



NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

Los Angeles Times

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 1994

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PERSPECTIVE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

A New Conservation Ethic



The educational process begins in our national parks: higher entrance fees, new parks in unexpected places.

By BRUCE SABBITT

In its 1916 decree creating the National Park Service, Congress explicitly outlined two goals: Preserve the designated sites "unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations," and provide for the public enjoyment of those resources. The conflict between preservation and access has forced a creative tension on the Park Service since its first days. Achieving balance grows more difficult each year.

As challenging as the mission is, the two goals are not contradictory, particularly when one focuses on the nature of the genuine park visitor experience.

The national parks are not about entertainment. Disney, Warner Brothers and others are masters at that task, and park rangers need not compete with them. Rather, rangers facilitate the American people's encounter with their heritage. The challenge is in bringing the visitor to a more intense appreciation of the natural world.

This framework sets new and clear parameters on methods for accommodating more visitors.

Despite annual increases in visitation, for example, the Park Service will not be in the road-building business. Roads disrupt, divide and fragment natural systems that are the very reason for parks; our challenge is in finding new means of visitor transport.

We will not be in the hotel-building business, but will instead work with owners of lands bordering parks so that many overnight needs can be met in gateway communities. These communities can also serve as "staging" areas, where visitors can learn of a park's qualities; collect materials and shop—all about adding to the milling crowds outside.

Likewise, the service must consider different methods for protecting its resource base, because it is no longer enough to focus on the nature of devel-

opments within the park. We must begin to focus on parks not as distinct entities, but as the centers of ecosystems.

At Yellowstone, massive herds of elk and buffalo (and soon, perhaps, gray wolves) do not acknowledge the straight lines on a map; those animals inherited an entire ecosystem, and park staff

must work closely with resource managers from other state and federal agencies to protect their migration range.

Everglades National Park is part of a natural system being killed by the invasion of exotic plants (caused by nutrient-rich agricultural runoff) and the diversion of water for residential and commercial uses. That park's fate lies not in the hands of its rangers, but in a



Los Angeles Times

Logging near Redwood National Park.

massive, multi-agency effort to restore the system.

Sequoia National Park has air-quality problems worse than many large cities, but the problems' source lies in faraway industrial centers along the California coast and in the Central Valley. Clearly, it is no longer sufficient to label land a park and assume it is protected.

Protecting the resource base also means continuing the search for new sites, because America's history and perspectives are always changing. Fifty years ago, there was no Martin Luther King Jr. Historical Site to be preserved, because that chapter in our history had not yet been written.

A century ago, we crossed the Mid-

west in search of scenic splendor, oblivious to the extraordinary biodiversity being plowed up and taken for granted. The new effort to create a park in the Kansas tall-grass prairie finally acknowledges the importance of that resource.

Generations in search of alpine scenery simply walked on by some of America's most unique ecosystems. One of those regions would be protected by the California Desert Protection Act, ushered through the Senate by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.). Unsurpassed in its scenic, biological, cultural and recreational significance, the desert has been ignored too long.

Finally, protection of the resource requires a sounder financial base. A first step would be congressional action to restore discretion to the Interior secretary to set reasonable park entrance fees. Currently, only three of the 367 Park Service sites charge \$10 per vehicle, only 15 charge as much as \$5 per car and Yellowstone's entrance fee is less today than it was in 1915. In addition, Congress can provide collection incentives to park managers by returning to the park half the money collected above the current base.

Though beset by fundamental problems, the welcome sign is out at our national parks, because the National Park Service can fill a unique and immediate role. We are within decades of an environmental collapse on this planet. Our urgent task is to communicate to the American people what it means to live more lightly and respectfully on the land.

Any contemplation of our role in developing and teaching a new conservation ethic leads directly back to the national parks. The parks are where this task is easiest, where the educational process begins, where it is all so extraordinarily fresh, obvious and overwhelming. The national parks must serve as the gateway to the conservation ethic, because if that gateway can't be crossed in our national parks, it can't be crossed anywhere.

Bruce Sabbitt is secretary of the Interior. (His jurisdiction does not include national forests, where budget cuts have led to closure of campgrounds, including some in the Angeles National Forest.)

Babbitt Unveils Parking Plan for Yosemite

■ **Outdoors:** Proposal would cut traffic by up to 60% and remove buildings to restore habitat. It appears to have broad support.

By JAMES RAINEY
TIMES STAFF WRITER

SAN FRANCISCO—For generations, a family day trip to the heart of Yosemite National Park has meant piling in and out of the car at Bridalveil Fall, El Capitan and Yosemite Falls. Much of that day might also be spent on the lookout—not for bears or the California spotted owl—but for the ever-elusive parking space.

With a comprehensive plan released Monday for remaking Yosemite Valley, the National Park Service hopes to put an end to that scenario and forever change the way the public comes to Yosemite.

If the plan is adopted by park service management this year, the vast majority of visitors will leave their cars on the periphery of the park, potentially cutting traffic on the valley floor by 60%. Visitors would reach final destinations such as majestic El Capitan by shuttle bus, bicycle or on foot.

The proposal framed by Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt in a speech before the Commonwealth Club is a compromise that has won over the broad middle in the national environmental community, but angered others who say it is either too restrictive of public access or not restrictive enough.

Babbitt insisted that the plan accomplishes the twin goals of restoring as much as 180 acres of wetlands, meadows and forests that had been overrun by buildings and human beings, while still allowing people ready access to Yosemite.

"People are welcome to their park," Babbitt said. "We don't manage national parks by taking the easy step of saying, 'Stay home.' That would just further the breach between Americans and their natural world.

"We can improve the visitor experience and at the same time we are recovering and restoring the landscape to something more approximating its original condition."

The five-volume plan presented Monday presents five options, including leaving current buildings and management in the mile-wide, 7-mile-long Yosemite Valley unchanged.

The park service's "preferred" option would make a number of significant alterations, including: eliminating more than 1,000 parking spaces in the valley and directing cars to lots in outlying El Portal, Badger Pass and Crane Flat; moving housing for about 600 employees out of the valley to nearby communities; closing 3.2 miles of one main road to cars and leaving the path for pedestrians and bicyclists; restoring parts of the Merced River by removing three of 11 bridges and a dam.

Some 375 campgrounds lost in a 1997 flood would never be rebuilt and 10 others would be removed, cutting in half the number of camping sites that historically existed in the valley.

To accomplish these goals, some other land on the valley floor would have to be developed with, for example, a new central parking lot for 550 cars and rebuilt units of Yosemite Lodge.

Babbitt said he is determined to see the proposal to its completion, after watching as other plans for Yosemite foundered. After three months of public hearings ending in early July, the plan must be approved by Yosemite's superintendent and by the Western Region chief of the Park Service.

Prospects for the Yosemite Valley Plan got a boost Monday, when representatives of three major national environmental organizations—The Wilderness Society, the Natural Resources Defense Council and the National Parks Conservation Assn.—stood alongside Babbitt and offered their endorsements.

"You don't have to be a policy expert to realize this is great," said Natural Resources Defense Council board member Christine Russell. "It means that future visitors will be able to get around the valley easily on foot, on bicycles or in shuttle buses. Instead of noisy traffic, they'll hear birds and waterfalls and the Merced River running through the valley."

On busy summer days, as many as 7,000 cars have crammed into the narrow valley and its two one-way thoroughfares. Dozens of buses sometimes had to line up at popular destinations like Yosemite Falls. Overcrowding procedures even allow closure of the valley to cars, although that hasn't happened since 1996.

Critics said the plan is just the latest example of the Interior Department and Park Service moving ahead too quickly. They noted

that the agencies had already printed the proposal when before all public comments had been received on the park's last major plan, a blueprint for protection of the Merced River that is supposed to help guide all Yosemite planning.

A lawyer for Friends of Yosemite Valley suggested that the park service was "circumventing the entire public process" by pursuing a macro plan for the Valley without plan for its principal river. Attorney Julia Olson called the move "totally illegal" and said critics might sue to stop the plan.

Lawsuits have played a major role in redirecting Yosemite planning efforts in recent years. Widening of a major route into the park, Highway 140, was stopped by litigation. Another suit prevented reconstruction of much of the flood-damaged Yosemite Lodge, because critics said it was clearly in a natural area that should remain open.

Sierra Club Executive Director Carl Pope said his group liked many of the plan's proposals but probably would object to bringing in larger and faster buses, to rebuilding Yosemite Lodge and would question the placement of the lone day-use parking lot. Other club members have called for stringent caps on park visitation or vehicle traffic.

Representatives of the rural "gateway" communities near Yosemite, meanwhile, expressed fears in the other direction—about too many restrictions by the Park Service.

"The American people are in love with their vehicles and it is going to be very hard to get them out of their cars and get them on a bus," said Mariposa County Supervisor Garry Parker, "especially with strollers and picnic baskets. I think the traveler might look at this and say 'It's just easier to go somewhere else.'"

"I think it could hurt the business people of the surrounding communities."

