew an additional 100 million acres from development.

President Clinton can similarly use administrative powers to place a moratorium against development on the one-third of BLM land estimated to still qualify as wilderness until the new inventories and plans are complete. This withdrawal would start the BLM afresh on a path of ecologically and legally sound management, and result in millions of acres saved that would otherwise remain vulnerable to oil wells and mines. Future generations of Americans would benefit, just as today we enjoy the visionary accomplishments of Presidents Roosevelt and Carter.

Jim Baca is mayor of Albuquerque, N.M. He served as director of the Bureau of Land Management under President Clinton. He wrote this for Knight Ridder/Tribune News Service.



April 22, 2000

Seeking to Safeguard California Mountains by Way of Congress

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By BARBARA WHITAKER

PALM SPRINGS, Calif. -- Postcards from this desert resort town often feature a golfer in full swing on a lush course, driving toward a majestic mountain range in the distance.

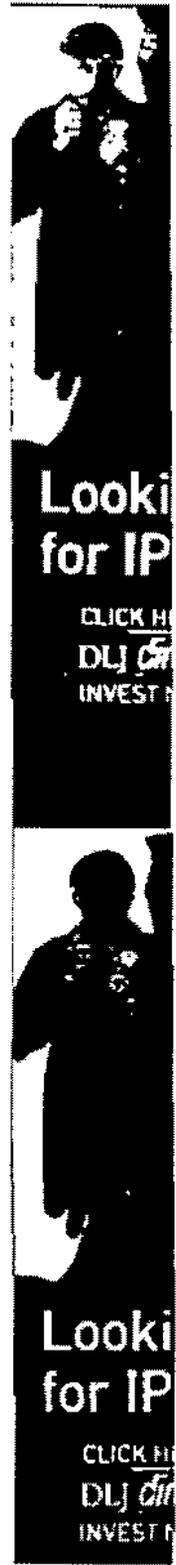
But if the two make picturesque partners, federal officials are weighing how best to secure the future of the pristine mountainous backdrop as the demands of development and tourism increasingly encroach on the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains.

President Clinton has put the mountains on the short list of areas that he would consider designating as national monuments, a move that would make them off limits for any purposes that would change their character.

The possibility alarms some landowners worried about property rights, and developers concerned that it would have an impact on projects around the base of the mountains, many of which command top dollar.

But in an effort to protect local interests as well as the mountains, Representative Mary Bono, Republican of California, has introduced a bill that would confer monument status through Congress instead.

The bill, now in the subcommittee on national parks and public



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lands. tries to address local concerns by assuring, for example, that no protective perimeters with restrictions on use would be created around the monument, and that management of the monument would not change as the federal government developed a comprehensive plan for the area.

"We've been very encouraged," Molly McCusic, a counselor to Bruce Babbitt, secretary of the Interior, said of the Congressional effort.

Officials hope the legislation will be more palatable than a presidential declaration. Private landowners hold about 55,000 acres within the 272,000 acres in the proposed monument area, and developers, the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians and state and local officials all have stakes to protect. The monument designation directly applies only to federal lands, about 150,000 acres.

"We're beginning at the grass roots rather than the administration coming in and saying we know what's right for you," said Rusty Payne, a spokesman for Ms. Bono. "Monument is a dirty word sometimes with Western Republicans."

On April 15, President Clinton officially designated 328,000 acres in California as a national monument to protect sequoias. It was the fifth time that Mr. Clinton had created a monument using the Antiquities Act of 1906, which allows a president to change the status of federal lands that have scientific, historical or architectural significance. He has also expanded an existing monument.

President Clinton has now protected more land in the lower 48 states using the act than any other president.

All the designations have been in the West. But some lawmakers and local people have accused the president of misusing the act, which they say was intended to set aside much smaller areas, and they see his actions as heavy-handed and detrimental to local interests.

Although the steepness of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains makes them nearly impossible to develop in many areas, development now reaches right up to the toe in several areas and extends into the mountains in some places. Pressure to build in the area is expected to increase as the Coachella Valley, which includes the desert towns of the region, grows to an estimated 475,000 residents from about 317,000 in the next 20 years.

The mountains are used in a variety of ways, including cattle grazing, sightseeing and recreation. They are also home to endangered bighorn sheep.

Private property owners are said to be evenly divided over the

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designation.

"The people who are against the monument or are worried about it are concerned about intrusion on property rights," said Ruth Watling, who is chairwoman of the Pinyon Community Council, an advisory group for the property owners.

Those supporting it are worried about intrusion from the increasing number of day-trippers and tourists who visit for hiking, hunting, horseback riding or off-road vehicle use.

The habitat in the area is quite fragile. Ms. Watling noted that it dated back as far as 12,000 years, when it was tall pines. Now it is home to pinyons and junipers, which will not regenerate themselves.

"It's really rare to see a seedling pine," she said. "Kind of horrifying and intriguing to watch."

Although much of the land is already held by state and federal governments, traditionally there has been little financing for management and conservation. Bill Havert, executive director of the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy, which has pushed for monument status, said such a designation would not only raise the mountains' profile, but would help to secure increased federal financing to buy private land in the area.

"We're not ultimately looking for the national monument designation to protect all lands from development," Mr. Havert said. "We're looking for the designation to at least maintain, if not enhance, Congress's willingness to fund acquisitions from willing sellers."

But private landowners and others who have interests at stake say they do not believe there is any need for the designation. Instead, they see it as a federal land grab, which will result in access restrictions and loss of property tax revenue.

"We already have protective measures," said Larry Paul, president of the Mountain Coalition, which represents private interests opposed to the designation.

"I'm all for protecting the environment," Mr. Paul said, "but we have everything to lose, and I don't see anything to gain. All that's going to happen is the limiting of uses we already enjoy."

Addressing such concerns was the purpose of Ms. Bono's bill, said Mr. Payne, her spokesman.

"Economic development is very important," he said, "but so is reasonable land management and environmental policy that preserves and protects. We are running out of land in America and Southern California, and we are leaving nothing behind for future generations."

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NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2000

The Idaho Statesman

APR 19 2000

Babbitt ponders plan for Craters expansion

Grazing can fit into landscape, secretary says

By Rocky Barker
The Idaho Statesman

ARCO — U.S. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt saw for himself on Tuesday 60 miles of hardened lava flows, ice caves and desolate desert landscape he hopes to protect.

Babbitt toured the Great Rift country extending south from Craters of the Moon National Monument. He told reporters he is studying the expansion of the national monument before President Clinton leaves office.

"This is a world-class ecosystem that deserves pro-

tection beyond the postage-stamp borders of Craters of the Moon," Babbitt said.

Craters of the Moon is best known for its fresh black lava flows, some as young as 2,000 years old. 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. Surrounding grass and sagebrush lands would remain under the control of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management but be included in the national monument.

Currently, only 83 square miles is in the Craters of the Moon National Monument created in 1924 by President Calvin Coolidge.

"I want to see if we can find a common vision on the land," Babbitt said. "I want to hear from everyone in Idaho."

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

Many Western congressmen 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.

So before he came to Idaho, Babbitt called the Idaho congressional delegation to let

them know he was coming.

"I would hope if they propose to do something in Idaho they include the people of the state and the congressional delegation," Simpson said.

Babbitt met with Idaho Secretary of State Pete Cenarrusa and other ranchers who graze cattle and sheep in Laidlaw Park, a grassland southwest of Craters that is surrounded by lava flows.

He said he would return to tour the area with the ranchers in a few weeks.

"Grazing is an ecologically appropriate use for that landscape," Babbitt said.

The ranchers were cautious, however.

Tom Peavey of Carey wants to know how it would affect his operations. But he sees a monument as bringing economic benefits to the largely agricultural area.

"If it doesn't change a lot, it would be good for the little town of Carey," Peavey said.

Surrounding communities have urged expansion of the monument or upgrade to national park status for years.

Former U.S. Rep. Richard Stallings, D-Idaho, introduced a bill to expand the monument and make it a park in 1989.

Craters currently attracts 225,000 visitors a year. Expansion to include

southern lava flows like Kings Bowl and Wapi lava flows closer to Interstate 86 could bring more tourists to the area.

But the National Park Service opposed Stallings' bill, in part because it allowed hunting and grazing to continue. Babbitt said he is studying expansion at the invitation of former Gov. John Evans, president of the D.L. Evans Bank in Burley.

Magic Valley businessmen have urged expansion and southern access to improve tourism in that area. But others question the need for additional protection.

Nolan Bowen of Idaho Falls said the government already has enough control over the lives of Idahoans.

"I don't think people would destroy things as much as they say," he said.

In remarks Tuesday to the City Club of Boise, Sen. Larry Craig, R-Idaho, criticized the Clinton administration's use of the Antiquities Act as a heavy-handed approach to depriving Americans of public lands without their input.

Craig said most of the lands in and around Craters of the Moon are already protected and aren't threatened by development.

The rich blue lava rock might someday become popular building material, Babbitt said. Designation as a national monument would withdraw the land from mineral development.

"You never know what the threat is until it's too late," Babbitt said. "Maybe the successor to Jim Watt will

say we should auction this off."

The National Wildlife Federation urged President Clinton on Tuesday to designate the 1.8 million-acre Owyhee Canyonlands in southwest Idaho as a national monument.

Babbitt said the Owyhees are not currently on his list of areas under study. And for him and the Clinton administration, the clock is ticking for designating more national monuments.

"I've got between now and Jan. 21, 2001."

— Statesman reporter Ken Miller contributed to this report.

Group urges Owyhee protection

The National Wildlife Federation urged President Clinton on Tuesday to designate the Owyhee Canyonlands as a national monument.

The largest member-supported environmental group cited the scientific, historic and cultural importance of the 1.8 million-acre scenic area in Southwest Idaho.

"The Owyhee Canyonlands embrace some of the most rugged, inspiring and solitary country in the West," said Catherine Johnson, the federation's grassland program manager.

The steep canyon lands and

sagebrush steppe grasslands are currently managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. The grasslands are grazed by livestock and the rivers are popular for floaters.

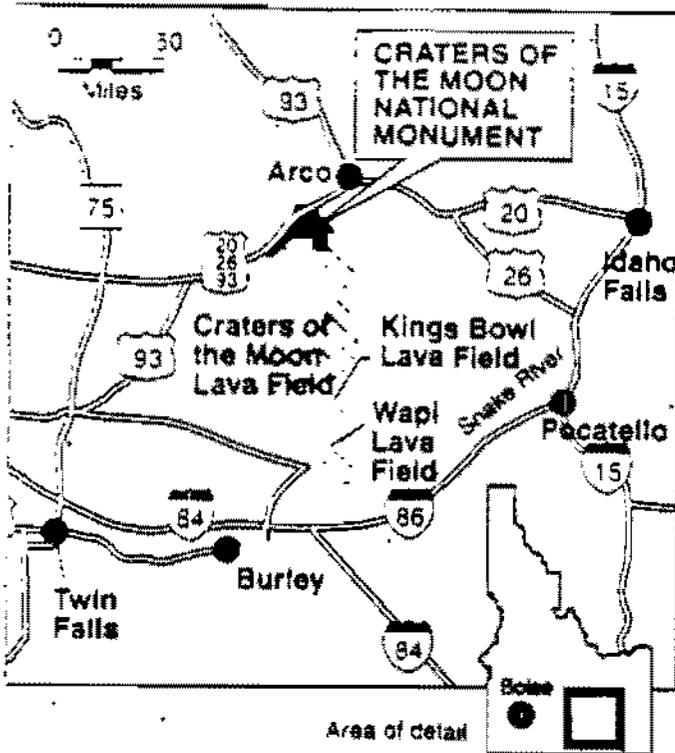
"This land contains human society artifacts dating back 8,000 years and is home to the nation's largest California bighorn sheep population," Johnson said.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt said Tuesday the Owyhees are not currently on his list for study as a national monument.

— Rocky Barker

Babbitt proposal

An expanded Craters of the Moon National Monument might include parts of the Snake River and surrounding Bureau of Land Management area.



What is a national monument?

is federally administered land set aside by the President under the authority of the Antiquities Act of 1906.

Is it a national park?

Not really, though the National Park Service administers most national monuments. Only Congress can establish a national park.

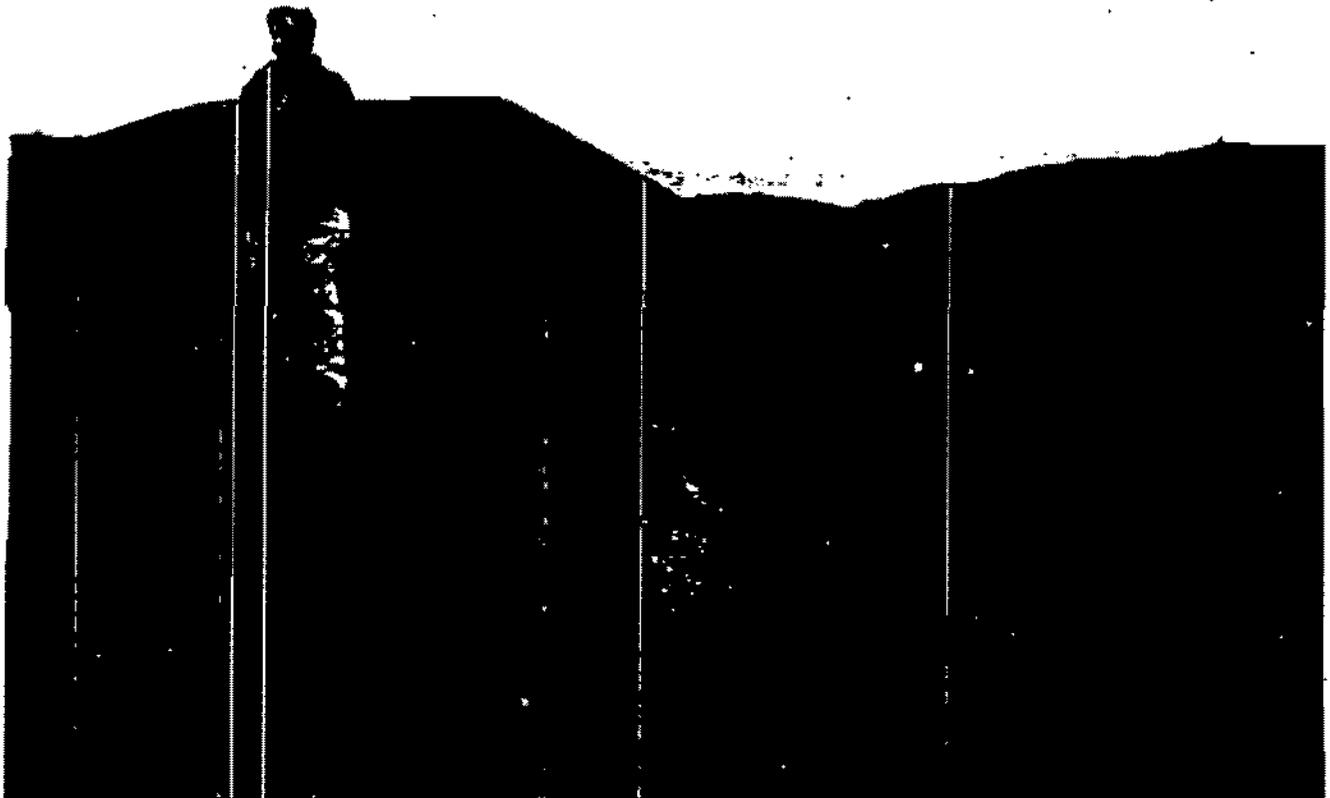
What area does Babbitt want to expand?

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 Morns

For more information

www.nds.gov/crmo/
 Address: P.O. Box 29, Arco, ID 83213
 Phone: 1-208-527-3257



The Associated Press

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt visits Idaho's Craters of the Moon National Monument on Tuesday. Walking along the rim of the Big Craters Overlook, he talked with reporters and monument officials about the possibility of expanding the boundaries of the monument to include formations outside the monument along the Great Rift. The rift cuts south across the Idaho desert and has numerous lava formations but contains several areas of grassland that could still be managed for livestock by the Bureau of Land Management. He flew over the formations in the morning.

14 April 2000

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PUBLIC PULSE

America's cultural heritage: What Babbitt is doing is right

By Jeff Widem

Safeguarding what we have left of our unique and fragile landscape in Southwest Colorado takes courage. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt is demonstrating that kind of courage in his efforts to protect the vast store of ancient ruins near Cortez. It is unfortunate that others in our community lacked this kind of foresight, and undermined the local residents who were working hard for a balanced solution.

This February, Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell introduced his "Canyons of the Ancients National Conservation Area" bill. While Campbell's bill fell short of what was needed to protect the vast array of archaeological sites in these canyons, it was a start. Environmental groups sought some slight improvements in the bill, but generally agreed with the city of Cortez, Montezuma County, Shell Oil, and the Cattleman's Association that this legislation was a good vehicle to balance protection needs with maintaining the area's rural character.

But less than two months after introducing the NCA bill, Camp-

bell withdrew it. Sadly, his decision was influenced by a small group of landowners who spread fear throughout Montezuma County with sensationalized stories about people losing access to their property and ranchers being run out of business. By dropping his bill, Campbell greatly disappointed locals who had worked so hard to devise a balanced solution. With no legislative solution remaining on the table, Babbitt stuck to his promise to ask President Clinton to designate a national monument in the area.

Despite the loss of a workable legislative approach, we remain hopeful that a national monument will work for everyone, while providing real protection for our cultural heritage. Secretary Babbitt can ensure that the monument balances these needs by including several features. Pristine canyons such as Cross, Cahone and Squaw/Papoose should be kept in an undisturbed state. These areas contain the best opportunities to study ancient sites in their natural setting, and should be managed to preserve their remote character. Oil and

gas development should continue, but be limited to existing valid leases. Most of the monument area is under lease already, so this wouldn't hurt the industry, and exempting the small remaining area would give real protection to archaeological sites in the more remote corners of the region.

Maintaining Southwest Colorado's agricultural lifestyle is also extremely important, so the monument should allow for continued livestock grazing, so long as it is carried out in a manner that keeps the land healthy. With these features, the national monument could provide truly balanced protection of our cultural heritage and maintenance of Southwest Colorado's agricultural and rural way of life.

It takes courage to stand up to harsh rhetoric, and do what is right to protect our land and ancient history. It takes even more to find the delicate balance that will work for all. Secretary Babbitt is doing just that, and we in Southwest Colorado should be grateful for his efforts.

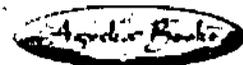
Jeff Widem is associate director of the Colorado Environmental Coalition.

The Salt Lake Tribune NATION/WORLD



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Tuesday,
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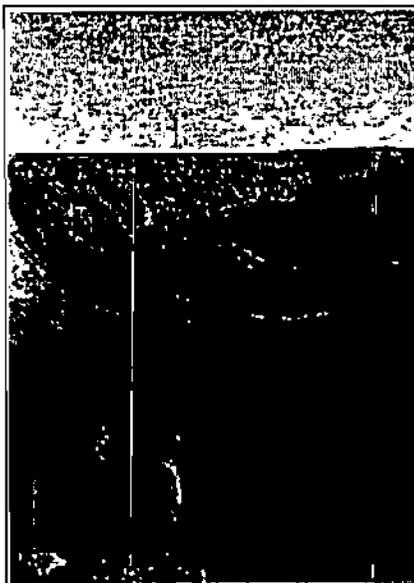
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Babbitt Plan to Expand National Monuments Includes 1 Million Acres South of St. George

BY BRENT ISRAELSEN

THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE



Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt is asking President Clinton to create or enlarge four national monuments in Arizona and California.

Babbitt's request this week includes a proposed 1 million-acre reserve adjacent to Grand Canyon National Park, about 50 miles south of St. George.

Arizona's Shivwits Plateau is among Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt's priorities for designation as national monuments. (Brent Israelsen/The Salt Lake Tribune)

The "Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument," between the Utah border and the Colorado River, would set aside lands once recommended for inclusion in the national park.

- In addition, Babbitt wants Clinton to:
- Create the "Agua Fria National Monument," a proposed 40,000-acre reserve north of Phoenix.
 - Create the "California Coastal National Monument," a collection of dozens of small islands and rock outcroppings.

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islands and rock outcroppings.

-- Double the size of the existing 10,000-acre Pinnacles National Monument in California.

A White House source told The Salt Lake Tribune on Monday that Clinton is expected to act on the requests "sometime next year." The requests are part of a larger push by Babbitt to protect more than a dozen federally owned areas around the West that are ecologically or archaeologically significant.

Of the proposals, the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument is expected to be the showpiece. Babbitt has been talking about the idea for more than a year. In November 1998, he announced his proposal to preserve a 400,000-acre chunk of land northwest of Grand Canyon National Park.

He then held a series of public meetings in Arizona, including one at Colorado City on the Utah border. Generally, the proposal has not been well-received by residents of southern Utah and northern Arizona.

The idea for the northern Arizona monument originally was given the working title "Shivwits Plateau National Monument." The name now has evolved to reflect the well-known name of the Grand Canyon as well as one of its large tributaries, Parashant Canyon, which originates on the plateau.

The monument's size has grown to more than 1 million acres, with the increase coming from the proposed inclusion of portions of the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, which includes the northwestern rims of the Grand Canyon.

The new monument would be managed similarly to the 1.9-million-acre Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in southern Utah.

Like the Grand Staircase-Escalante, the Grand Canyon-Parashant would be administered by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BLM) rather than the National Park Service, which oversees most other national parks, monuments and recreation areas. The Arizona monument, like its Utah counterpart, would allow grazing and hunting to continue.

Unlike the Grand Staircase-Escalante, the new Arizona monument would not be created by surprise. In September 1996, Clinton stood on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon and invoked the Antiquities Act of 1906 to designate the Utah monument. The action, viewed by many political analysts as an election-eve ploy to reinforce support among

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environmentalists, shocked and angered most Utah political leaders.

A year ago, Babbitt told The Tribune he hoped Congress would give meaningful protection to the area, but he did not rule out the presidential fiat, as provided in the Antiquities Act of 1906.

Earlier this year, Rep. Bob Stump, R-Ariz., introduced a bill that would create "national conservation areas" in the Shivwits Plateau region. The bill, however, contained language that would have resulted in less protection than the area gets under current management, said Tom Robinson of Grand Canyon Trust, an environmental group based in Flagstaff.

A companion bill by Arizona Sen. John Kyl offered more protection, but apparently didn't satisfy Babbitt, Robinson said.

The Shivwits Plateau region was first inhabited by American Indians, most recently the Paiute. It was settled in the late 1800s by Mormon pioneers, descendants of

whom still run cattle on the plateau. About 15 ranchers, most of them Utahns, have grazing permits in the area.

Water is scarce, there are no paved roads, and no logging or mining operations. Still, Babbitt said the area needs protection now to save it from future encroachment from growth in southern Utah and Nevada.



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12/14/99



Pinnacles Would Grow by 8,000 Acres Under Babbitt Plan

Tuesday, December 14, 1999
San Francisco Chronicle
CHRONICLE SECTIONS

Jim Doyle, Chronicle Staff Writer

A Clinton administration plan to expand Pinnacles National Monument by nearly 8,000 acres could breathe new life into a federal park that in recent years has become increasingly threatened by urban sprawl, federal officials said yesterday.

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Officials said the existing monument's boundaries are inadequate to protect wildlife including habitat for golden eagles and prairie falcons. The proposed expansion also includes the headwaters of streams that need additional protection to ensure water quality.



The proposal, delivered to the White House yesterday by Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, also would provide federal protection for thousands of uninhabited rocks, islands and exposed reefs off the California coast.

Babbitt also recommended national monument status for 1 million acres on the northern rim of the Grand Canyon in Arizona, and 71,000 acres near Perry Mesa and Black Mesa near Flagstaff, Ariz.

Under the plan, President Clinton would use the Antiquities Act of 1906 to declare certain federally owned wilderness land as part of a national monument -- a designation that would result in more land-use restrictions.

Babbitt's recommendation follows his survey of lands in need of increased federal protection. The president is expected to act on Babbitt's proposal early next year.

Pinnacles National Monument encompasses more than 16,000 acres of mountainous wilderness on the east side of the Salinas Valley.

The craggy land, which includes remnants of an ancient volcano, was set aside as a national monument in 1908. Pinnacles' rugged spires and sheer walls attract thousands of hikers and rock climbers every year. Others visit the park to view its magnificent spring wildflowers or

explore its caves.

But in recent years, nearby land has been the subject of an increasing number of development proposals. "As the Silicon Valley expands south, we're going to see development move closer to the monument," said Brian Huse, director of the Pacific region for the National Parks Conservation Association.

"It shows why the Antiquities Act is a necessary vehicle by which the president can protect land," Huse said. "In this last Congress, we've seen that Congress has been unable to act, not because these lands are unworthy, but because Congress is bogged down in partisan politics."

Pinnacles is managed by the National Park Service, but a large part of its watershed extends outside the monument's boundaries and is administered by the federal Bureau of Land Management.

Babbitt's plan is to transfer 5,948 acres of adjacent BLM land and perhaps as much as 2,000 acres of private ranchland -- the owner is willing to sell -- to the National Park Service, which has more strict controls over commercial uses such as mining and logging as well as recreational activities including off-road vehicles.

Earlier this year, Rep. Sam Farr, D-Carmel, offered legislation to expand Pinnacles National Monument. But the Republican-controlled House Resources Committee tabled Farr's bill.

Farr also introduced a bill that would provide increased protection for California's offshore rocks and islands. But again, the House Resources Committee took no action -- prompting Babbitt to recommend that the president simply issue an executive order.

The roughly 7,000 rock outcroppings that dot the state's coast provide crucial habitat for an estimated 200,000 breeding sea birds, including the California least tern and the brown pelican -- which are both listed under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Many of these seabirds once nested on or near the shoreline but have been forced to retreat to offshore rocks because of increased development along the coastline. The rocks also provide foraging and breeding habitat for marine

mammals, including the threatened southern sea otter.

Some of the major rocks and islands are already protected, such as the Farallon Islands, which are part of a federal marine refuge, and the Channel Islands, which constitute a national park.

Babbitt's proposal would take every other federally owned rock outcropping within 12 miles of the California coastline and include them in a new national monument -- with enhanced protections against disturbing breeding and nesting wildlife. The uninhabited rocks would continue to be administered by the state Department of Fish and Game, on behalf of the Bureau of Land Management.

"These are smaller islands but more fragile and environmentally sensitive," said Bruce Hamilton, the Sierra Club's national conservation director. "It is equally important that these other islands receive protection because they are just as important from a scientific standpoint."

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Chronicle Sections



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AS OF DATE



Proposals would guard land

Babbitt submits plan to name monuments while Clinton wants to buy 'Legacy' sites

By Randal Mikkelsen
Reuters

WASHINGTON — Federal land along Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona would receive new protection under proposals made Tuesday by the Interior Department to create three national monuments and expand a fourth.