Mark Thornton, a supervisor in

nearby Tuolumne County, said there has never been enough day-use parking in the valley and that a less elitist plan would consider adding more parking for day visitors, who make up the vast majority of the park's audience. "Why not consider moving this entire city of employees and others off the valley floor and dedicate that to day visitors, who are the biggest users of the park," Thornton said.

U.S. Rep. George Radanovich (R-Mariposa) said the Park Service had not spent nearly enough time trying to resolve traffic problems without removing cars or parking. He said he would fight for better traffic planning, before supporting a move to reduce the number of cars.

Babbitt said his agency wants to hear the public's views on Yosemite, but that he is convinced that development and automobile traffic are excessive.

"The area is equivalent in size to Central Park in New York City but with more roads, more auto-

Remaking Yosemite Valley

Here are some of the provisions in the Yosemite Valley Plan draft:

- The number of parking spaces for day use would be reduced from more than 1,600 to 550, all at Yosemite Village.
- The number of lodging rooms in the valley would be reduced from 1,260 to 981 by removing cabins at Curry Village and Housekeeping Camp. Yosemite Lodge would be allowed to replace more than 100 units lost to a 1997 flood, bringing to 387 the number of rooms.
- A 3.2-mile section of Northside Drive, a main artery through the valley floor, would be eliminated and replaced with a paved foot and bike trail.
- About 180 acres would be restored to a natural state, including Ahwahnee and Stoneman meadows, by removing roads, trails and some buildings.
- Three bridges and a dam would be removed to reduce erosion along the Merced River. A 150-foot-wide protection zone would be imposed along most of the river and almost all development moved outside that zone. Indigenous shrubs, willows and black oak trees would be planted.
- Campsites would be reduced from 475 to 465. More than 100 would be walk-in campsites, accessible on foot but without nearby parking. Another 375 campsites lost in a 1997 flood would not be rebuilt.

mobiles and more development than in Central Park," Babbitt said. "There is a certain irony that you would find more solitude in the Sheep Meadow in the midst of New York City than in [Yosemite] Valley." "We must restore a semblance of nature to this most sublime place in our country."



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of the Secretary
For Immediate Release
March 27, 2000

Contact: Tim Ahern (202) 208-5089
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BABBITT ANNOUNCES DRAFT PLAN TO RESTORE YOSEMITE VALLEY

Remarks at Commonwealth Club unveil approach in which people adapt to park, not vice-versa

SAN FRANCISCO - Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt today announced a draft plan to restore Yosemite Valley by reducing traffic and crowding and restoring portions of the valley which is at the heart of one of the nation's greatest national parks.

"Yosemite Valley is one of nature's most awesome creations," said Babbitt. "Over the years, roads and bridges and structures have been constructed which, in some cases, have contributed to the sprawl and crowding that visitors to Yosemite are trying to avoid. In Yosemite, we're using the lessons and impetus from the New Year's Day flood in 1997 to help adapt visitors to the needs and forces of nature in the Valley, rather than the other way around. We are helping to return the Yosemite Valley to what it has always been - a place of breathtaking beauty."

"The proposals we are making in Yosemite are in line with how we're improving the transportation system in other parks, such as the Grand Canyon, Acadia, and Zion. Our goal in Yosemite, as in those parks, is to make sure visitors spend time appreciating the natural beauty of the parks, rather than focusing on where to park," Babbitt said.

The changes are part of a Draft Yosemite Valley Plan which provides direction and proposes specific actions to preserve Yosemite Valley. The draft plan is based on the broad goals laid out in Yosemite National Park's 1980 General Management Plan of reducing traffic congestion and crowding, allowing natural processes to work, and reclaiming the Valley's natural beauty.

The Draft Yosemite Valley Plan produced by the National Park Service proposes to:

- Rip out Cascades Dam on the Merced River, along with three bridges affecting the natural flow of the stream, restoring riparian, meadow and Black Oak landscapes on its banks
- Remove roads through Stoneman and Ahwahnee Meadows, and tear up most parking in the east Valley other than at lodging, campgrounds and Yosemite Village
- Demolish and restore to nature the Superintendent's House, commercial stables, some units of Housekeeping camp, some NPS Operations and concessioner administration.

(More)



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PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1999

U.S. Sues To Raze Tower at Gettysburg

Eminent Domain Invoked in Court

By STEPHEN BARR
Washington Post Staff Writer

The federal government moved to end a 27-year modern-day skirmish at Gettysburg National Military Park by filing suit yesterday to tear down a privately owned, 310-foot observation tower that history buffs have repeatedly denounced as a national eyesore spoiling one of the nation's most important Civil War landscapes.

The government exercised its power of eminent domain in U.S. District Court in Harrisburg, Pa., against the owners of the National Tower, a commercial tourist attraction on private property near the fields where Union troops turned back 12,000 Confederate soldiers in the attack called Pickett's Charge.

Congress has given the National Park Service about \$6 million to acquire the tower and two other parcels inside the Gettysburg park boundaries. The federal court will determine fair compensation for the taking of the land after hearing arguments from the Justice Department and the property owners.

"We didn't want the tower in the park in the first place and taking it down is an important symbol for a new day dawning at Gettysburg," said Dennis Galvin, deputy director of the National Park Service.

The primary owner of the tower, D.C. businessman Thomas Ottenstein, declined comment, saying he had neither seen the lawsuit nor had time to consult with his lawyer.

Preservation groups praised Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt for fulfilling his pledge to bring down the tower on his watch. Babbitt also has backed a Park Service plan to build a new visitor center at Gettysburg and restore the battlefield to its 1863 appearance.

"We're thrilled by this news," said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which helped lead the fight to remove the tower. "It's an abomination and should not have been built in the first place. We're strongly supportive of Secretary Babbitt."

O. James Lighthizer, president of the Civil War Preservation Trust, also praised the government's action and said "hopefully this will never happen again" at Gettysburg or other battlefields across the country.

"It's about time," said Eileen Woodford, northeast regional director of the National Parks and Conservation Association. "We'll finally have it out of the way."

The "complaint in condemnation," filed by U.S. Attorney David M. Barasch, said the tower property "is required for the proper administration, preservation and development" of the Gettysburg park and "for the use, benefit and enjoyment of the public."

Construction of the tower began in 1972 and quickly drew the opposition of then-Pennsylvania Gov. Milton Shapp. At one point, court proceedings stopped the tower's construction, at 178 feet. But in 1973, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court declined to halt the project. The following year, tower owners beat back a challenge in federal court.

The tower's location on private property effectively gave it immunity from federal land-use controls on the books at that time. A 1971 agreement between the Nixon administration and the tower developers also complicated legal arguments. The agreement let the Park Service swap land tracts with the developers so that the tower would not be built closer to the center of the battlefield.

Park Service Wants Battlefield Land

The National Park Service is trying to buy a 240-acre farm that is the last privately held parcel within the boundaries of Monocacy National Battlefield near Frederick.

The Araby Farm was the setting for the final phases of the Monocacy battle, also called "the battle that saved Washington," that left more than 1,600 dead, wounded or missing on July 9, 1864.

The property, about three miles south of Frederick, is owned by the Josephine Clapp family and is closed to the public.

It was included within the boundaries of the 1,670-acre battlefield when Congress created the national park in 1934.



FILE PHOTO ASSOCIATED PRESS
The 27-year-old tower hovering over the Gettysburg park is 310 feet tall.



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of the Secretary
For Immediate Release: May 20, 1999

Contact: Michael Gauldin
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Statement

Statement by Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt Regarding Action by the House of Representatives to Give Congress Veto Power Over U.N. Designations

"They've got things backwards. President Nixon signed the World Heritage Legislation as a way of exporting one of America's best ideas, our national parks, to recognize special places all over the world. It's like a five star rating that brings millions in tourist dollars annually to our country.

"It's comical for these guys to say this idea, our idea, is actually a plot by foreigners and space aliens, and we're going to stop it.

"I am sure we can expect the Senate again to ignore it, which is all it deserves."

- DOI -



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 7, 1998

Stephanie Hanna (O) 202/208-6416
(NPS) Scott Gediman (O) 209/372-0248

INTERIOR SECRETARY ANNOUNCES COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS FOR YOSEMITE VALLEY

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt announced today that the National Park Service will be consolidating its current planning activities for the future of Yosemite National Park in California into one comprehensive draft plan.

"We have listened to public responses to previous planning proposals and we got the message loud and clear," Secretary Babbitt said. "It makes sense that we roll things into one comprehensive package that can be reviewed in total. Taken together, it will meet our expectations to restore natural areas and to protect resources while at the same improving the quality of visitor experiences."

The new comprehensive draft plan will integrate the draft Valley Implementation Plan, the draft Housing Plan, the Yosemite Lodge project and the Lower Yosemite Falls project. The plan will thoroughly analyze a range of options that will ultimately provide a vision for the future of the Yosemite Valley and Yosemite National Park.

Yosemite National Park's 1980 General Management Plan (GMP) continues to be the template guiding all planning efforts in the park. The GMP's overall goals are to reclaim priceless natural beauty, reduce cars, congestion and crowding, allow natural processes to prevail and to promote visitor understanding and enjoyment.