At a White House ceremony, President Clinton said he would make a decision early next year on the recommendations, which immediately drew criticism from Arizona Sen. John McCain, a Republican presidential candidate.

Clinton also proposed spending \$35 million to buy 18 sites of historical or natural significance under his Lands Legacy Initiative. The sites included land surrounding the first home of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. in Atlanta and habitat for sea turtles and manatees on Florida's Pelican Island, where President Theodore Roosevelt created the first national wildlife refuge in 1903.

The proposal for national monuments, announced by Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, would create a 1 million-acre Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument to protect the watershed on the north rim of the Grand Canyon in Arizona.

"The Grand Canyon is still not fully protected," Babbitt told reporters at the White House.

The proposal also would designate a 71,000-acre national monument protecting prehistoric rock inscriptions and ancient ruins north of Phoenix, and another monument covering thousands of small islands, rocks and reefs off the California coast that serve as habitat for wildlife such as sea otters and birds.

Furthermore, the proposal would expand by 8,000 acres the Pinnacles National Monument south of San Jose, Calif.

Although the land covered by the proposals is owned by the U.S. government, a national-monument designation would put it off-limits to mining and other forms of development as designated by Clinton.

McCain criticized the proposals, which would create two monuments in his home state, as a "unilateral decision" bypassing the people of Arizona. He said the issue should be resolved through legislation.

Clinton's authority to protect federal

lands by establishing national monuments or similar reserves was established under the Antiquities Act of 1906 by President Theodore Roosevelt, who set aside about 194 million acres of land during his presidency.

Clinton used the authority in 1996 to create the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Utah.

Babbitt said every president except three since Theodore Roosevelt

has used his authority to protect federal lands under the act. The three exceptions, Babbitt said, were Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan and George Bush.

The separate Lands Legacy proposals were sent to congressional appropriations committees, which must be consulted on the purchases.

Babbitt dismissed suggestions that Tuesday's national monument recommendations were an effort to bolster Vice President Gore's environmentalist credentials for his presidential campaign.

Clinton Plans \$652-Million 'Lands Legacy' Initiative

■ **Environment:** President says he wants to preserve natural or historic sites — including one in California — from development.

By EDWIN CHEN
TIMES STAFF WRITER

WASHINGTON—President Clinton on Tuesday signaled his intention to create three national monuments in the West—including one that would encompass thousands of small, federally owned islands, rocks and exposed reefs along California's coastline extending 12 miles out to sea.

Clinton also suggested that he will invoke his executive authority to expand by nearly half the size of the 16,265-acre Pinnacles National Monument south of San Jose to protect watershed and wildlife habitat from commercial exploitation.

The president sent to Congress a list of 18 other natural or historic sites throughout the country that will be acquired—and protected—under his \$652-million "lands legacy" initiative. Funds for these purchases were provided by the budget Clinton signed two weeks ago.

"We must use this time of unparalleled prosperity to ensure people will always be able to see these places as we see them today," Clinton said. "There is no greater gift we can offer to the new millennium than to protect these treasures for all Americans, for all time."

The other two national monument sites, nominated by Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, are in Arizona: about 1 million acres abutting the Grand Canyon's north rim, and about 70,000 acres of desert about 40 miles north of Phoenix that are rich in archeological sites and pictographs.

As the president spoke of the four sites, all federally owned, he left little doubt that he intends early next year to follow Babbitt's

recommendations. Such status would add restrictions on access and use.

"By giving these lands national monument status, we would ensure that they could be passed along to future generations healthy and whole," Clinton said.

Under the 1906 Antiquities Act, every president except Richard M. Nixon, Ronald Reagan and George Bush has created at least one monument, according to Babbitt. Most of America's national parks were created under the act, he added.

But that did not assuage many congressional Republicans, who have long been at odds with the Clinton administration over land-use policy.

Among them was Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), a contender for the GOP presidential nomination. He called it a unilateral decision that should be reached only by an act of Congress.

But Babbitt said that thousands of federally owned offshore islands and rocks need protection to guard against mining by entrepreneurs who have been known to convert such rocks into kitty litter or grit for the washing and manufacturing of stone-washed jeans.

"And there have been a variety of those kinds of proposals from people thinking that these rocks might look better ground up and merchandised," Babbitt said.

"Those are rocks where all the vast flocks of birds are coming in, where the pelicans are molting at breeding time," he added. "They really are a treasure. And the time is now at hand to make certain that they are protected."

Babbitt is recommending to the president that the islands be jointly administered by the federal Bureau of Land Management and the California Department of Fish and Game.

The Clinton administration decided to issue an executive order on the offshore islands and the Pinnacles expansion after concluding that the Republican-controlled Congress has no intention of taking up proposals by Rep. Sam Farr (D-Carmel) to designate the islands as wilderness areas and to expand Pinnacles.

"I'm overjoyed," Farr said Tuesday. "With these two initiatives, we are taking substantial steps toward protecting the environment for our future generations."

The Pinnacles National Monument was created by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1908 to protect what Clinton described Tuesday as "spectacular volcanic spires and mountain caves." It began with 2,060 acres but has been expanded six times, five by presidential fiat and once by Congress.

The expanded lands hold important habitat for an array of amphibians, reptiles and raptors such as prairie falcons, golden eagles and red-tailed hawks.

However, Babbitt said, "it's being increasingly discovered by the people in the South [San Francisco] Bay and San Jose area, who use it for rock climbing and as a refuge from all the sprawl."

He is recommending that jurisdiction for the expanded monument be transferred from the Bureau of Land Management to the National Park Service.

The new national monument near the Grand Canyon would include the Colorado Plateau north of Grand Canyon National Park extending west to the Nevada state line and encompassing part of Lake Mead. The monument north of Phoenix would include public land north of Perry and Black mesas and the Agua Fria River canyon.

The 18 sites to be purchased under the "lands legacy" program are in Colorado (Gunnison Basin and Silver Mountain), Florida (Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge), Hawaii (Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge), Idaho (Sawtooth National Recreation Area), Georgia (the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site), Minnesota (the Chippewa and Superior national forests), North Carolina (Lake Logan), Tennessee (Gulf Tract and the Stones River National Battlefield), Utah (Bonneville Shoreline Trail and the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument) and Virginia (the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County Battlefield Memorial National Park), Washington (Mountains to Sound Greenway) and Wyoming (Royal Teton Ranch). Also on the list: the Virginia Islands National Park and the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River, which flows through the Carolinas and Georgia.

"There are certain places humankind simply cannot improve upon, places whose beauty and interest no photograph could capture, places you simply have to see for yourself," Clinton said.



NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

MONDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1999

USA
TODAY Nation

Babbitt: Save the land or step aside

By Martin Kasindorf, USA TODAY

LOS ANGELES - Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt is making a holiday shopping list consisting entirely of ornaments - spectacular but threatened places that decorate the vast landscape of the American West. Before urban sprawl engulfs them, Babbitt wants to give these 2 million acres to future Americans for centuries of contemplation.

Delivering an ultimatum to Congress, Babbitt has made it clear that, unless the lawmakers act first, he will sign off on a "preliminary" list this month of at least seven environmentally delicate Western sites. He'll then ask President Clinton to sign executive orders designating them as national monuments, bypassing a Congress that Babbitt says is dawdling.

National monument status restricts industrial and some recreational access. It ensures that land can't be sold or subdivided into "ranchettes." But a monument typically has fewer use restrictions than a national park or wilderness. Roads, livestock grazing, hunting and fishing are allowed.

As skeptical Republicans see it, Babbitt is merely trying to build monuments to the Clinton administration -- and to secure environmentalists' support for Vice President Gore's presidential campaign.

"I think it's the height of arrogance to say, 'If you, Congress, don't act on this, we'll just do it ourselves,'" Rep. Jim Kolbe, R-Ariz., says. "There may be some saber-rattling to get Congress to do their will, but it's going to be counterproductive."

Babbitt is worried that time is running out for the administration to establish a conservation legacy, but he will give Congress more time

coal-rich southern Utah into the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. Locking up the land against mining helped Clinton that November with environment-minded voters, but the move was so unpopular in Utah that it cost Democrat Bill Orton his House seat.

"This administration likes to fly in, fly out, have a photo opportunity and with the stroke of a pen, create long-term problems that members of the congressional delegation are left to solve," says Sean Conway, an aide to Sen. Wayne Allard, R-Colo.

Though Grand Staircase-Escalante has brought more tourists to the area, Clinton's 1996 pen-stroke made the Antiquities Act anathema to Hansen. He wrote a bill requiring Congress and the affected state's governor and legislature to approve any monument over 5,000 acres.

The measure has passed in the House. Clinton has threatened to veto it if it gets through the Senate next year, Interior Department spokesman Tim Ahern says.

Preservation powers

Clinton is hardly the first president to sidestep Congress when it comes to preserving public lands. Teddy Roosevelt used the Antiquities Act in 1908 to protect the Grand Canyon, which was upgraded to a national park in 1919. Every president since then except Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan and George Bush has employed the act. There are more than 100 national monuments.

The law reserves the designation for lands having "scientific, historic or archaeological significance."

Critics say the administration is proposing oversized monuments and doesn't always explain how the lands meet the law's definition. "A lot of these things are hardly deserving," Hansen says.

Congress can create national monuments, but on some of Babbitt's proposed sites, lawmakers would rather declare national conservation areas. These can be custom-crafted to provide a lesser level of protection, appeasing ranchers, forestry workers and off-road-vehicle users who don't want to be fenced out.

Environmental organizations welcome Babbitt's monument proposals. Daniel Weiss, Sierra Club political director in Washington, says the group would "appreciate" the designations, and assumes that the idea "stems from Gore's influence on Clinton" and Clinton's desire for a legacy. Still, the club hasn't endorsed either Gore or Bradley. Each is being asked to fill out an exacting questionnaire on his environmental views.

Babbitt's plan is unpopular with business users of public lands. Chuck Cushman, executive director of the American Land Rights Association, which represents 18,000 people who hold lands within national parks and national monuments, says the administration is "as close to a dictatorship in land use as we've ever seen in this country."

National Mining Association President Richard Lawson says presidential withdrawal of more public lands from new mining claims

would be a fresh example of "the administration's assault against the mining industry."

Babbitt dismisses his opponents as "the self-styled property-rights crowd, who basically are arguing as a matter of ideology that the government should sell off the public lands."

Rather than directly rebut charges of political motivation, Babbitt says he'll be asking Clinton to act in "a tradition of presidential leadership that is 100 years old and has produced a fantastic heritage for our country."

Elliot Diringier, spokesman for the White House Council on Environmental Quality, says, "My sense is that this would be happening whether or not Gore was running."

What Clinton does with Babbitt's list "is entirely unknown to me at this point," Babbitt says. Diringier says the president will consider Interior Department recommendations case by case. Past administrations often have designated national monuments in their final months as "a last shot, a legacy," Diringier says.

Hansen says the Constitution gives Congress, not the president, the power to say how public land is used. "It's even questionable in my mind that the Antiquities Act is constitutional," he says. "I wish somebody would challenge it in court."

Congress can de-authorize a national monument, but has never done so; it's politically risky.

'No surprises here'

To avoid a repeat of the outcry over Grand Staircase-Escalante, Babbitt has given Congress and local residents months of notice about where he wants national monuments. "We've learned from that time," he says. "There are no surprises here."

Asked by Clinton to find sites needing protection, Babbitt kicked off his drive in November 1998 with a hike on the Shivwits Plateau of the "Arizona Strip." The 570,000-acre high country north of the Grand Canyon is threatened by Las Vegas' growth and by potential uranium mining.

Babbitt has barnstormed as many as four times through the sites under review, holding public meetings. "He's been a veritable Oprah Winfrey for his cause," says Melinda Pierce, a Sierra Club representative in Washington.

Republicans say Babbitt isn't making local converts. In a joint letter to the secretary in October, Rep. Scott McInnis, R-Colo., and Colorado Sens. Allard and Ben Nighthorse Campbell said southwestern Colorado communities want no change in management of federal lands.

The three legislators say they're talking to Colorado officials about the Anasazi ruins site to find an alternative to Babbitt's "stated threat to usurp local recommendations and congressional authority by

unilaterally locking up the 160,000-acre site through an executive order."

Babbitt won't immediately ask Clinton to employ the Antiquities Act where prospects of getting a pleasing bill out of Congress look good.

Isolated Steens Mountain in southeastern Oregon, for which Democratic Gov. John Kitzhaber and Rep. Greg Walden, R-Ore., are teaming to recommend a protection plan, is "the one that's going best at this point," Babbitt says. Long a proposed national park, the scenic mountain and grassland area isn't in immediate jeopardy, but "let's protect it while we can," Ahern says. Winning Oregon officials' consensus on Soda Mountain, just off busy Interstate 5 near Ashland, isn't as far along.

Babbitt praises Kolbe for a "model process" of harmonizing opinion toward legislation that would protect the Las Cienegas -Empire Ranch area near sprawling Tucson. The ranch has 50,000 acres of desert, farm and grazing land with Indian ruins.

By contrast, Babbitt sounds ready to ask Clinton to pre-empt a national conservation area bill written for the Shivwits Plateau by Rep. Bob Stump, R-Ariz. The bill is "not even close," lacking sufficient environmental safeguards, says Babbitt.

At sunset, the Santa Rosa Mountains overlooking prosperous Palm Springs, Calif., shade from pink to purple like settings in a Zane Grey novel. But golf courses and luxury homes are creeping toward the slopes.