"When we have completed the planning process, it's my goal that Yosemite National Park becomes an even better place in the 21st century for the spectacular natural resources and for everyone who comes to enjoy them," Babbitt said.

The draft comprehensive plan is scheduled to be completed in May, 1999. A final decision is expected to be made next fall.

-DOI-



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

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IN REPLY REFER TO:

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA 95389

**Comments of Yosemite Superintendent Stanley T. Albright
Comprehensive Planning Process for Yosemite Valley Announcement
December 7, 1998
Washington, D. C.**

- The initiative launched today for Yosemite Valley under the leadership of Secretary Babbitt, with support from the Wilderness Society, National Parks and Conservation Association and the Natural Resource Defense Council, will result in the best possible plan to move the park into the 21st Century.
- The public involvement processes have provided a fundamental message about the planning underway for Yosemite Valley: incorporate all Valley projects into one comprehensive plan. And we have listened. In formulating this comprehensive Valley plan, we will incorporate the Yosemite Lodge project, draft Yosemite Valley Housing Plan, draft Yosemite Valley Implementation Plan and Lower Yosemite Falls project into one integrated plan. We will provide the public with a thorough analysis of the impacts and trade-offs of proposed restoration, resource management and visitor enhancement alternatives. Our goal is to have the draft plan for Yosemite Valley available for public review in May of 1999 and issue a final plan late next year.
- Crafting plans for the Valley has always been a complex and challenging process. If we are to succeed with this new initiative, the public and the National Park Service will have to make difficult decisions about the trade-offs necessary to balance the needs of nature and the more than four million annual visitors to the park. If we are to succeed, we will have to build consensus through compromise and cooperation. Working together, we are confident that we can implement positive change in the Valley to resolve restoration, resource management and visitor enhancement challenges for the greatest good, not just the special interest of the few.
- The park's General Management Plan (GMP) will continue to be used as a guide for this ambitious effort. The GMP's goals, as you recall, are to reclaim priceless natural beauty, reduce cars and congestion, allow natural processes to prevail, and promote visitor understanding and enjoyment. These goals remain valid today.
- As stewards of Yosemite, the National Park Service has a responsibility to partner with the public to resolve the park's complex challenges. It is a responsibility we take very seriously. This new initiative demonstrates that the public process is working in Yosemite.
- We want to thank the public once again for participating in the planning process for Yosemite Valley. In the coming months, we will be providing ongoing updates on planning efforts and details on how to participate in the public review process. It is our hope that the public will continue to provide us with thoughts and recommendations as we move forward to preserve and protect one of the nation's most magnificent natural treasures.

Yosemite

National Park
National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior

1998 Fact Sheet

Administration

Superintendent	Stanley T. Albright		
Established	October 1, 1890		
1998 Budget	\$19,169,000 (initial allocation)		
1998 Staffing	<u>National Park Service*</u>	<u>Summer</u>	<u>Winter</u>
	Permanent - full time	365	365
	Permanent - part time	116	116
	Temporary - seasonal	<u>350</u>	<u>124</u>
	TOTAL	831	605
	<u>Yosemite Concession Services Corporation*</u>	1,500	1000

*1998 estimates

Visitor Use

Visitation	1996 4,118,783			
	1997 3,801,397			
Visitor Protection		<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	
	Search and Rescue Operations	192	154	
	Motor Vehicle Accidents	404	378	
	Custodial Arrests	457	333	
	D.U.I. Arrests	63	46	
	Case Incident Records	3,900	4054	
	Fatalities	20	9	
Backcountry Use*		<u>1977</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1997</u>
	People	74,537	52,536	48,523
	Overnight Stays	194,243	105,103	99,866
	Average Stay(days)	2.61	2.00	2.06

*Totals include number of permits issued plus a percentage of no-shows, U.S. Forest Service users and backpackers without permits. 1997 figures do not include High Sierra Camps statistics.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 7, 1998

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Park Advocates Back Comprehensive Approach to Yosemite *Development, Access Planning To Be Consolidated*

Washington, D.C. — A comprehensive approach to the future of Yosemite National Park will help planners resolve conflicts and better consider how traffic, construction and nature interact in the park, the nation's leading national park advocacy group said today. The National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA) today enthusiastically supported the National Park Service's consolidation of current project plans into one comprehensive draft plan.

"The vision of a restored Yosemite Valley is still within our reach if we put the protection of natural and cultural resources first. This consolidated planning approach will enable the Park Service to better consider the impacts that people and cars and buildings have on the natural setting," said NPCA President Tom Kiernan. "The flood damage of 1997 served as a wake up call that Yosemite needs bold, broad action to protect the valley. We can't look at each problem individually. We must address the Yosemite Valley's health as a whole."

The new comprehensive draft plan, announced today by Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, will integrate the draft Valley Implementation Plan, the draft Housing Plan, the Yosemite Lodge project and the Lower Yosemite Falls project.

In 1980, Yosemite approved a General Management Plan (GMP) to guide all planning efforts in the park. The plan's overall goals are to reclaim priceless natural beauty, reduce cars, congestion and crowding, allow natural processes to prevail, and to promote visitor understanding and enjoyment. Kiernan said that today's announced consolidation shows a redoubling of commitment by the Park Service to the 1980 plan. Kiernan added that an effective transportation plan is key to reaching the vision set for Yosemite in the 1980 GMP.

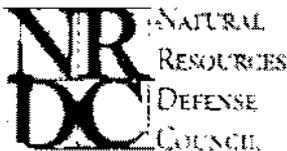
"If the flood waters underscored the need to move development and restore the valley's natural processes, the flood of cars into Yosemite reinforces the need to move visitors more efficiently," Kiernan said. "Yosemite has a dynamic opportunity to lead the way and become a model for solving national park transportation problems, and we believe the American public will support its efforts."

A national survey released in June by Colorado State University for NPCA shows that people are willing to make changes in their behavior in visiting national parks if they know it will help protect park resources:

- 92 percent say they would be willing to ride a shuttle bus;
- 92 percent say they would be willing to make reservations to get in;
- 89 percent say the park service should limit the number of visitors if a park is too crowded;
- 95 percent say the park service should limit the number of visitors if the number is harming the park's cultural or natural resources.

The draft comprehensive plan is scheduled to be completed in May, 1999. A final decision on the plan is expected to be made next fall.

The National Parks and Conservation Association is America's only private nonprofit citizen organization dedicated solely to protecting, preserving, and enhancing the U.S. National Park System. An association of "Citizens Protecting America's Parks," NPCA was founded in 1919 and today has nearly 400,000 members.



**REMARKS OF CHARLES M. CLUSEN, SENIOR POLICY ANALYST,
NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL, REGARDING
COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING OF YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK,**

DECEMBER 7, 1998

With its priceless beauty and natural wonder, Yosemite National Park is a crown jewel of the National Park System. It looms large in the history of the National Park System as the first park reserve established from the public lands by Congress, which created a California state park encompassing Yosemite Valley in 1864 in a bill signed by President Abraham Lincoln. Over the next four decades Yosemite became famous through John Muir's lyrical descriptions of the "mountains of light". In 1890 the Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Grove of Sequoias were transferred back to the Federal Government and greatly expanded to make Yosemite National Park.

Today Yosemite's beauty and natural values are seriously threatened by the ever-increasing number of people who visit the park every year, and particularly by the automobiles they use to get there. In 1980 the Yosemite General Management Plan declared automobile traffic to be "the single greatest threat to enjoyment of the natural and scenic qualities of Yosemite". In fiscal year 1996 more than 4.1 million people visited Yosemite, a new record and almost twice the number that visited in 1980. The resulting traffic problems are among the most severe in the entire National Park System. During peak visitor periods the traffic jams in the valley are the equal of those found in major American metropolitan areas.

High visitor numbers and associated traffic volumes adversely affect park resources, often compromise visitor safety, and always diminish the visitor experience. Today, far too many visitors to the park experience it while sitting in traffic and driving around in search of parking. Visitors often find the views from world-famous points impaired by haze created by the exhaust from thousands of cars.

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Following the devastating flood damage in the valley two years ago, the National Park Service wisely saw the opportunity to finally move forward with implementing the 1980 General Management Plan. The intentions for the Valley Implementation Plan (VIP)—to guide the removal of non-essential facilities from the valley and relocate them outside the park, restore important habitat lands and to appropriately and sensitively reconstruct essential facilities damaged by the flood—were entirely admirable. Yet, park stake-holders including NRDC and the public at large raised a number of important concerns about elements of the VIP. Confusion also developed between the various different plans effecting the valley: the VIP, the Lower Yosemite Falls project, the Yosemite Lodge project plan and the Housing Plan.

Most fortunately, the Park Service listened to the American public. This is not only good news for Yosemite, but for democracy in America. Public agencies at all levels of government need to follow the Park Service example here. Yosemite does belong to all Americans and they deserve to be involved in solving the serious problems that confront their park. Ultimately, this will result in a better plan, increased public understanding and strong public support for the plan and the Park Service.