Rep. Mary Bono, R-Calif., says that except for Palm Springs' city government and some resort developers, who fear a new layer of red tape, her constituents like Babbitt's idea of a San Jacinto-Santa Rosa Mountains National Monument. They see it as an aid to tourism. Willing to sponsor such a bill, she held a public hearing last Tuesday in Rancho Mirage.

"There's so much pressure from the administration," she says. "I feel that I'm the little train on the railroad tracks, chugging along, and there's this huge bullet train coming behind me. I have to keep up. If I don't, they're going to run right over me."

Babbitt's prodding has already paid off in another instance. On the last day of this year's session, Congress gave wilderness status to Otay Mountain, on the California-Mexico border near San Diego. The mountain had been on Babbitt's early list. "The monument discussion produced it," he says.

Contributing: Valerie Alvord

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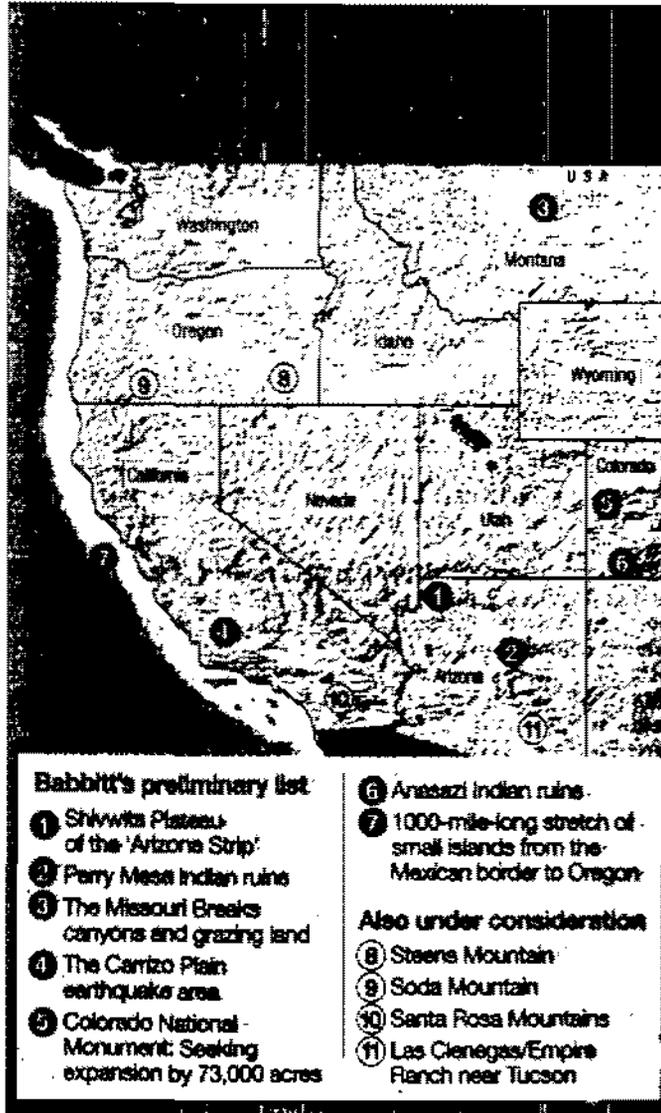


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By Dave Merrill, USA TODAY

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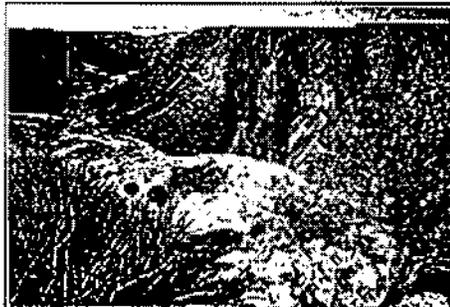
2 new Arizona monuments?

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Million acres at Canyon in Babbitt's plan

By Steve Yozwiak
The Arizona Republic
Dec. 13, 1999

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt today will ask President Clinton to unilaterally create four new national monuments - two in Arizona and two in California - that Congress has refused to protect.



Bureau of Land Management

"The empty spaces are filling up in the West. We have to imagine what the Western landscape is going to look like in 50 years and try to anticipate (protections), rather than wait for the conflicts to happen," Babbitt told The Arizona Republic during an exclusive interview Sunday.

A June 1999 photo shows the Shivwits Plateau, a scenic strip of land between the Grand Canyon and the Utah state line. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt is asking President Clinton to designate the area a national monument.

The former Arizona governor said the two monuments in Arizona would be:

The Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, 1 million acres northwest of the Grand Canyon that otherwise could be developed by mining and subdivisions. This monument across the Shivwits Plateau would be almost as large as the adjacent 1.1 million-acre Grand Canyon National Park.

The Agua Fria National Monument, 40,000 acres north of Phoenix where hundreds of archeological sites are threatened by urban sprawl and pothunters. This monument east of Interstate 17 would stretch from Black Canyon City to Cordes Junction.

The two California monuments would:

Nearly double, by adding 10,000 acres, the existing Pinnacles National Monument south of San Jose, which is threatened by urban sprawl.

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Create the California Coastal National Monument, made up of thousands of small, uninhabited islands and rock outcroppings, which are threatened by mining.

All four are among the dozen natural features Babbitt has identified across the West this past year that he intends the Clinton administration to preserve from development.

In most other cases, Babbitt has successfully enlisted the cooperation of Republicans and Democrats to advance the protections through congressional action. Babbitt is working closely, for example, with U.S. Rep. Jim Kolbe, R-Ariz., to create a new national monument southeast of Tucson called the Empire Cienega.

However, in the case of the four monuments Babbitt will formally propose to Clinton today, Republicans in Congress have failed to act. In the case of the Arizona Strip northwest of the Grand Canyon, U.S. Rep. Bob Stump, R-Ariz., has actively opposed Babbitt and pushed instead for more mining, road building and air tours across the Shivwits Plateau.

Stump's congressional aide, Lisa Atkins, said her boss was "extremely disappointed" and "surprised" by Babbitt's plans.

Atkins said there has not been enough time to fully consider either of the two proposals for Arizona, and the monument planned next to the Grand Canyon is nearly twice the size Babbitt originally proposed a year ago.

"The congressman believes it is not fair to the public . . . to move ahead with a recommendation at this point," said Atkins, adding that Stump will send a letter to Clinton this week asking that the president reject Babbitt's plan.

Arizona Gov. Jane Hull joined Stump in denouncing Babbitt's recommendations. Hull's press secretary, Francie Noyes, said Sunday that the governor supports the preservation of open space, but not through a unilateral action of the president.

"The governor feels strongly that Arizona should be involved in decisions that affect so much of Arizona. This is not a rejection of the idea of open space by any means. Rather it's (opposition to) the process of this particular decision," Noyes said.

Babbitt said Clinton is expected to act on the recommendations within the next several weeks.

Under the 1906 Antiquities Act, pushed through Congress by then-President Theodore Roosevelt, the president has the unilateral power to protect federal lands from development by declaring them national monuments.

Clinton used this power in 1996 to create the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in southern Utah. That move is credited, in part, for solidifying environmentalists'

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support and helping Clinton's re-election that year.

Every president this century - except for Presidents Nixon, Reagan and Bush - has used the powers of the Antiquities Act.

Unlike Clinton's surprise action in 1996, vehemently denounced by the Utah congressional delegation, Babbitt has hosted numerous hiking tours and town halls throughout the West during the past year to generate support for protecting natural places.

In Colorado and Oregon, Babbitt said, he has garnered bipartisan support for new national monuments and national parks.

"We're making good progress in many areas of the West in getting these consensual approaches to work - but not everywhere," Babbitt said.

In October, Stump aggressively challenged Babbitt's plans by introducing his own Shivwits Plateau National Conservation Area.

"H.R. 2795 protects the remoteness, native biodiversity and ecological richness of the Shivwits Plateau, but at the same time increases public awareness, outdoor recreation-use enjoyment," Stump said at the time.

Babbitt joined environmentalists in denouncing the measure in testimony before a subcommittee of the House Resources Committee.

Babbitt said his own plans would ensure that ranching and hunting could continue across the Arizona Strip - a sparsely populated land settled during the past century by Mormon pioneer ranchers. However, a national monument would prevent uranium miners and other developers from ruining the natural landscape and fouling the area's tributaries to the Colorado River, he said.

Environmentalists criticized Stump's bill because they said it would allow the spraying of toxic herbicides and bulldozing of trees and bushes to open up grasslands for local ranchers. And it would disclose the locations of archaeological sites and delete proposed wilderness protections from Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, they said.

As for the 40,000 acres near the Agua Fria River, Babbitt said, the archeological treasures across Black Mesa and Perry Mesa must be protected from the Phoenix metro area's relentless advance.

"Unless we take steps now, the development pressures will leapfrog onto those mesas and continue right on to Prescott," Babbitt said.

Atkins said Stump also recognizes the development pressures

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from northern Maricopa County and southern Yavapai County but wants to look at a more comprehensive plan that would include the Agua Fria recreational corridor planned for the West Valley.

Regarding the California proposals, Babbitt said legislation to protect the coastal islands and expand Pinnacles National Monument was introduced but never received a hearing in the House Resources Committee.

"We're running out of time, not for this administration, but in terms of future growth in the West submerging all these pristine places," Babbitt said.

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Amid Protests, Land-Protection Plan Goes to President

By MICHAEL JANOFSKY

DENVER, Dec. 12 — The Clinton administration is a step closer to designating three new national monuments in Arizona and California, a change in status that would add restrictions on access and use.

A letter from Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt recommending the action is expected to reach the White House on Monday for President Clinton's approval, administration officials said today. Mr. Babbitt, who has been leading the effort to turn more federal lands into monuments, is expected to recommend additional changes in the remaining months of the administration.

While leading Republicans in Congress strongly object to monument declarations as an inappropriate use of the Antiquities Act of 1906 and an end run around Congress, the administration officials said President Clinton would likely read the recommendations on Monday and act on them early in the new year.

"I know the president wants to exercise executive authority very carefully," said a senior White House official. "But I also know he has a very strong view that he has responsibility to future generations to provide protection for areas like these. This is a legacy issue for him that I'm sure he is looking at favorably."

The lands Mr. Babbitt is recommending for monument status are 1 million acres along the northern rim of the Grand Canyon in Arizona, 71,000 acres around Ferry Mesa and Black Mesa near Flagstaff, Ariz., and the thousands of islands, rocks and exposed reefs within 12 miles of the California coast.

Mr. Babbitt is also proposing that Pinnacles National Monument east of Salinas, Calif., be expanded by nearly 8,000 acres to protect watersheds and habitats for an array of birds, amphibians and reptiles.

The four areas in question are managed by the federal Bureau of Land Management, which imposes minimal restrictions on use and access. Monument status would protect the areas from recreational and commercial overuse.

Mr. Clinton needs little more than his signature to act on the recommendations. The Antiquities Act allows presidents to use an executive order to change the status of federal lands that have scientific, historic or archaeological significance. Since it was passed, every president except Richard M. Nixon and Ronald Reagan has designated at least one national monument. Now there are more than 100 around the country.

In recent months Mr. Babbitt has spent considerable time and energy building support for declaring up to a dozen federally owned areas as national monuments. So far, Mr. Clinton has designated only one new one, Grand Staircase-Escalante, a 1.9-million-acre area in southern Utah.

But that declaration, in 1994, fueled a running battle between the Republican-led Congress and the White House, in which federal lawmakers have disputed the legal grounds upon which the Clinton administration is basing its right to invoke the act.

The chairman of the House national parks and public lands subcommittee, Representative James V. Hansen, Republican of Utah, contends that the act was intended only for relatively small areas, not the expansive areas in Mr. Babbitt's recommendations.

Mr. Hansen introduced legislation this year that would restrict the president's discretionary powers over federal lands. Efforts to reach Mr.

Hansen today were unsuccessful. He did not respond to a message left with an aide.

But in a speech before the House in April, Mr. Hansen sharply criticized the White House for the Grand Staircase designation, charging that the administration had its eyes on "multimillion-acre national monuments to score a few extra votes in the next election."

"Democracy isn't always pretty," Mr. Hansen said then. "But I think we can all agree that it is a lot better than having a king dictate everything from the White House."

In addition, the proposed use of the Antiquities Act has angered ranchers, mining companies and cattle producers who contend that new restrictions on land use, especially in the West, increase costs, reduce productivity and eliminate jobs — claims the administration has denied.

On the other hand, environmental groups have routinely supported greater protections for public lands, and some political analysts say that by designating more national monuments in the final months of his term, Mr. Clinton would help solidify environmentalists' support for Vice President Al Gore in his quest for the presidency next year.



Associated Press

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, left, and Mike Taylor of the Bureau of Land Management, at Perry Mesa in Arizona in September. Mr. Babbitt is seeking national monument status for Perry Mesa and other areas.

A New Government Indicator

For the first time, 30 services provided by the federal government were measured as part of the American Consumer Satisfaction Index by the National Quality Research Center at the University of Michigan. The data were converted into a score between 0 and 100. Here's how the index ranked specific federal services:

Agency	Customer	Score
Administration for Families & Children	Parents of Head Start students	87
Food and Nutrition Service	WIC program recipients	83
Housing and Urban Development	Community Development Block Grant recipients	69
Social Security Administration	Recent retirement benefits recipients	82
Veterans Health Administration	Outpatients at VHA clinics	79
Office of Personnel Management	Federal retirees and annuitants	75
Health Care Financing Administration	Recent Medicare beneficiaries	71
Veterans Benefits Administration	Veteran compensation/benefit claimants	61
Education Department	Primary users of education publications	80
NASA	Educators participating in NASA Center programs	80
General Services Administration	Users of the Consumer Information Center	77
Bureau of the Census	Data distributors	70
Environmental Protection Agency	Reference librarians accessing EPA Web site	69
National Park Service	Recreational visitors	73
National Forest Service	Recreational visitors	70
Bureau of Land Management	Recreational visitors	64
U.S. Mint	Buyers of collector & commemorative coins	86
FEMA	Disaster assistance recipients, 1997-98	73
Education Department	Electronic applicants for Title IV student aid	63
National Science Foundation	Grant applicants, 1998	57
Patent & Trademark Office	Recent individual patent & trademark applicants	57*
State Department	Recent passport applicants/renewals	73
Immigration & Naturalization Service	International travelers	69
Customs Service	International air travelers	66
Food & Drug Administration	Principal grocery shoppers & food preparers	66
Food Safety & Inspection Service	Principal grocery shoppers & food preparers	62
Internal Revenue Service	Electronic tax filers	74
Internal Revenue Service	All tax filers	51
Federal Aviation Administration	Commercial pilots	58
OSHA	Health & safety professionals	51

*An incomplete score because of mix-up in processing data.

Administration Turnover

At the Interior Department, Patricia J. Benoit, assistant secretary for water and science and former counsel on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, will leave at the end of the year to work in the private sector.



NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 2000

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

APR 17 2000

Arizona preserved magic of caverns

Editor's note: When Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt was in Phoenix recently, we invited him to write a column in response to concerns raised by former Arizona State Parks naturalist Matt Chew about the development of Kartchner Caverns State Park. As governor of Arizona 15 years ago, Babbitt was instrumental in the state's acquisition and later development of the caverns near Benson.

I was apprehensive and unsure what to expect on that first trip. We scrambled down the pit and then went headfirst into a hole in the limestone. I wondered about rattlesnakes, then imagined myself a salamander crawling through primeval muck toward the center of the Earth. We slithered and squirmed on and on, and there it was — a great cavern full of wonders flickering before our headlamps.

A few weeks ago, I returned to see whether Kartchner Caverns State Park — 10 years and \$20 million in development — could possibly match that enchanted moment of 15 years ago. I toured the impressive visitor center, located where we had bushwhacked our way up the mountain, and then watched the film recounting how Randy Tufts and Gary Tenen discovered the cave in 1974, kept the secret for 10 years and finally approached us at the state Capitol to authorize a state park.

Our guide gave a brief orientation and cautioned "no gum, no food or drink, no touching," and we boarded a tram to go across Guarani Wash and up to the entrance.

MY TURN



BRUCE BABBITT

We entered a tunnel, passed through an air lock designed to preserve the 98 percent humidity of the cave and followed the pathway to the Throne Room. What a magnificent sight! Even better than I remembered. With good lighting, I could see the detail in the fantasy formations of stone icicles and columns and soda straws and wall decorations that look like the work of an exuberant pastry chef.

I marveled at the colors. This is not your usual dusty gray limestone cavern. There is every shade of red that iron oxides can generate, from rust to strawberry plus a spectrum of orange, yellow, brown, black and white. The guide explains how the complex geology, overlying rocks with many different mineral suites, provides a palette of colors to stain the cave formations.

To me the most profound sight, however, is the process of creation going on right before our eyes. A drop of water hanging from the tip of a stone icicle drops, splashing on the ground where a stalagmite grows up-

ward — our guide says it is growing at the rate of a tenth of an inch per century, an inch every 1,000 years. At the visitor center, we saw the bones of a giant ground sloth that died there 80,000 years ago — in a cave that looked much like what we see today.

We learn that State Parks consulted scientists and engineers from around the world, commissioning baseline scientific studies, asking all experts to "imagine the perfect cave development." As a result, State Parks has avoided the mistakes visible at other "show caves" around the country.

Roads and visitor facilities are located below and away from the cave so no runoff filters down into the cave system. Guarani Wash, which feeds water into the cave, remains undeveloped. Pathways in the cave were carefully located and constructed; they are rinsed down every night to keep the spores and hair shed by visitors from triggering the spread of algae and fungus.

When we come to the Throne Room, the trail widens into a small amphitheater. We sit, staring out at the Rubia Kahn Tower and other wonders, awaiting the sound and light show. Lights are lowered, then one panel of rock formations lights up, then another and another. The lighting shifts in sync with drumming and chanting that sounds like that old Delta Airlines theme song. Disneyland under limestone? Perhaps, but it's a good show.

We moved on. I wondered, where are the bats? Lines of bats streaming out into the evening air are the biological heart of any great cave system. The guide explained that Kartchner bats are migratory — they leave in September to winter in Mexico. They return in May to roost in the Big Room to bear and nurse their young.

The Big Room is in a section not yet open to visitors. But it is being developed, and it will be open in several years. Is it appropriate to take such a risk? Bats are highly sensitive to human presence; if disturbed, they may suddenly leave the cave, never to return. The biologists who studied the Kartchner bats have warned, "Loss of the roosting bats could cause a collapse of a healthy cave environment and the destruction of the entire cave ecosystem."

State Parks staff members respond that the new section could be opened for visitation only during the winter season when the bats are in Mexico. I hope the State Parks Board will endorse that approach, for we cannot risk loss of the bat population.

Then the tour is over, and we head back through the tunnel into the dazzling spring sunshine. It is a beautiful and unusual cave, carefully developed, interpreted by guides who are well informed and proud of their work. We should be proud of them and of our park system and of our legislators who year after year appropriated money and waited patiently so that it could be done right.

As we headed down to the parking lot, I looked out at the San Pedro Valley. There is no place in Arizona or anywhere else quite like this; across the valley, the Dragoon Mountains are glowing purple in the sunset, to the south I can see the blue peak of Santo Thomas clear down in Mexico and off to the right, the ramparts of Huachuaca.

But down in the valley along the San Pedro River, it may not last. The desert floor is being bulldozed to dust for wildcat subdivisions. The lush forests of cottonwood and willow along the San Pedro River are threatened by excessive groundwater pumping. How ironic that the state of Arizona can set a world standard for cave development, yet do so little to manage development up on top.

Babbitt is completing his second term as Interior secretary. Columns of up to 600 words are welcome. They will be selected for publication based on topic relevance and will be edited for clarity and length.



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of the Secretary
For Immediate Release: October 15, 1999

Contact: John Wright
202/208-6416

Babbitt Delivers on Third Utah Monument Promise *\$5.5 million settlement with PacifiCorp coal leases reached*

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt today announced a second agreement to relinquish federal coal leases in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Utah.

Under the agreement with PacifiCorp (which holds the lease as a result of its acquisition of Utah Power & Light several years ago), the company will receive \$5.5 million, in return for which it will relinquish all of its interest in the Monument. Like the agreement announced last Friday with Andalex Corp., this agreement is subject to congressional appropriation.

"This is another follow-through by the Administration on President Clinton's proclamation of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument," said Babbitt. "I am especially pleased with this agreement because PacifiCorp had initiated discussions with us to resolve these issues even before the President proclaimed the Monument, a fact noted and applauded by the President when he announced his historic action."

-DOI-



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of the Secretary
For Immediate Release
Sept. 1, 1999

Contact: Tim Ahern (202)-208-5089

Babbitt Supports Protection For California Rocks and Islands

MONTEREY, Calif. - Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt today endorsed legislation to designate as federal wilderness the thousands of rocks and islands off the California coastline.

"These small rocks, islands, and reefs are absolutely essential for the existence of a number of birds and sea mammals. They provide nests, shelter, and feeding grounds for a variety of birds and sea life and we need to make sure they are protected," said Babbitt, appearing at a news conference with Rep. Sam Farr, D-Calif.

Farr is the chief author of HR 2277, the California Rocks and Islands Wilderness Act of 1999. The legislation would raise the protection level of the rocks and islands to the highest protection status afforded by the federal government. The rocks and islands, from Mexico to the Oregon coast, are under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management, an agency of the Department of the Interior.

The legislation would cover the rocks and islands above the mean high tide line and within three geographic miles of the coastline. There is no accurate number of how many would be involved, although most estimates put the numbers in the tens of thousands with an estimated total of 7,000 acres.

"I am pleased to support this legislation," said Babbitt. "The wide, bipartisan support it enjoys among California's Congressional delegation reflects the hope of people in California to do everything they can to protect this state's magnificent coastline, which is one of the wonders of the world. I commend Congressman Farr for sponsoring this bill."

-DOI-



NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

MONDAY, AUGUST 9, 1999

The Oregonian Portland OR 8/6/99

Steens Mountain needs protection, Babbitt says

The Interior secretary and Gov. John Kitzhaber tour the area and propose more restrictions, but they want to retain grazing

By HAL BERNTON
THE OREGONIAN

FRENCHGLEN — Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt on Thursday called for new federal protections for Steens Mountain, declaring this high-desert range of Eastern Oregon a "primo resource of national importance."

But responding to local cattle ranchers who fear these protections could push them off the mountain, Babbitt said he thought that "carefully managed grazing" is "perfectly compatible" with this desert landscape.

Babbitt and Gov. John Kitzhaber visited the mountain on a blustery day filled with the rumble of distant thunder. They peered into a 2,000-foot deep Big Indian

Gorge, sniffed wild mint leaves and escaped for a brief fly-fishing session in search of red-band trout.

Babbitt and Kitzhaber said they hope for congressional action naming the Steens as a National Conservation Area, a designation that would emphasize resource protection. And Babbitt said he would return to Eastern Oregon in the months ahead to help craft a proposal.

"I would really like to build on the cooperative spirit here and get a consensus bill that would have the acceptance of the governor and congressional delegation," he said.

Harney County officials who met with Babbitt on Thursday evening, appeared willing to work on a new protection plan.

"I'm cautiously optimistic that we can end up with something," said Steve Grasty, a Harney County judge.

But the prospect of consensus remains uncertain.

Conservationists are hoping that a new management plan will cut back public lands grazing and also finance some federal acquisitions of private land. Their representatives are scheduled to meet with Babbitt this morning, and they want a stake in shaping the congressional legislation.

"I don't care what it's called, as long as it's real protection, which is to remove cattle from the mountain and prevent private development," said Alice Elshoff, of the Oregon Natural Desert Association, a group which has sued the federal

government about management of portions of the mountain.

If a consensus fails to emerge — and no bill passes Congress — Babbitt indicated he would consider executive action to name the Steens a national monument under the administration of the Bureau of Land Management. The federal government owns more than 600,000 acres of the mountain, but it is unclear how much would be included in any new protection area.

The 30-mile long mountain is one of the most remarkable geological formations in Oregon, formed by the uplifting of basalt rock and later carved by glaciers.

The summit ridge, which reaches an elevation of 9,700 feet — drops sharply to the east down to a desert filled with alkali flats and bubbling geothermal mud pots.

The gentler western slope encompasses myriad ecological zones. There are hanging valleys, where small lakes pool in meadows studded with wildflowers.

"I fear that it will be artificially advertised by the designation and taken over by hordes of people."

**FRED OTLEY,
RANCHER**

Further down the slope are pockets of quaking aspen, and in the lower elevations are a mix of sagebrush, native grasses and juniper.

Any effort to increase protection of Steens poses challenges that reflect the tangled nature of landownerships.

About 25 percent of the Steens is privately held. Unlike other areas of Oregon, where private tracts are often fenced or posted with no trespassing signs, most of Steens Mountain is managed in a private-public partnership. That partnership has allowed hikers, fishermen and other visitors access to some of the scenic private areas.

Many ranchers and other residents of Eastern Oregon's Harney County fear that a new federal designation could lead to major

restrictions on grazing, a surge of visitors and pressure for improvements that would fundamentally change the wild character of the area. They say that could unravel the partnership and prompt private landowners to put up more fences.

"I fear that it will be artificially advertised by the designation and taken over by hordes of people," said Fred Otley, a local rancher, at a Thursday evening "Friends of Steen" meeting in Burns that drew several hundred people.

Babbitt spoke briefly before the group, urging it to join in crafting the new plan.

But many in the crowd were unconvinced by Babbitt's appeal and most were hostile to new federal protections.

During the last decade, the Bureau of Land Management's estimates of visitors have indicated an average of 45,000 people a year, with many taking a more than 60 mile-long gravel road that loops up along the ridge line. Outfitters report, in recent years, a surge in interest in back country trips. Babbitt said he doesn't want to see the Steens trampled by more visitors, and that recreation — as well as grazing — must be carefully managed. He said he respects the public-private partnership.

But Babbitt said that naming the Steens as a National Conservation Area probably wouldn't draw too much attention to the area but could provide significant new protections in the decades ahead as more people came to the area.

"The West is developing, places always get discovered," Babbitt said.

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BOB ELLIS/THE OREGONIAN

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt (right) confers with Stacy Davies, manager of the Roaring Springs Ranch, which includes property at Steens Mountain. Babbitt assured ranchers that grazing could continue.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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Taya Kashuba / The Press-Enterprise

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt hikes in the Santa Rosa Mountains. He was in the Palm Springs area Tuesday.

Santa Rosas win over Babbitt

Interior chief urges push for monument status now

By Jeanette Steele
The Press-Enterprise

PALM SPRINGS

Bruce Babbitt soaked in the hot beauty of the Santa Rosa Mountains on Tuesday, eyeballing a desert flower through a magnifying glass and stroking the nose of a desert horned lizard.

Lifting his cap often to wipe a sweaty brow, the interior secretary hiked the mountains that tower darkly over the desert resort cities.

"As long as it doesn't get above 120 (degrees), I'm into the poetry of this place," Babbitt joked.