But action must be taken. The status quo is not acceptable. The lack of action—the lack of a plan—will only condemn Yosemite and its outstanding resources to accelerating degradation.

With great expectation NRDC strongly commends and applauds Secretary Babbitt and the National Park Service for announcing today the launching of a new comprehensive planning process that will roll the several plans together. We trust that this process will present the public with a comprehensive analysis of the full range of alternatives to accomplish the goals of the general management plan along with full disclosure of their benefits and trade-offs. We further trust that they will develop their new plan with vision and great sensitivity to the park's resources and the visitor's experience. We are particularly delighted that we are now finally on the road to effectively addressing the overcrowding and intolerable traffic conditions that exist in the valley. We will assist the National Park Service in every appropriate way to help insure that America gets the bold and farsighted plan it deserves to preserve Yosemite for the 21st Century.



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 29, 1998

Stephanie Hanna (O) 202/208-6416

STATEMENT BY DR. FRANCIS McMANAMON, CHIEF ARCHAEOLOGIST OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

The safe arrival of the skeletal remains found in Kennewick at the Burke Museum of Natural History & Culture in Seattle today opens a new chapter in resolving the mystery of these bones' age and ancestry.

There are many unanswered questions. As the federal agency responsible for implementing the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA), the Department of the Interior believes that the Act provides both the legal foundation and the flexibility to proceed and find scientific answers.

Following a necessary period of acclimatizing the skeletal remains to changes in temperature and humidity at their new location, we will undertake a series of scientific investigations. The first phase will involve analysis and measurements of the remains that do not require destruction of any bone fragments.

There is much to learn from conducting this analysis, and the Department of the Interior (DOI), in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Justice, has developed a scientific protocol for these examinations. This protocol has been reviewed by two acknowledged experts in the fields of archaeology and anthropology, as well as in consultations with Tribal representatives. Once any final recommendations have been incorporated in the examination protocol, DOI will identify experts who can best perform the scientific tasks ahead. After the "non-destructive" work is completed and the data thoroughly analyzed, DOI will make a determination whether the data is sufficient to conclude definitively that the remains are considered Native American under NAGPRA. If not, DOI will determine what additional testing might be necessary, including DNA sampling or radiocarbon dating, to answer this question.

Clearly, there will be those who believe that there should be even more tests performed, and there will be those who believe that only they have the expertise to perform them. There are others who believe that the remains should be reburied undisturbed and untested.

We hope in the events of the next several months to seek and to hold a middle ground, where the compelling questions surrounding these remains can be answered scientifically and conclusively while being sensitive to those who want the remains treated with respect, dignity and honor.

Dr. Francis P. McManamon serves as Chief Archaeologist of the National Park Service and Departmental Consulting Archaeologist of the Department of the Interior.

-DOI-



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 21, 1998

Stephanie Hanna (O) 202/208-6416
(NPS) John Quinley (O) 907/257-2696

GLACIER BAY FISHING PROVISION MEETS WITH APPROVAL

Calling it "a fair and reasonable solution," Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt today praised a provision in the Department of the Interior Appropriations Act that addresses the problem of commercial fishing in Glacier Bay National Park.

"We have increased protection for the park's marine resources for the benefit of present and future generations, while also assuring fair treatment for fishermen who have fished Glacier Bay for many years," Babbitt said.

Private use of national park resources for personal profit has long been viewed as inappropriate in national parks, their resources belonging instead to all Americans. Commercial fishing in Glacier Bay National Park has taken significant amounts of living resources from the park's marine waters.

The Appropriations Act provision will help to protect park resources by establishing a phase-out of commercial fishing inside Glacier Bay Proper, the heart of Glacier Bay National Park. Only those halibut, salmon, and Tanner crab fishermen with qualifying history of fishing in Glacier Bay Proper will be allowed to continue to fish there. When these fishermen are done, there will be no more commercial fishing in Glacier Bay Proper.

In addition, commercial fishing will immediately be closed for the most part in the more recently glaciated northern reaches of Glacier Bay Proper. "These immediate closures will provide unique and exciting opportunities for preserving natural marine communities and carrying out scientific study," Babbitt said. "Glacier Bay will be a model and a valuable natural laboratory for all those who care about or depend on the North Pacific."

While the new law advances the park's fundamental purpose of natural resource preservation, it also treats current fishermen fairly, including these provisions:

- It leaves open to commercial fishing the park waters outside Glacier Bay Proper where over 80% of the commercial fishing occurs.
- The law establishes a lifetime allowance to continue commercial fishing in most of Glacier Bay Proper for fishermen with qualifying history of fishing there.

(more)

- It makes a limited exception for winter king salmon trolling for the grand fathered fishermen in Glacier Bay Proper in parts of the closed northern waters of the Bay's East and West Arms.
- It provides generous financial compensation to a small member of Dungeness crab fishermen who have fished for at least 6 of the 10 years from 1987 through 1996 in the designated wilderness waters surrounding the Beardslee Islands and within upper Dundas Bay, but who must cease such fishing in accordance with a 1994 decision by the U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska, affirmed in 1997 by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

"The National Park Service looks forward to working with the State of Alaska on a cooperative management plan for the commercial fishing that will continue in Glacier Bay National Park," said Park Superintendent Tomie Lee. "This process provides an excellent opportunity for the state to contribute its expertise on commercial fishing management, and the NPS to contribute its expertise on protection of park values and purposes, and for all to consider what special studies could be performed in Glacier Bay's fished and unfished areas to enhance scientific understanding of marine systems."

The Glacier Bay provision in the Appropriations Act reflects much work and many years of public discussion and information gathering. It responds to the vast majority of public comments received by the Park Service that oppose commercial fishing in park waters, but it also responds to the issues of equity raised by the longtime Glacier Bay fishermen and championed by the State of Alaska.

-DOI-



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NEWS RELEASE ***NEWS RELEASE***NEWS RELEASE

Office of the Secretary
For release: October 2, 1998

Contact: Paul Bledsoe
(202) 208-6416

BABBITT COMMEMORATES 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT CANOEING DOWN PROTECTED RIVER; ANNOUNCES PROJECT TO FURTHER PROTECT LAMPREY RIVER FISH Comments from Vice President Gore on Wild and Scenic Rivers Anniversary

October 2, 1998, Washington, D.C. -- U.S. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt was in Durham, N.H. today to celebrate with local conservation and community leaders the 30th anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and to announce a project to open up spawning habitat for American shad, striped bass and other anadromous fish along the river. In addition, Vice President Al Gore sent a special message commemorating the anniversary of this landmark environmental legislation.

"Rivers have always been the bloodlines of our nation, main arteries of our social, economic and natural life," Babbitt said. "But by the mid-1960's, many were sclerotic, clogged and polluted to the point where we had forgotten their vital role in our national character and natural health. The passage of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was a watershed moment, helping to turn the tide toward a developing recognition that protection of our waterways is deeply bound up not only with protection of our wildlife and water quality, but with our connection to our natural landscape and heritage."

Signed by President Johnson on October 2, 1968, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act protects river segments which contain remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, and cultural values. To date, 155 river segments, in 36 states have been designated as National Wild and Scenic Rivers, totaling almost 11,000 miles in length. These protected rivers range from the mighty Missouri to the Lamprey River in Durham, which had its designation signed into law in 1956 and which Babbitt canoed Friday.

Vice President Gore noted from Washington, "The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act became law at a crucial time in our natural history, when our nation's waterways were severely degraded and getting worse. It helped inaugurate a generation of our most important environmental protection laws -- including the Clean Water Act in 1972 and the Endangered Species Act in 1973 -- laws which have helped clean up and protect rivers across the nation. Just this year, President Clinton and I designated 14 waterways as American Heritage Rivers, a direct descendant of Wild and Scenic Rivers which focuses on improving the health of less remote, more commercially-used waterways. We have also urged Congress to fund our Clean Water Action Plan, a program

calling for a new generation of water quality protections so that we can clean up the 40 percent of our rivers from which we can still not eat the fish or swim in safely. Our work is not done. But the 30th anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act reminds us that with determination we can continue to restore and protect our natural heritage and environment for generations to come."

Babbitt also announced today his support for a proposed project to open up 43 miles of river habitat on the Lamprey River which is crucial to the restoration of runs of river herring, American shad, American eel, and striped bass. The project will involve construction of a fish ladder at Wiswall Dam, where Babbitt made his announcement today, to allow passage of fish to spawning grounds. The project planners hope to begin construction next fall and complete it in 2001. The overall costs of the project would be approximately \$600,000, with \$500,000 coming from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The 30th anniversary of one of the most important pieces of Federal legislation ever passed to protect rivers -- the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 -- will be celebrated across America from October 1 to October 12. Events ranging from river clean-ups and hikes to festivals and symposia will be held along many of the Nation's designated wild and scenic rivers.

For the past 30 years wild and scenic rivers have become an increasingly important part of America's protected heritage, offering recreational and tourism opportunities to the public, protection for otherwise threatened plant and animal species, and dependable supplies of clean water for local use. Passage of the Act has stimulated an increasing public interest in river protection and provided an important tool for achieving it nationwide.

Key principles of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act which help protect these remarkable rivers include:

- Keeping the designated river segments free-flowing
- Protecting and enhancing outstanding natural cultural, and recreational values
- Allowing appropriate economic uses of the rivers
- Building enduring partnerships among all affected parties: especially local communities, state agencies, landowners, river users; and tribal governments.

The National Park Service helps build the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System three ways: (1) by carrying out feasibility studies for those rivers and river segments requested for study by Congress or state governors, (2) offering technical assistance to river partners to enhance these river corridors, and (3) operating 20 river segments as units of the National Park System. Examples include the Charley River in Alaska and the Bluestone River in West Virginia.

The National Park Service plays several roles in studying, assessing, and operating wild and scenic rivers -- in close partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency, the USDA Forest Service, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. States also play an important role by administering rivers designated by the Federal Government but operated through state authorities. For more information about the Wild and Scenic River System, contact John Haubert at (202) 208-4290 or Chris Brown at (202) 565-1175.



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of the Secretary
For Immediate Release: September 28, 1998

Contact: John Wright
202/208-6416

Babbitt Announces Designation of Lumber River in North Carolina as National Wild and Scenic River

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt today announced the designation of 81 miles of the Lumber River located in North Carolina, as a state and locally managed component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The Lumber River is the fourth river in the state of North Carolina to receive the status of national designation, joining the New River, Horse Pasture River, and a portion of the Chattooga River, which extends to South Carolina and Georgia.

"I congratulate the state of North Carolina, the city of Lumberton, and the town of Fair Bluff in their successful efforts to protect and responsibly manage this magnificent and natural resource," Babbitt said. "We look forward to working with the state to help preserve the river's outstanding character in perpetuity."

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act requires the Secretary of the Interior to: 1) determine if the river possesses values that would qualify it for inclusion in the System; 2) determine that the state has an adequate program to permanently protect the river and adjoining lands, 3) submit the proposal to the federal department and agency head for review and comment and, 4) finally, if the state's request is approved by the Secretary, add the river to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

In 1989, the Lumber River was added to the North Carolina Natural and Scenic Rivers System because of its abundant and wide variety of outstanding resources. Among the important resources associated with the river are endangered species such as the bald eagle, red-cockaded woodpecker, and American alligator; remarkable scenic beauty; outstanding canoeing and fishing opportunities; highly productive fish habitats; and large numbers of rare, threatened, or endangered plant species.

April 1996, North Carolina Governor James Hunt petitioned the Interior Secretary for 115 miles of the Lumber River to be included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers system. Under Section 2 (a)(ii) of the Act, the Secretary can designate a river wild and scenic at the request of a governor, provided the river has existing state protection, has resources important to the nation, and can be managed by the state to protect those resources.

The state's application and environmental analysis as required by the National Environmental Policy Act, was reviewed and evaluated against designation criteria. The NPS found that 81 miles of the river met the criteria for designation as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

During the 45-day public review of the NPS eligibility report and environmental assessment, and also during an additional 21-day extended public review period, the NPS reported no objections, all supported designation of the Lumber River into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

The 81 miles of the Lumber River added to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System includes two reaches of the river. The upper reach extends from State Route 1412/1203 to the Scotland/Robeson County lines, at the end of the Maxton Airport Swamp (22 miles) and the lower reach begins at Back Swamp and runs through the town of Fair Bluff and the city of Lumberton, to the North Carolina and South Carolina border (59 miles).

October 2 marks the 30th anniversary of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The Act was passed to preserve, protect, and maintain certain free-flowing rivers and adjacent land for their outstanding, remarkable, natural, scenic, educational, geological, recreational, historical, fish and wildlife, and cultural values. For the past 30 years the Act has helped to safeguard 154 rivers covering 10,764 miles of some of America's most precious waterways for their exceptional qualities and free-flowing conditions.

"These rivers are historical connections to our past and an important part of our future," said Babbitt. "They are a source of history and adventure that represent many things for many people."

- DOI -

Local efforts will preserve Loess Hills, Babbitt says

By Michael Coleman
Journal staff writer

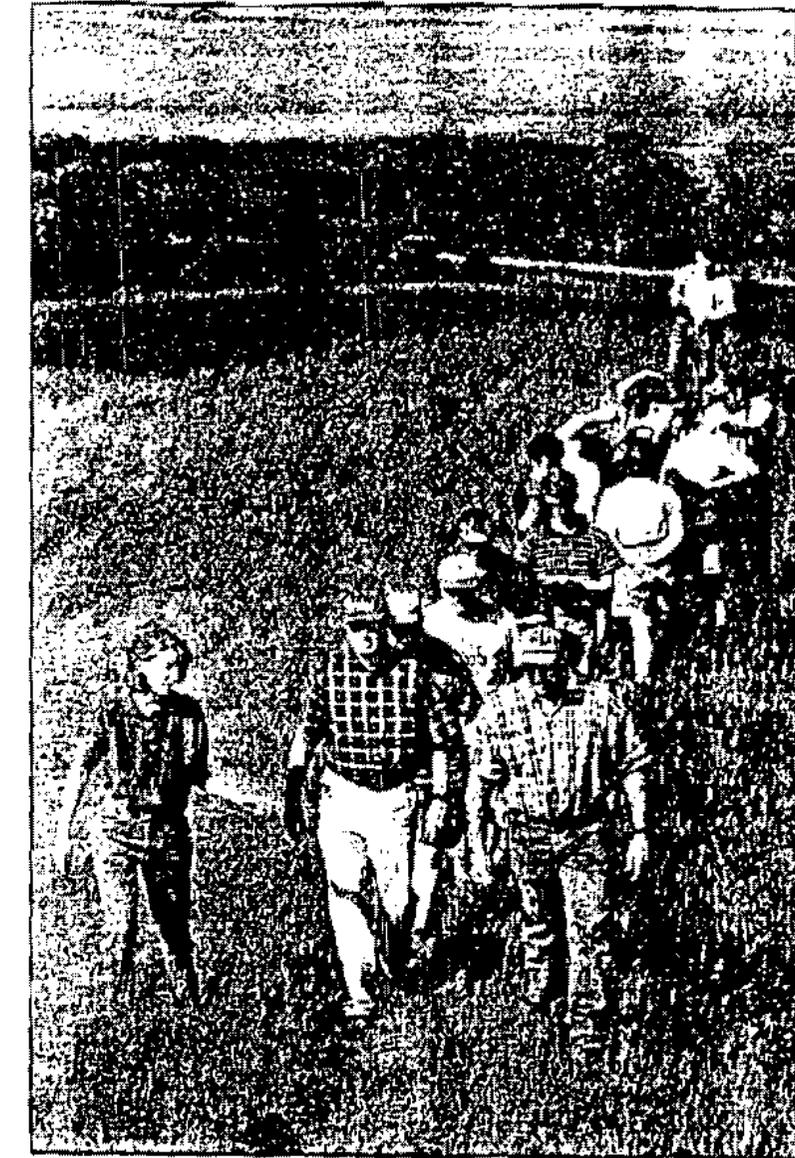
ONAWA, Iowa — The effort to preserve the Loess Hills mirrors the long hike Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt went on Saturday — just when you think the journey is over, you see another hill on the horizon.

Babbitt spends 75 percent of his time as secretary of the interior traveling the country, learning the terrain and listening to local concerns. During his hike through the Sylvan Runkel Wildlife Preserve north of Onawa, Babbitt talked with conservationists from the area about the future of the hills and learned about the unique ecosystem.

"It's always amazing to come out on the landscape and see — what you read and people tell you about — is actually there," Babbitt noted as he studied some bluestem grass along the trail. Scott Moats of Westfield, who works for the Iowa Nature Conservancy in Northwest Iowa, pointed out various plants and a few insects as well.

As the group of 20 hiked on, Babbitt talked about how the future of the preserve and the Loess Hills in general lies with local efforts.

There has been some discussion of turning the hills into a national park, and State Sen. Steve Hanson, D-Sioux City, proposed a resolution urging the federal government to establish one in the region during the last legislative session in Des Moines. In the end, a panel



Bruce Babbitt, front center, hikes in the Loess Hills near Onawa, Iowa. With Babbitt are Susanne Hickey of Omaha and Scott Moats of Westfield, Iowa, both from the Nature Conservancy.

was established to study how to protect the rugged land.

The hikers lean into the steepening hill to keep their balance. At the top of a ridge, guide Tom Bruegger stops so stragglers can catch up.

"The important thing at this point is to get the local community involved," Babbitt said. "The ultimate status is in the hands of

SEE LOESS HILLS
continued on page A3

Loess Hills landowners hold key to preserving state resource

from page one *P.A.3*

lowans." But before a decision can be made, nearly everyone agrees, more communication must take place to decide what direction to go with preservation plans for the region.

Bruegger tells the hikers how many more hills and valleys they face before its over. The bus to Preparation Canyon State Park for lunch with the Loess Discovery Tour bikers is still miles away.