Feeling the mountain poetry strengthened Babbitt's belief that a 274,000-acre swath of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto mountains should be named a national monument this year, he said. The label would mean more prestige and a better chance at public funding for the area.

got here," Babbitt said. "This is the most varied and diverse desert I've ever been in. And that's saying a lot for a guy from Arizona."

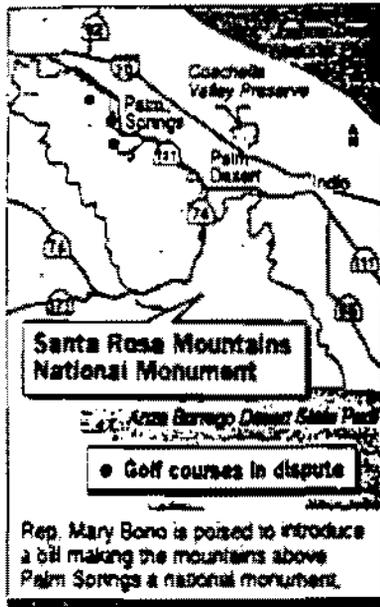
The secretary said he'd lend his weight — though only symbolically — to move the biggest boulder blocking the area's path to national monument status: Palm Springs city officials are withholding support, and Rep. Mary Bono, R-Palm Springs, has hesitated to offer a monument bill without unanimous agreement from the region.

Palm Springs' mayor said the city won't take a stance on the monument designation until state and federal wildlife-related objections are resolved regarding three golf course and hotel projects near the mountains.

The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, which is proposing one of the projects, also has taken no position on the



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The Press-Enterprise

BABBITT

Continued from A-1
nearby desert cities do support the idea.

"The city of Palm Springs is going to take a position of no position until there's some resolution on issues of concern with this development," Mayor William Kleindienst said.

Palm Springs also believes the monument label will bring another layer of bureaucracy, which it fears will make development on private lands within the designated area more difficult, he said. However, regional and federal officials said the monument status won't put additional restrictions on private or tribal lands included in the designation.

Bono said she won't necessarily wait for Palm Springs' approval. But, she said, "I think I'd like to give Palm Springs and the Interior (Department) the opportunity to work out their differences."

It's late in the congressional year to squeeze in the Santa Rosa monument bill, though it could be done. "If not, in January we'll put it on the highest list of priorities," Bono said.

Babbitt has the power to recommend monument status to the president, but he will wait for legislation because Congress may be more likely to earmark money for a monument that it has created, he said.

Babbitt and other officials seemed concerned that Palm Springs might be using support of the monument as a political football.

"I'm going to urge them to not hold the monument hostage," Babbitt said before a meeting with Kleindienst on Tuesday afternoon.

Palm Desert, which supports the monument, believes Palm Springs is "trying to invent an excuse to not support a good idea," said Buford Crites, mayor pro tem.

Palm Springs has approved three golf course and hotel projects that would sit on the fringes of the proposed monument boundary. A fourth hotel and golf project is working its way through the city's planning process.

The projects are being held up, in part, by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and state Fish and Game Service concerns that the developments would encroach on bighorn sheep habitat. Flatlands good for golf courses are the same terrain that the endangered peninsular bighorn sheep like for lambing, said Robert Hight, state Fish and Game director.

The two sides are discussing the issues, officials said. One option would be to restructure the layout of the courses, Hight said.

Getting the national monument label would mean more money and clout for the rocky pale-brown range covered by agave plants and beavertail cactus.

The Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy, a state-created agency, buys private land in the hills for public use. There are willing sellers but limited funds, Babbitt said. More money also could buy amenities that would make the hills easier for hikers, equestrians and all-terrain vehicle drivers to use.

"It would put the Santa Rosas first in line for land acquisition," Babbitt said. "It would give it a big priority."

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Babbitt to visit Ore.'s Steens Mountain

Interior secretary to arrive as BLM, advisory council consider plans that could restrict use

By TAM MOORE
Capital Press Staff Writer

Southeastern Oregon's Steens Mountain, a striking 2,400 square miles of mostly public land, gets a personal inspection by the U.S. Interior secretary next week.

The Aug. 5-6 visit of Bruce Babbitt comes as the local Bureau of Land Management district and its resource advisory council wrestle with proposals that could further restrict use of the land that's grazed by livestock from several local ranches.

Babbitt is expected to fly into Burns Aug. 5 and take a helicopter flight over Steens, then meet the next day with a citizen committee considering a BLM staff report.

That report suggests the mountain be designated a national conservation area, a national monument or a scenic area. The proposals are part of a draft environmental impact study for BLM's Southeast Oregon Resources Management plan.

Environmental groups have for most of this decade advocated turning Steens into part of a national park covering six million acres of Eastern Oregon.

An Oregon BLM office spokesperson said at least two of the alternatives would require congressional action, and the agency has no intention of repeating the controversial Grand Staircase-Escalante monument designation two years ago in Utah. That was done by presidential procla-

mation over objection of Utah's congressional delegation and most local government officials.

John Monfore, a Wamath Falls forester who heads the resource advisory committee's Steens subcommittee, said his group is far from reaching a conclusion on how BLM should manage the mountain.

Monfore's subcommittee is scheduled to meet with Babbitt the morning of Aug. 6 at a Burns bed and breakfast where the secretary will spend the night. Babbitt is also meeting with the Harney County Court, the local governing body.

Current BLM management of Steens is a patchwork of multiple use lands mixed up with scattered altes administratively withdrawn for special designation, and a 75-mile-long, 22,600-acre, wild and scenic river corridor on the Donner and Blitzen River and its tributaries.

The largest livestock operation is on the south three-quarters of Steens where Roaring Springs Ranch, with headquarters in Catlow Valley, operates on about 425,000 acres, some of it cut by the Donner and Blitzen designation imposed after the 1996 grazing season.

Monfore says the advisory committee is giving its greatest attention to a BLM designation called "resource conservation area." It's asking the agency what activities can still occur under that designation and what issues have arisen in other altes where the term is applied.

The subcommittee plans to hold a public meeting on Steens Mountain options in Bend the evening of Sept. 27, then gather the next day to complete its recommendation to the BLM Burns District manager.



NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

THURSDAY, JUNE 10, 1999

Babbitt bemoans West's 'dead rivers'

Interior secretary says region is dotted with 'trails of dust'

JUN - 9 1999

By Berny Merson
Denver Rocky Mountain News Staff Writer

BOULDER -- Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt said Tuesday that the nation must restore the health of rivers that were dried up to provide water for farms and cities over the past century.

"The Western landscape is dotted with dead rivers which are trails of dust," Babbitt said. Improving rivers could include dismantling some obsolete dams, he said.

But he stopped short of calling for the destruction of major dams as advocated by some environmental groups.

"The major storage dams on the upper Colorado River serve an important function," he said. No one in his department advocates tearing them down, he said.

Babbitt's comments to a group of water-law experts meeting at the University of Colorado were in contrast to an early draft of the speech, faxed to news media by his office. That version put greater emphasis on destroying dams, but did not specify which dams.

In the speech he delivered and in remarks to reporters, Babbitt emphasized the need for public consensus before any dams are destroyed.

Three dams have been taken down in recent years. In each case the demolition had local support because it improved the rivers as habitat for fish.

Other, older dams may come down when they become too costly to maintain, he said.

Leaders of the Sierra Club have called for the demolition of Glenn Canyon Dam on the Colorado River. The dam created Lake Powell, but destroyed the canyon.

Babbitt agreed with those who have reservations about what federal dams did to Western rivers. He said the needs of rivers must no longer be treated as "table scraps" to be considered only after every other public needs.

Many of the largest dams were rushed through in previous decades with little regard for their effect on the environment. Glenn Canyon Dam was built in seven years -- less time than it takes to complete an environmental-impact statement for big projects today, Babbitt said.

He noted that the big reservoirs behind the dams lose as much as 10 percent of their water to evaporation.

Babbitt said cities in the future will turn to underground storage, pumping the water into aquifers that are being dried up by wells.



NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

TUESDAY, JUNE 1, 1999

Montezuma Valley Journal

MAY 27 1999

Babbitt: Ruins need more protection

BY GAIL BINKLEY

On a tour of ancestral Puebloan sites in Montezuma County on Monday, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt called for more and better protection of the area's cultural resources.

Exactly what form that protection will take has not been decided, he said.

"The day when you can just say, 'It's out there — we don't need to do anything' is disappearing," Babbitt stated.

He said he has asked the BLM's Southwest Resource Advisory Council to meet with community leaders and come up with some land-management options by the end of the summer for approximately 156,000 acres of BLM land west of Cortez.

"You can't say, 'We don't need anything — leave it as it is, everything's fine,'" he said. "Because the future's coming at us."

A specific plan will allow him to seek federal funds from Congress for protection and enhancement of the sites, he said.

Babbitt and his entourage began the day at the Anasazi Heritage Center, then visited the Lowry Ruins, a site near a Shell plant on BLM lands, and Sand Canyon.

He seemed struck by the accessibility of Anasazi ruins and the number of artifacts such as potsherds lying on the ground.

"Lowry is one of the most remarkable sites I've ever been on," he said, calling the great kiva there "spectacular."

However, he said, the site is "a little bit vulnerable right now because there's no presence there and no interpretation."

"I walked away from Lowry and said, 'It's fine right now, but as tourism develops in the Four Corners... my guess is Lowry can't just be sort of left there sitting all alone."

"Lowry, along with what I saw at Sand Canyon, is kind of a signal that we have to have a stronger approach to these issues."

But Babbitt refused to be pinned down on what sort of protection or management he envisioned for the wide-open BLM tracts.

"I don't believe there's a national park in the future of this landscape," he said, but he did not rule out the possibility of national-monument status for the area or some portion of it.

The region was designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern in 1985.

"So what do I see?" he asked. "I see the need to be ahead of the curve and to get the necessary resources to manage the cultural values to preserve them to inventory them and interpret them."

"That doesn't mean a sentinel at every one of the 20,000 sites."

Ancestral Puebloan ruins are scattered throughout Montezuma County, on both public and private lands, with some areas having more than 100

sites per square mile.

Most ruins are largely buried and, to the casual observer, look only like rubble. But some areas such as Sand Canyon have cliff dwellings that are partially intact.

The ruins are vulnerable to vandalism and pot-hunting, Babbitt said, as well as casual damage done by unthinking visitors who carry away potsherds.

"Pot-hunting is an old tradition in the Four Corners area, but it's destructive and illegal," he said. "Vandalism happens a lot less where there's a management plan."

Babbitt visited Lowry as an example of a striking, restored site featuring a collection of rooms with an underground mural. The mural survived for centuries, only to begin crumbling after the ruins were excavated by archaeologists, exposing it to air. Today it is nearly gone.

"That's a very interesting point — sometimes the best preservation is leaving things alone," Babbitt observed while at Lowry.

He later stopped at a site near several carbon-dioxide-processing plants owned by Shell, the county's largest taxpayer, to announce that traditional uses such as oil and gas

extraction and grazing would definitely continue on the lands.

"The footprint of this natural extraction is very small overall," he said. "It's not a major conflict. Grazing is also compatible with archaeological protection.

"Ironically, the real issue is not oil and gas, and it's not cows — it's people. This is a problem that arises everywhere when places are discovered — when they come into the public view."

Babbitt said southwestern Colorado has been discovered, and there are two ways of dealing with the hordes of visitors that are coming.

"You can stick your head in the sand and keep quiet about this and think everything will be OK. But it's never worked anywhere in the West and it never will."

Or, he said, you can manage and preserve the sites, providing education and interpretation for visitors while keeping the flow of tourist dollars coming into the economy.

"This is five-star archaeology," he said. "There are a lot of protected areas around the West that have a lot less to offer in terms of volume and integrity than this. There are a couple of national monuments around my home town of Flagstaff that don't have a fraction of the character and extent or size of these."

His tour wound up at Sand Canyon, a site that sustains heavy recreational use by hikers, cyclists, and horseback riders. However, a thunderstorm cut that visit short.

"(Southwestern Colorado) is an extraordinary, pristine resource," Babbitt proclaimed. "the most intensive, rich archaeological landscape in the United States, and for the most part it is entirely intact."

"And it seems to me our job is to ask how can we, before it's at risk, work out an appropriate plan to care for it."

But Babbitt insisted he is leaving the details to others.

"I don't have a proposal here," he said. "What I have is a strong appreciation that we have to have a better approach."

On Wednesday, Erin Johnson, of Cortez, chair of the Southwest RAC, said the council had set no date for its next meeting but that she was "really excited" about the chance to develop a management plan for the area.

"The whole thing is as new to me as everybody else," she said. "I know the BLM wants the RAC to have a central role in this process."

She said she wants the issue to be introduced to the RAC before public involvement begins, but that there would be "many opportunities" for citizens to comment.

"We want to have a lot of public involvement," she said.

Saturday, March 20, 1999

BLM Gets Plenty of Input on Managing Grand Staircase

BY JUDY FAHYS
THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE



A few people, bent on making federal bureaucrats keep them in mind, sent personal snapshots along with comments on plans for the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

Some offered pages of detailed criticisms and suggestions on the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's proposal for managing the monument. Others described their preferences with maps.

In total, the BLM has fielded more than 6,500 letters, e-mails and faxes during the past four months concerning what to do with Utah's newest playground, a 1.9-million-acre expanse of desert sage and red rock.

"There are lots of recommendations that are interesting," said Chris Killingsworth, who leads the BLM team reviewing the comments.

The eight-person team has until next fall to write a final management plan, which will guide how the monument is protected -- and used -- in the future. The September deadline is roughly three years after President Clinton created the monument as a scientific and scenic preserve.

Last fall, the BLM issued a call for comments on several different management scenarios. One placed greater emphasis on protecting natural resources, another emphasized scientific research, while a third would allow more recreation.

And all five allow hiking, biking, climbing, camping, hunting, fishing, filming and driving cars on established roads. Guided tours would still be permitted. So would cutting firewood and Christmas trees, and road building by landowners who need access to their property.

But any of those activities can be limited to certain areas.

The agency added 30 days to its original comment period when people told them 90 days was not enough. The official time for public input ended on Monday.

About 2,500 of the comments came from Utahns. Four thousand came from outside the state, and about a dozen came from other countries, according to the BLM's preliminary inventory. As many as 90 percent of the comments were generated from "alerts" issued by organized groups.

The nature of the comments ran the gamut, Killingsworth said. Utah Gov. Mike Leavitt submitted five pages of comments describing the recommendations of state agencies and local governments. Then he talked about the suggestions with Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, whose department oversees the BLM. The two met in Leavitt's hometown of Loa on Tuesday.

"We want to protect the assets of the monument," said Brad Barber, the governor's deputy director for planning. "But we also want to push the cooperative management of the monument and enhance the local communities."

In effect, the governor urged monument planners to ensure, as much as possible, whatever activities are currently allowed can continue on lands within the monument. That means honoring rights of way and water rights, along with the ability of state agencies to carry out their duties without needless interference.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), for example, wants flexibility to manage wildlife and habitat within the monument.

"The idea is, we don't want to be boxed in," said Darin Bird, a DNR policy aide.

That could mean using helicopters to count big horn sheep herds or dragging a chain between two tractors to remove aggressive juniper trees, for instance. But Bird said his agency has no plans to use that vegetation management technique. "But we just don't want to preclude anything."

Some scientists wholeheartedly back the plan while others complain that some requirements might hinder their research. Proposed restrictions on some areas of the monument might make it hard for paleontologists and geologists to get permits for their digs. A ban on motorized vehicles might be impractical for using bulldozers to dig, they have complained.

The Utah Farm Bureau encouraged the BLM to ensure the future of grazing.

"This historic and valuable way of life is being squeezed from every direction," the bureau said in its comments.

And, while the farm bureau said no rivers in the monument should be protected as "wild and scenic," the Wilderness Society said all 25 rivers that qualify should get that designation.

The environmental group also accused the BLM planners of relying too much on guesswork. The planners do not gather enough legal and scientific input, nor did they carefully consider the economic costs and benefits of any particular course of action, the group said.

"The agency should keep its options open by focusing on protective strategies and actions and generally deferring or restricting development decisions until adequate data, analysis and guidelines can be developed," the Wilderness Society said.

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NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

MONDAY, MARCH 15, 1999

ARIZONA DAILY SUN, Flagstaff, Arizona, Sunday, March 14, 1999

Babbitt targets 'last best place'

Seeks comment Monday on proposed monument north of Grand Canyon

By LUKAS VELUSH
Sun Staff Reporter

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt wants to use the federal Antiquities Act to convert what he calls one of Arizona's "last best places" north of the Grand Canyon into a protected national monument.

But Babbitt's proposal for a Shivwits Plateau National Monument already has drawn criticism. Some say it doesn't go far enough. Others question why it's needed at all.

Babbitt will be in Flagstaff Monday to hear both sides and to discuss his plan, which would set aside 550,000 acres of land north of the western end of the Grand Canyon. He is holding a town hall at Northern Arizona University's Cline Library Assembly Hall from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

"We want to recognize the great qualities of this spectacular and unique area and ensure that it receives the protection and care that it deserves," Babbitt said in a statement announcing his visit. "I hope the public will join me for discussions about this region's environmental qualities, natural resources and needs for this special place."

Conservation groups such as the Flagstaff-based Grand Canyon Trust see the region as a last stand for mule deer, pronghorn antelope, mountain lions and desert bighorn sheep — animals that have been pushed onto the Shivwits Plateau because of shrinking wildlife habitat elsewhere. Development pressures also loom: Las Vegas is just a few hours' drive away, and several uranium mining claims on the plateau could be developed if the market for nuclear power improves.

The Trust would like to see Babbitt double the size of the proposed monument, expanding it northward by a half-million acres to

the Utah border.

"The reason wildlife depend on areas like this is because we have pushed them into them," said Brad Ack, the trust's director of conservation field programs.

Others are worried that a monument designation will put the Shivwits Plateau "on the map," convincing thousands more people to visit an area that is now mainly a wildlife haven interspersed with several large cattle ranches.

"Visitation is extremely low right now," said Tony Williams, a Fredonia resident who has spent much of the last 30 years exploring a landscape painted with rolling hills, salt bush and scrub vegetation — and containing just 10 year-round residents.

"It's one of the most sparsely populated areas in the lower 48 states. There are parts of it that you could only see with a helicopter. We're talking about rugged country."

Williams doesn't want to see things change in a region that the Interior Department says attracts just 11,000 visitors a year. Most of those are drawn to the Lake Mead National Recreation Area upstream of Hoover Dam.

"I don't think you can do anything to improve it," Williams said. "It's better left anonymous."

In Utah north of Lake Powell and the Glen Canyon National Recreation area, the recently created Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument is a perfect example of killing a wilderness area with too much exposure, said Williams.

An avid explorer of southern Utah and northern Arizona, Williams said he used to be able to go most places on the 2-million-acre Utah monument without seeing a soul. Now, annual visitorship that approached 3,000 people before the monument designation numbers 10,000, and federal officials estimate Grand Staircase-Escalante could attract 100,000 visitors a year a decade from now.

"I would hate to see that happen on the Shivwits Plateau," Williams said. "It would destroy the essence of the place, the solitude."

LIMIT TOURISM

The Grand Canyon Trust would be opposed to creating a new monument if it did attract large numbers of people, added roads and generally promoted recreational use, Ack said.

Instead, the trust would like to see a monument proclamation that emphasizes the protection of wildlife habitat, including limits on cattle grazing and mining. At least 12 different species of birds and 50 plants that are threatened or endangered live in the region.

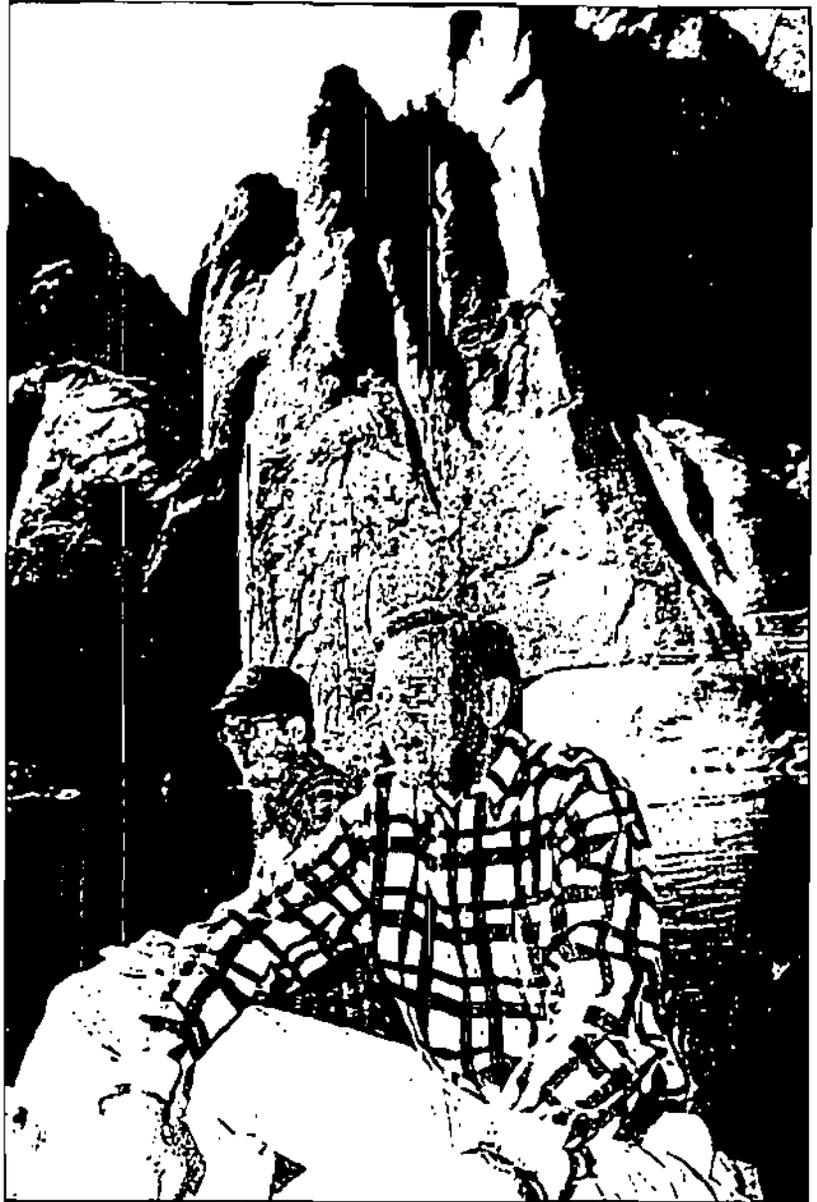
To effectively provide enough wildlife habitat for all the major species in the area and to have proper buffers from developed areas, Ack said the monument should contain about 1 million acres. That would see it stretch all the way north to the Utah border.

Ack said any tourism that did occur should be centered on low-impact ventures such as wildlife photography, with no additional road-building or campground development.

Giving the region monument status would not result in much change in development and use status for the area inside the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Ack said. That land is already being proposed for wilderness status, putting development effectively off-limits.

But as a national monument, lands now under the Bureau of Land Management would be afforded a much greater degree of protection from the impacts of mining, logging and ranching, Ack noted, although those activities would not be banned.

Simply expanding the adjacent Grand Canyon National Park to encompass the Shivwits would eliminate all ranching and mining. But that takes an act of Congress, whereas a national monument can



Sean Openshaw/Arizona Daily Sun

Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of the Interior, is pictured in this March 1996 file photo on the Colorado River below Glen Canyon Dam.

be created by executive order of the president under the Antiquities Act.

But it's worth it, Williams said, because the views of the western part of the Grand Canyon are spectacular.

ARDUOUS DRIVE

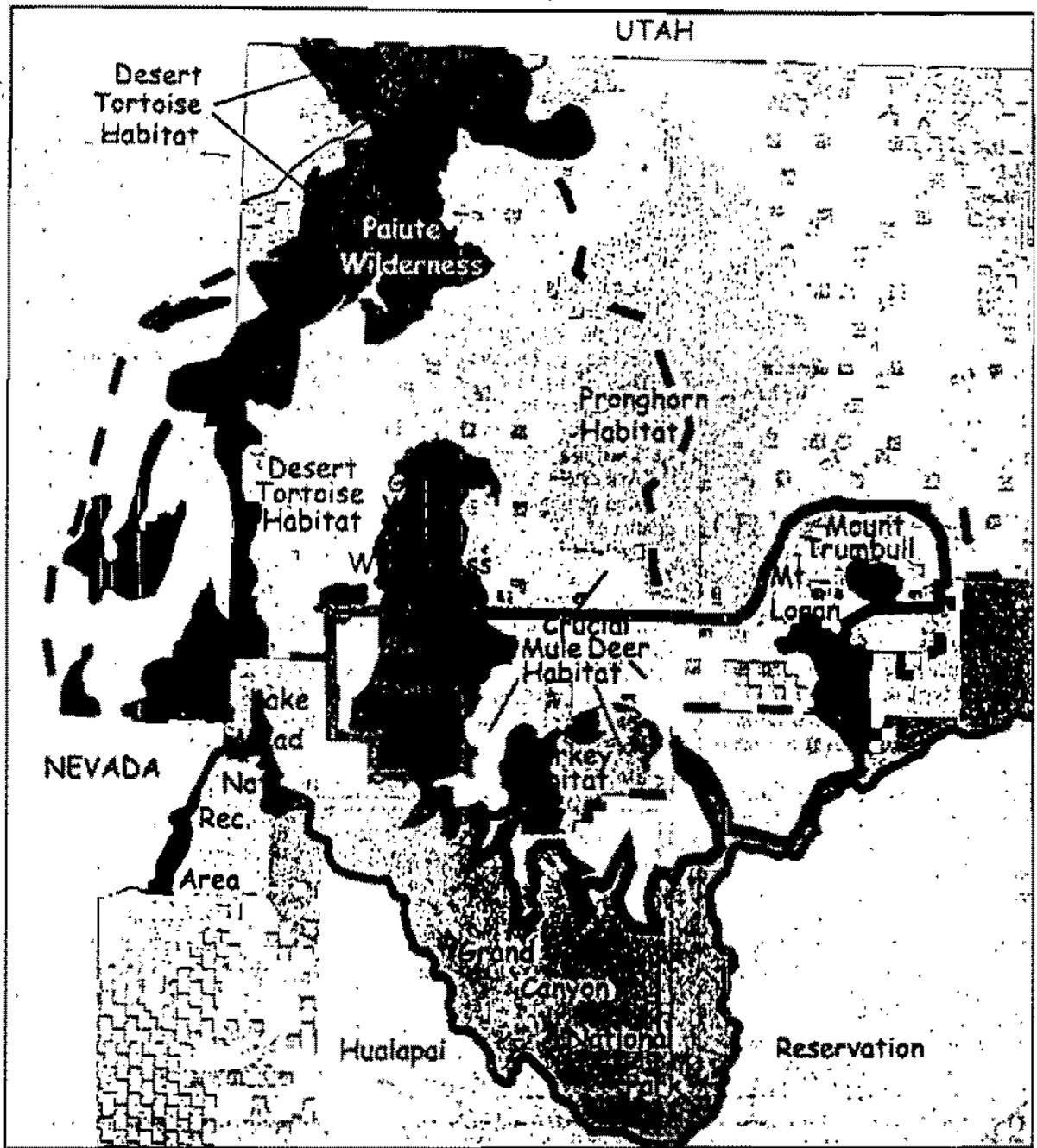
Williams lives in Fredonia so he can be in the middle of canyon land to the north and south. He gets to the southwest corner of the Shivwits Plateau only once a year, so arduous is the 180-mile drive.