Suzanne Hickey, who covers southwest Iowa for the Nature Conservancy, said just the hint of a national park has been positive.

"It's opened a lot of discussion on the Loess Hills," she said. However, another national park

would likely reduce funds going to other parks, she said. With limited funds, it's difficult to determine what is the best way to preserve the area long-term. In the meantime, efforts at protection continue.

"We will be working with land owners to come up with management plans and biodiversity protection," Hickey said.

As the hikers descend into another valley, Ames native Assistant Secretary Patty Bencke reiterates Babbitt's view that the future of the area is in the hands of the people who own the land and want to protect it.

Bruegger, a member of the Monona County Conservation Commission, points out that from the next ridge, no roads or other signs of civilization can be seen. He notes that owners have kept the land in good shape for the most

part.

He points out to Babbitt a plant that has taken over a patch of the hill.

"This is coralberry," Bruegger said. "It was started for erosion control and it got away."

"It always does," Babbitt said, as Bruegger went on to explain that a lack of complete research resulted in the plan going awry.

As the hike nears its end, Babbitt says successful efforts to preserve an area or make a national park designation often take decades.

"The sense of urgency comes when people come into subdivisions and dig sand pits," he said. "You can't wait forever or it may not be there."

Just a few more steps, then a new horizon.

Hiking in the hills

SCTJ 9-27-98

p. A1



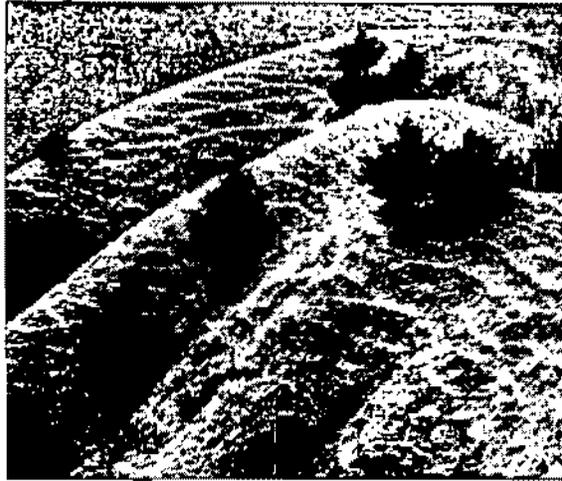
Monona County Conservation Director Tom Bruegger, right, tells U.S. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt about turkey grass, a plant native to

the Loess Hills. Listening is Susanne Hickey of the Nature Conservancy. (Staff photos by Tim Hynds)

Iowa's very special hills

■ The natural wonderland on Iowa's western border is a gift from ancient glaciers.

On this early Sunday morning, hundreds of bike riders and hikers in Onawa, Ia. (pop. 3,000), are either lacing up their shoes in preparation for the remainder of the Loess Hills Discovery Tour or are still resting up from Saturday's outings. For the thousands of Iowans who wish they were there, remember — miles of roads and all of October lie ahead.



"Catsteps" set the Loess Hills apart.

If "Discovery Tour" sounds inappropriate for land settled more than 150 years ago, consider: Those 150 years represent just 1 percent of their life. And discoveries of significance haven't ceased; it was just 16 years ago that a sharp-eyed hiker in the hills discovered a fern

A Loess Hills national park



that was then still unknown to the botanical world. That sort of thing happens in our unique hills.

Loess silt was formed when the monster glaciers that pushed down from the north ground rocks to tiny particles, which were carried by glacial melt into the Missouri River floodplain, and carried then by westerly winds and dumped at the edge of the huge river's valley. Centuries of shaping by wind and waters left hills so precipitous that there are pastures you can fall off of. There are ridge tops so dry and well-drained that they carry vegetation more typical of western Nebraska. The dominant prairie grass is little bluestem, but its cousin the big blue grows so tall that you can get lost in it.

Fire suppression has allowed red cedar trees to invade the hills where prairie used to prevail. The bur oaks, however, can make a case that they belong. Some are a couple centuries old, having survived the fires of long ago because they have a tough bark. Also their

branches hang low to the ground, discouraging the grasses that could carry flames to their trunks. Bur oak savannas — grasslands with a tree cover — are among the hills' high spots.

What most distinctly sets these hills apart are the catsteps. Some swear they're old game trails, but the accepted explanation for the concentric terraces ringing the hills is slippage of the oddball loess soil. To quote a 1986 geology report: "Some investigators have suggested that these arise from animal trampling, while others suggest that they are microstumps produced by shallow, successive failure of the loess. . . ."

If you buy the "trampling" theory, you'll find plenty of potential trampers in the hills' history. Among those that romped here in the

long-ago were woolly mammoths, reindeer and bison. Specimens found in related stream deposits show ground sloth, giant armadillo, woodland musk-ox, giant beaver and a camel. And still out there today — although very rarely spotted — are the prairie rattler (in the north), the Great Plains skink (south) and the ornate box turtle. Explorers Lewis and Clark —

who also left footprints in our hills — were puzzled by the "barking squirrels" (prairie dogs) just across the river in Nebraska.

The hills, in short, are more than just the best remaining showcase of remnant Iowa prairies. They're a vast academic resource, a repository for secrets of grassland ecology, archaeology, paleontology and American history. They're a gift left behind by the glaciers as if to make amends for otherwise messing up the landscape.

But those who today dig into this geologic treasure trove aren't after treasure. They want fill dirt. Our Loess Hills today are under serious attack, primarily from urban sprawl. That

sprawl has already shaved the hilltops of the front range east of Council Bluffs and Sioux City. Once sprawl accelerates, it becomes more and more difficult to check. And when the best of the hills are gone, saving the rest seems less and less important — until we have given up an invaluable part of our heritage.

Local support for preserving the hills is growing. Financing the easements and covenants necessary to keep farmland in farmland, to protect pastures from the bulldozers will take national help — and is worthy of that help. Iowa has paid its share for the preservation of significant national lands; now it's time for national attention to focus on Iowa.

The worthiness of this land for national protection is as obvious as the need is great.

Go take a look. The apple crop is ready. The grasses are golden. The hardwoods and sumacs are beckoning with their first flirtatious touches of coloration. The hills are alive.

Babbitt: Protect Loess Hills

■ The Interior chief, awed by the area's beauty, says action is up to Iowans.

By CHARLES BULLARD
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

Onawa, Ia. — After a hot, windy, two-hour hike through Iowa's Loess Hills, U.S. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt said the Ice Age bluffs along the Missouri River deserve preservation for future generations.

"There's nothing like it anywhere," he said. "It's a remarkable place."

Babbitt stopped short of endorsing a proposal to give National Park status to the area. But he said, "It ought to be protected."

"This is a national treasure," said Babbitt, who hiked more than three miles along the prairie-clad, knife-edged ridges of Sylvan Runkel State Preserve overlooking the floodplain of the Missouri River.

Babbitt came to Iowa for the Loess Hills Discovery Tour, a two-day bicycle ride through Monona County sponsored by The Des Moines Register and the Onawa Chamber of Commerce.

Babbitt did not join the 400 bikers who rode 40 miles Saturday under cloudless blue skies, but he spoke to them at Preparation Canyon State Park near Moorhead.

Instead of looking at the Loess Hills from a bike seat, Babbitt chose to stride through the waving prairie grasses that cloak their high ridges.

Babbitt was accompanied by several dozen Iowans who

would like to see the Loess Hills preserved. He seemed fascinated by the wide variety of prairie plants he was shown on the strenuous hike.

"That's the most impressive prairie preserve I've been in anywhere in the United States," he said. "I've been to the Loess Hills before, but I had no idea there was this much of a tall-grass prairie still here."

Babbitt also was impressed by the views out across the Missouri River floodplain from the 200-foot-high ridges of the Loess Hills.

"When we were up there in the middle of the hills, you could be on a western landscape. You could look clear to the horizon," he said.

"It's a largely intact ecosystem that still looks like what Lewis and Clark might have seen coming through here 194 years ago," Babbitt said. "There just are virtually none of these areas left in Middle America."

The Interior secretary compared the Loess Hills to the Flint Hills of Kansas, which recently became a national park.

"In terms of size and ecological importance, I'd say this ranks right up there with the Flint Hills," he said.

Although the Loess Hills do not have the alpine grandeur of Yosemite National Park or the scenic splendor of Grand Canyon National Park, Babbitt said they are the equivalent of those landscapes.

"In the last century, we've come to understand that nature is really a lot more than just alpine scenery," he said. "There is more diversity of life in the Great Plains by far than there is in the Rocky Mountains."

"These systems have their own unique quality and beauty which is every bit the equal of what you see in the Rocky Mountains. But it does require us to stop, to let it sink in, to look at the detail, to understand the natural history."

The Loess Hills were created after the last Ice Age, when rock particles that had been ground as fine as flour by the glaciers were blown into dunes on the eastern bank of the waterway that eventually became the Missouri River.

"This is really nature at its best . . .

and most Iowans aren't even aware that there's this kind of resource out here," Babbitt said. "I'm here to say, 'Look, you've really got something wonderful.'"

The Interior secretary said the Loess Hills are "one of the best-kept secrets I've ever seen. This is a really magnificent asset. You need to see it."

But Babbitt said it is not his place to advocate national park status for the Loess Hills, which stretch 200 miles from Sioux City in the north to St. Joseph, Mo., in the south.

The impetus must come from Iowans and their congressional delegation, he said.

"The important thing that Iowans need to do is think and discuss and debate and look at all the options," said Babbitt. "There are a lot of models around the country for how it is you protect places like this and make them available for public use."

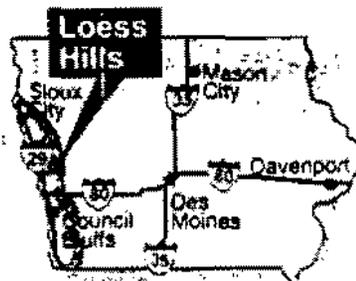
National park status is only one of several possibilities, he said.

"I'm not here to propose a model," Babbitt said. "I'm here to say, 'This is really important. You really ought to have a discussion. It really ought to be preserved and protected for future generations.'"

Babbitt said: "The important question for Iowans to discuss is to look ahead 100 years and say, 'Do we want our children to see the mountains of Iowa as a moonscape of gravel pits and subdivisions, or do we want our grandchildren to see this landscape that is here?' Once we reach a consensus that we ought to preserve a really substantial portion of this, then you get to the institutional question."

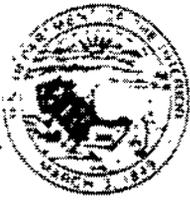
Most of the Loess Hills area is in private hands, and farming is common. But Babbitt said national-park status is not out of the question. Much of Flint Hills National Park is privately owned, and "the National Park Service is there as an interpretative partner. That's all. The National Park Service is not a big landowner there."

But Babbitt said farmers in the Loess Hills would have to be willing to grant conservation easements, in return for annual payments, so that the fragile hills could be preserved.





U.S. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
Bruce Babbitt, left, U.S. secretary of interior, inspects a garden spider web called to his attention by Scott Moats of the Broken K Grasslands Area in Westfield, during a tour of the Loess Hills in western Iowa. Babbitt called the area "nature at its best."



NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 1998

CLERK

JULY 1998

YELLOWSTONE STONE REBORN

Ten years ago, wildfires raged across Yellowstone National Park, and the nation debated the wisdom of the Park Service's "natural fire" policy. Today Yellowstone rises from its ashes: alive, well, and in many places, thriving. **BY JIM ROBBINS**

The summer of 1988 was a strange time for weather. Thunderstorm after thunderstorm sailed across the Yellowstone Plateau, but instead of dropping rain as they usually do, the storms brought high winds and little moisture. Lightning set fire to a landscape parched by several years of drought. The first fire of the year in Yellowstone National Park began on May 24. By August more than 50 separate fires were burning, and as they burned into one another they became eight huge fire complexes.

When the fires started, they were for the most part allowed to burn, in keeping with the park's philosophy of natural management. But by the end of the summer they had assumed a fury far beyond what anyone had predicted, and it was hard to say which direction they would go. "The movement of the fires will not be controlled by us but by the Big Guy upstairs," said Ted Schwinden, then Montana's governor. While the fires burned, it felt as if the world were near its end. The summer sky was filled with smoke, and it acted like a wind-driven kaleidoscope, eclipsing the sun and producing light that was twilight-gray one minute,

orange the next, then sulfur-yellow. Ominous orange glows lit up the horizon at night. Truckloads of weary, soot-faced firefighters, in yellow-and-green uniforms and yellow hard hats, rumbled up and down park roads. By October 25,000 firefighters, including 4,000 military personnel, had pitched in. Slurry bombers droned overhead, dropping red clouds of fire retardant out of their silver bellies and onto the flames.

One dark night, deep in the park, I watched in eerie sight a sheet of prairie fire, whipped by the wind, flowing over rolling grass hills like water, following the contours of the land nearly as fast as a deer could run, down a hill, up the other side, and over the next. The only thing that broke the uniformity of the fire's movement was an occasional stand of trees, alive and dead, gathered in the bottom of a draw. Firefighters call a group of dead trees a jackpot. When a fire hits, the jackpot explodes in a roar of flame and sparks, like a Roman candle.

Once a forest fire reaches critical mass, it becomes a kind of perpetual-motion machine, sucking in tremendous amounts of oxygen to fuel itself

and in the process creating its own windstorm. These fires simply took over the park. "We're in conditions they haven't written the rules for," said Superintendent Bob Barber. Finally, in November, rain and snow came, and the fires died. The last fires were extinguished on November 18.

For a while, the smoldering Yellowstone landscape was postapocalyptic. The earth looked in places as if it were covered with hot tar, and in some areas as far as the eye could see a forest of trees had been transformed into giant black matchsticks stuck in the scorched earth—mostly burned lodgepole pines, the dominant tree species in the park. But seeds of renewal lay within the blackness.

These days Yellowstone is a dramatically different place. It hasn't returned to prefire conditions—that will take more than a century—but the only obvious evidence of the fire is the trees that remain blackened. Acre after acre of dead forest still stands—and might stand for two or three decades, though black trees crash to the ground with each windstorm. Of some 2.2 million acres in and around the park, a little more than a third were affected by the fires—nearly 794,000 acres. Only about 1,400 acres were burned severely enough to wipe out all life.

Wildfire is a capricious pas de deux between fire and wind. It skips across the landscape, creating a mosaic, a

patchwork of burned and partly burned and unburned areas, and the places that were not burned serve as a source of renewal. The lodgepole pines that died, for instance, left a legacy of serotinous cones. "They blossom like a ripe rose and spew out their seeds in the

wind," explains Steve Betlach, a firefighter. "Rain pushes the seeds into the ash, and also releases nutrients." In many places, lodgepole pines are regrowing at a rate of 200,000 seedlings an acre. Some trees born of the seeds planted by the fires of 1988 are now more than six feet tall.

Wildfires redistribute biological wealth. In the East, where the conditions are wet, nutrient recycling takes place through decomposition. In the semiarid West, however, fire plays the

primary role of returning plants to the earth. The flames of Yellowstone turned the lodgepole pines and other vegetation into usable forms of potassium and phosphorus—the coin of the realm, ultimately, for almost all species in the park. The spring after the fire, fertilized grasses erupted from the burned ground and grew as high as an elk's belly, while yellow arnica, mountain hollyhock, and oceans of blue lupine exploded in the burned meadows. "I was hiking on the east side of the park, and I ran into mountain hollyhock," says John Varley, the park's chief scientist. "I've been here twenty years, and I've never seen a single one. There was a hillside covered with their lavender blooms—so many of them it was too thick to walk through." Linda Wallace, a plant ecologist at the University of Oklahoma who has been studying the park's grasslands since the fires, says that for the first three years there was 50 percent more forage than before the fire, though that number has dwindled as the nutrients have been exhausted.

The potassium and phosphorus also pulsed through streams and rivers in the park. Nutrients and organic matter boosted the production of the insects and algae that form the basis of the food chain. In addition, a large number of trees and other debris fell or washed into the bigger streams, slowing the flows and creating pools where insects breed and fish thrive.

After the fires, light found its way to parts of the park for the first time in centuries. Lodgepole pines,

which covered most of Yellowstone, are as straight as telephone poles and grow so close together they're called doghair. Their canopy creates a biological desert on the forest floor. When the Yellowstone canopy burned off, it opened up the landscape to new ecological possibilities. A great deal more sunlight fell on the creeks, raising water temperatures and increasing the amount of algae, on which insects feed. Anglers have reported more and bigger fish since the fires, though no formal studies have been done.

G. Wayne Minshall, a stream ecologist at Idaho State University in Pocatello, says the amount of debris in the streams from burned trees will increase over the next quarter-century, which will increase the pooling effect and, subsequently, the number of fish. "But no one really knows for sure," he cautions. "No one has ever looked beyond a year or so."

There are always winners and losers in a fire. Cavity-nesting birds—owls, bluebirds, woodpeckers of all kinds—have done well in the post-fire park. One ornithologist recalled coming to the park in 1989 to hunt for three-toed woodpeckers. He had seen just one in his life. On that day he saw 20.

Grizzly bears have had gains and losses. Whitebark pines, an important source of nuts in the prehibernation months, were hit hard. But important plants such as spring beauties and biscuit root have thrived. And ants, also important to bears, are expected to thrive as burned timber falls to the ground and gives them more places to live.