"The canyon varies from east to west," he said. "The profile is uncrowded, unlike the South Rim. When you're at places like Kelly Point, you're looking down at the river. You're looking right into the Grand Canyon."

What: Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt will hold a town hall meeting in Flagstaff to discuss setting aside 550,000 acres of land north of the western end of the Grand Canyon as a protected national monument

When: Monday, 6-8 p.m.

Where: Northern Arizona University's Cline Library Assembly Hall



Map courtesy of Grand Canyon Trust and Grand Canyon Wildlands Council

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt has proposed creating a national monument on the Shivwits Plateau at the western end of the Grand Canyon (outlined in red). Some environmental groups want the Secretary to consider additional lands that contain important wildlife habitat (outlined by the dashed line).

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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
PUBLICITY RECORD
LAS VEGAS DISTRICT OFFICE, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

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Clint Karlsen/Review-Journal

Flanked by North Las Vegas Mayor Michael Montandon, left, and City Councilman John Rhodes, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt hammers home a point Thursday about the sale of 7,500 acres of public land in the north valley.

BLM land to be auctioned off in pieces

□ Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt unveils a plan that lets NLV determine how a precious plot is developed.

By Shaun McKinnon
Review-Journal

What had been the Hope Diamond of undeveloped land in urban Clark County — a 7,500-acre parcel that wraps around the northern tip of the Las Vegas Valley — will be cut-up and sold in pieces, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt said Thursday.

Simply put, he said, the land is worth more to taxpayers in smaller pieces. Please see **BABBITT/4A**

Babbitt

From 1A

chunks than it is intact. Under a new law, revenue from the sale of federal lands in Southern Nevada stays in the state, some of it earmarked for schools.

"The law requires us to maximize the price," Babbitt said. "By getting more money, we will get a better deal for the citizens of Nevada."

North Las Vegas officials once had hoped to find a single buyer for the land, some of the valley's last unclaimed acreage of any significant size. They saw the parcel as a chance to create a master-planned community on the scale of Green Valley in Henderson or Summerlin in Las Vegas.

Babbitt insisted Thursday the city can still do just that with proper planning and he promised support from the federal government when the time comes to begin auctioning the land.

"What we have here is a once-in-a-century opportunity to envision an entire community," he said. "It's not often you get a block of 7,000 acres of land, where the city can look at the successes and failures of the past and then look at it all in one bite. It's a good thing for the entire valley."

North Las Vegas Mayor Michael Montandon appeared more reserved than Babbitt after an early morning meeting with the secretary and officials from the Bureau of Land Management, but he said he was prepared to roll up his sleeves and work with the new policy.

"The secretary has let us know it's not going to be an easy task, but then we knew that," Montandon said. "There's a lot of work ahead of us. We will go forward to get assurances from him that we can build a consistent master-planned community."

The 7,500-acre tract has loomed Oz-like in North Las Vegas for more than a decade, the symbol of development riches for a city long relegated to poorer status in the valley.

Until Congress rewrote the law last year to allow the auction of public lands in Southern Nevada, North Las Vegas was looking at years more of dickering over potential land swaps, none of which had yet even approached the parcel's estimated value of \$100 million to \$150 million.

Now, Babbitt said Thursday, federal land managers are prepared to begin carving up the land as soon as North Las Vegas knows what it wants to put on it, and he said if it's done right, it could fetch even more money than originally thought.

"We'll plan together to make the transition over the next 10 to 20 years," Babbitt said. "I think we are going to reach a process that will work for both of us, one that will make sure the land will be developed in a predictable and consistent way."

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Montandon said the city will begin work immediately to craft a master plan for the land, an area bounded roughly by Decatur Boulevard, Grand Teton Drive, Lamb Boulevard and Centennial Parkway.

City officials want the entire parcel mapped out before the heavy equipment moves in. That means designating certain areas for residential neighborhoods, others for commercial development and apartments, and still others for schools, parks and fire stations.

Those designations will determine, in part, the size of each parcel sold.

Scott Higginson, vice president of government and public affairs for Del Webb Corp., one of the larger developers in the valley, said the piecemeal approach is probably the best for the 7,500

acres.

"I think it's a better solution for the city," he said. "What it means is they will have to master plan it themselves, or with a consultant, and then go to the BLM and determine which pieces will be sold off in what order. It puts the city in the driver's seat."

City officials will be able to zone the land in advance, have the property appraised based on that zoning, and then allow the federal government to auction it off at that market level, Higginson said.

"This gives the city a chance to define for themselves what they want those 7,500 acres to be," he said. "They can actually now plan what they're going to get."

Under the new land sale law, the government will auction public lands at market values instead of trying to appraise the value of land against environmentally sensitive lands used in the old swap process.

When the land is sold, 85 percent of the proceeds will be deposited in a fund to buy those sensitive lands in Nevada, with an emphasis on needs on Clark County. Some of the money also can be used for improvements at Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, Lake Mead, the Spring Mountains and the Desert Wildlife Refuge.

Five percent of the revenue will be placed in the Nevada Permanent School Fund and 10 percent will be sent to the Southern Nevada Water Authority.

"This can be a model of how we work this out in the rest of the country," Babbitt said. "We've got to do it right."



Feb 2

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt outlines details Thursday of his agency's plans to sell 7,500 acres of federal land in North Las Vegas in smaller

pieces instead of as one parcel. Babbitt met with city officials, then spoke with reporters at a detention basin in the middle of the parcel.

Clint Karlson/Review-Journal

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Land-grab threatens economy

OPPOSING VIEW

State, local governments will lose billions in taxes.

By Richard L. Lawson

The proposal to close 430,000 acres of land in Montana to mineral exploration and mining is another step in the administration's rush toward more removal of lands from public use.

This ill-conceived strategy is, at best, an assault on the principle of multiple use and, at worst, an insidious threat to America's economic and national-security interests.

This latest federal land-grab comes on the heels of a 1998 proposal to withdraw 605,350 acres of copper- and uranium-rich land in Arizona. In 1996, public lands were withdrawn in Utah for creation of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, where 62 billion tons of coal reserves could have generated as much as \$1.1 billion in state revenue.

The federal government manages 623 million acres of public land and has already placed 271 million acres, or 44%, off limits to mining. Yet mining has touched less than one-quarter of 1% of all U.S. land. Every American uses 46,000 pounds of new minerals annually. These mineral resources go into the prod-

ucts and services that uphold our standard of living and our national security.

Forsaking our ability to produce minerals domestically puts our national security and economic future at risk. Further restricting land for mineral exploration will deprive state and local governments of billions in taxes. According to a 1997 study by the Western Economic Analysis Center, the mining industry contributed more than \$523 billion to the national economy in a single year, including \$57 billion in federal taxes and \$27 billion in state and local taxes. Montana alone received more than \$2.2 billion in economic activity from mining, including more than \$146 million in revenue for state and local governments.

Also at stake are thousands of high-paying jobs. The center reports that mining was directly and indirectly responsible for 24,900 Montana jobs in 1995. If lands continue to be removed from public use, jobs that would have been created in the United States will go overseas. As a nation, we will continue to consume minerals. The question is, will we produce them here, with the attendant economic benefits, or import them from abroad?

Richard L. Lawson is president of the National Mining Association, Washington, D.C.



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 8, 1999

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INTERIOR SECRETARY CELEBRATES LAND EXCHANGE WITH UTAH **Students, national parks, public lands all benefit from large statewide land swap**

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt today joined thousands of Utah school children and political and environmental leaders from around the state at a high school gymnasium in Bountiful, Utah, to celebrate the completion of the largest land exchange of public lands in the contiguous United States.

"This is a great day for Utah, and all its future leaders joining us at this ceremony today," Secretary Babbitt said. "It is also a great day for public lands, and for all Americans who enjoy Utah's spectacular places."

Secretary Babbitt presented a check for \$50 million to Utah Governor Mike Leavitt who will accept on behalf of the school trust administration and their beneficiaries—the 477,000 elementary and secondary students who attend Utah's public schools.

Today's ceremony marked the transfer of funds and the exchange of title to nearly one million acres of federal and state lands and mineral rights and resolved a contentious federal-state dispute that had been ongoing since the 1930's.

"This historic agreement shows that even the most difficult problems can be resolved with good faith, hard work, and a commitment to protect both the lands we love and our children's future," Babbitt continued. "It also demonstrates what can happen when we invest our time and money on lands and people instead of litigation and lawyers."

As a result of the land exchange, the State of Utah received \$50 million directly, about \$13 million in future coal revenues, and 153,000 acres of commercially developable lands and minerals.

In return, the State of Utah will relinquish title to 376,739 acres of school trust lands that will now pass into public ownership, including:

- 176,699 acres within the boundaries of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument
- 80,000 acres within Arches and Capitol Reef national parks, Glen Canyon and Flaming Gorge national recreation areas and Dinosaur National Monument.
- 70,000 acres within eight national forests and the Desert Range Experimental Station.
- 47,480 acres within the Goshute and Navajo Indian reservations.

(more)

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 7, 1999

The Honorable Mike O. Leavitt,
Governor of Utah
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114

Dear Mike:

When I created the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in 1996, I was very concerned about its potential effect on the thousands of acres of state land found within its borders and held in trust for the benefit of Utah's school children. I pledged at that time to do my best to see that the state got a fair deal if it wanted to exchange these inholdings for resources elsewhere that could be more easily developed.

I am very proud that we are making good on that commitment. The land exchange that you are celebrating eliminates the scattered school sites in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and in nearly all other national conservation areas and Indian reservations across Utah. In return, the state school trust receives assets of equal value that will immediately benefit the state educational system. It is one of the largest state-federal land exchanges in our nation's history.

This is a state-federal partnership of the very best kind -- one that simultaneously advances the interests of education, the environment, Utah, and our nation. You, Secretary Babbitt, the Utah congressional delegation, and all those who have worked so hard for this extraordinary achievement have my heartfelt gratitude.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

Babbitt: Cooperation, not conflict, helps public lands

Interior chief stresses need for balance between jobs, preservation

By Susan Gordon
THE NEWS TRIBUNE

Both people and nature can thrive if public lands managers and their neighbors work together, U.S. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt said Thursday in Tacoma.

Babbitt was here to commend about 450 people already fixed on his message of conservation and cooperation.

"There is enough room in this Western and American landscape for a vibrant, dynamic, national economy, jobs and futures," he told participants from 13 Western states at the Gateway Community Conference. Meanwhile, people still must "manage and take care of God's creation."

The event is focused on ways people can capitalize on tourism without

ruining the natural lure. Workshops showcase successful partnerships between managers of public lands and residents of surrounding communities.



Babbitt

ruining the natural lure. Workshops showcase successful partnerships between managers of public lands and residents of surrounding communities.

The wilderness "back 40" won't survive if a land-use "free-for-all" prevails outside, Babbitt said. As an example, he cited the Everglades National Park in South Florida, which was nearly devastated when outside users robbed it of its water source. "All of nature is unitary, and you have to come to terms with it in a

The event at the Tacoma Convention Center ends today. Sponsors are the Western States Tourism Policy Council, which represents state tourism officials, and nine federal agencies.

Many in Babbitt's audience were his employees.

way that recognizes that reality," Babbitt said.

Babbitt also criticized the traditionally adversarial relationship between managers of public lands and local residents. The rift hurts both parks and communities, he said.

Years ago, the stereotypical federal land manager was a haughty anob who treated locals like country bumpkins. "I now lead a different National Park Service," Babbitt said. "We've got to come out of isolation as we invite the community to come out of isolation and share in a common future."

Striving for that balance is difficult, but worthwhile, Babbitt said.

"The most important thing at the outset is to look up and ask what is our vision," he said. Successful partnerships can grow out of a shared awareness of both history and the natural environment. "You need to look up at the landscape," he said.

Cooperation can evolve even in the least likely places, he noted. For example, Babbitt cited the Grand Stair-

case-Escalante National Monument in Southern Utah. The monument was so controversial that the dedication was held at the Grand Canyon in 1996. "We didn't have the courage to go to Utah to do it," Babbitt joked. Babbitt's effigy once hung in Escalante.

But the atmosphere has changed, he said. The Bureau of Land Management, which runs the monument, "got the savviest guy in their Utah

operation" to lead the way. "I stayed home," Babbitt said.

Eventually, things turned around. The monument got support from Utah's congressional delegation. Federal money followed. Escalante's new mayor is now willing to shake Babbitt's hand. "The good will really started to feed on itself," Babbitt said.

Still, change takes time. "We can't solve 100 years of (problems) all in one blow," Babbitt said. Everyone

should be invited to participate.

Babbitt praised his audience: "You're on the right track. It is a powerful, powerful concept. It will take you as far as you want to work and imagine and do together."

Staff writer Susan Gordon covers East Pierce County. Reach her at 253-597-8281 or by e-mail at sjg@p.tribnet.com

TACOMA (WA.) NEWS - TRIBUNE, 09/25/98, P. B7