Among the losers in the fires' aftermath are Yellowstone's moose. The animals wintered in old-growth lodgepole forests, eating subalpine fir saplings and seedlings that grow in the understory. But the fire wiped out the saplings and seedlings along with the understory. This loss has hit

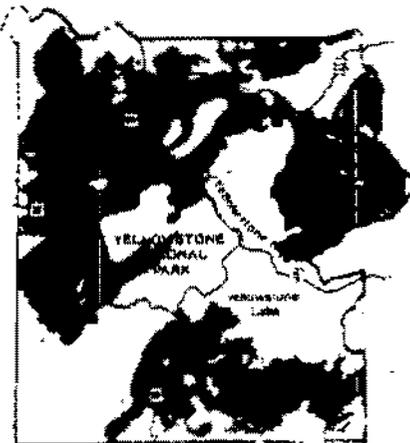
the moose population hard. As many as half the moose in the northern part of the park have died since 1988. "Some of them simply starved after the fires," says Dan Tvers, a biologist who conducted a moose study for the U.S. Forest Service. "Some of them moved into marginal habitat in other places."

Yellowstone is unique in that it provides one of the few large, undisturbed places to study the long-term effects of fires. In 1972 the National Park Service adopted a "natural fire" policy as part of an overall decision to allow nature to take its course. Its so-called 10 A.M. model of fire suppression—put out all fires by 10 A.M. the day after they started—had actually made the fire situation worse. In the absence of fire, dead lodgepole pines had fallen among other closely spaced trees, and when a fire started, it climbed the fallen timbers to the forest canopy, consuming far more acreage than it would have if fire had been allowed to clean out the debris periodically.

The natural-fire policy meant letting lightning-caused fires burn, although they were controlled or suppressed if they threatened human life or private property. Allowing these fires to burn removed the fuel and stimulated growth. And park officials did not let every fire burn; they tried to put out manmade fires.

This policy was a near-casualty of the 1988 fires. The next year the Park Service suspended every fire plan in the country. The plans were rewritten, and now, 10 years later, the policy of allowing natural fires in the parks has returned—though it calls for more caution under certain conditions, especially near developed areas.

"After ten years my view is that this place took these fires in stride ecologically," Varley says. "Just as if they were a summer thundershower passing through. Just as it's supposed to happen." *



■ TOTAL AREA AFFECTED BY FIRES



NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

FRIDAY, JANUARY 9, 1998

Wednesday, January 7, 1999 ARIZONA DAILY SUN

Babbitt deflects political barbs

By LUKAS VELUSH
Sen Staff Reporter

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, Flagstaff's favorite son, was at the Grand Canyon on Tuesday to champion new quiet technology to be used by the National Park Service and Papillon Grand Canyon Helicopters.

While visiting the area where he grew up, Babbitt, who has also served as governor of Arizona, discussed his recent role as Congressional whipping boy. He's awaiting word on whether the U.S. Justice Department and Attorney General Jans Reno will appoint a special prosecutor to look into his involvement in the 1995 rejection of a Indian gaming compact.

In a scathing Governmental Affairs Committee hearing in October, lobbyist Paul Eckstein alleged Babbitt turned down the Wisconsin tribe in favor of another that donated money to the Democratic party. Eckstein is a lobbyist for the Wisconsin tribe that had its compact rejected.

Babbitt said he had no part in the decision and believes his reputation will soon be cleared.

Fellow Arizona Sen. John McCain, who was also at the Grand Canyon on Tuesday, said he hopes Babbitt's reputation as a straight shooter comes out intact.

"Washington, D.C., is a tough town, as I have found out in the past," McCain said. "But I have the greatest respect and friendship for Secretary Babbitt. I believe he should be accorded the constitutional right of innocence until proven guilty. And I hope to come out of this thing fine because I think he's done a fine job as secretary of interior. And frankly I'm a bit saddened to see this happen to him and his family."

Babbitt, serving his second term as secretary of the interior, talked about staying afloat in hot water.

Daily Sun: What has it been like to have your reputation questioned?

Babbitt: I've just had tremendous support from the people I've worked with across all these years in Arizo-

na. I was in Phoenix over the weekend — everywhere I went, people stopped me to talk about all the things that we've done over the years and to offer support.

Obviously, this is a painful process. My reputation is being attacked. But I'm absolutely confident that I made the right decision, for the right reasons and the right process.

Q: Could you explain that for me?

Babbitt: The facts will be out — they will show that the decision was made on the record with no outside influence. It was made by the professional staff at Interior Department under a process that has been in place since it was put there by a Republican administration some 10 years ago. It's an established process. The important thing is to get all of that out.

Q: Did you ever feel like the scapegoat finger was pointed at you?

Babbitt: I don't think there's any question that the Thompson Committee was using that hearing simply for character assassination. I didn't recall hearing from any of the witnesses who were involved in making the decision. It was a professional decision. I didn't make it. I wasn't part of the decision-making process.

Q: Do you feel worn down by this process?

Babbitt: I've got to tell you, I've had a lot of support. In a sense, it's brought my family really close together. My kids, they're both college students — one of them is a journalism student. They've been critiquing my performance, telling me I should smile more on television and sort of helping me with my written work. It's really brought our family together in a really, really close way.

You heard Sen. McCain here today. It's really been encouraging to me to have that kind of support. It really means a lot. There's a lot of people in Flagstaff who support me. Tell them how much I appreciate it. It means a lot — you don't know how tough this can be until it happens.

Q: You've been doing this all your life. When do you say, "I've had my fill?"

Babbitt: Never. Never. The reason I'm here today is because I love this job and I'm going to keep doing it. We're making a lot of progress on big issues at the Grand Canyon, Arizona water issues, forest policy. This isn't distracting me from doing my job. I'm going to keep right up there, doing the best I know how.

Q: As far as potential for being appointed to the Supreme Court goes, is that still in your mind as an option?

Babbitt: I'm thinking about one thing right now, and that's my time as Secretary of Interior, doing this job to the best of my ability.

Q: Do all of the things that have been going on at the Grand Canyon — the Grand Canyon Flood, a mass transit plan to get people in and out of the park and a general management plan — help make it worth it?

Babbitt: The Grand Canyon is really a fabulous success story. We've made immense progress in game management, forest restoration, the re-regulation of the river, the mass transportation system. It's a really, really great golden age in management of the Grand Canyon. I'm very proud of what we've done in this administration and obviously eager to get it all done.

Q: You have Sen. McCain working on protecting the Grand Canyon, you have Sen. Jon Kyl working on forest restoration. Does it feel like you guys are crossing political lines and getting things done, setting some examples?

Babbitt: Yeah, you bet. It proves what we can do when we can sit down and look carefully at the problem and find common sense solutions.

By **BRUCE BARBITT**

CATARACT CREEK, MONTANA—It is late morning, the last day of summer. I am hiking through Glacier National Park in search of its namesake. So far, in vain.

Of course, all glaciers move—over geologic time. But during the last 100 centuries, the temperature rose fastest in this one, eroding 70% of the park's glacial area, driven by 10 of the hottest years on record. Are glaciers—Earth's storehouses of condensed water—shrinking unnaturally fast? As custodian of parks, that question haunts me, leads me higher.

Following maps to "the foot of Grinnell Glacier," I find only barren dry rock. A sign reads: *The glacier extended here in 1911.*

By then the industrial age was six decades old. Factories burned coal at an unprecedented rate. Henry Ford would soon begin mass production of the Model T, whose internal combustion engine would revolutionize the world—and its need to burn oil. Atmospheric carbon dioxide had increased 20 parts per million (ppm); temperatures rose .2 degrees.

Catching my breath, I continue up, where the air is thinner. Yet the carbon dioxide spewed up over Charles Dickens' London and spread around the Earth still hovers above. We cannot see, feel, smell, taste or sense these increases. So what do they mean?

A scientific consensus, including Nobel Prize winners, concluded that global warming is underway, and "the balance of evidence suggests a discernible human influence."

I drink from my canteen at the next sign: *The glacier reached here in 1937.* By then humans had concentrated another 15 ppm of carbon dioxide. Temperatures measured 57.0 degrees, .5 hotter than 1911.

The scientific conviction rests on a proved foundation: Atmospheric layers of

gases (water vapor, methane, nitrous oxide and carbon dioxide) let in sunlight then trap heat, much like car windows. Trouble comes when humans artificially pump up the volume to unnatural levels. Concentrating carbon dioxide "thickens the glass" to trap more heat. To do nothing is to leave children and grandchildren locked in a car on a hot day with the windows sealed tight.

I wipe sweat from my face at the next sign: *The glacier reached here in 1968.* By then humanity concentrated another 15 ppm of Carbon dioxide; Earth measured 57.2 degrees, .3 degrees hotter than 1937. Can we "crack open the windows" in time? Looking around, I know it was easier to protect Glacier National Park from logging or development than it will be to stop its glaciers from shrinking. Can we "think global, act local" regarding climate change?

No. But we can invert the slogan to think about what we may lose locally, then act at a global forum. That forum comes in Kyoto, Japan, seven weeks hence, where 165 nations will try to reach agreement on binding targets and timetables to reduce emissions.

Another 200 feet higher, another sign: *The glacier was here in 1979.* In one decade, humans added 15 ppm of carbon dioxide; Earth's temperature hit 57.4, another .2 degrees hotter.

How we reach those emissions targets can be market-based. For example, the Environmental Protection Agency's emissions-permit trading system is reducing acid rain 30% faster than expected, at 10% of the projected cost. Rewarding efficiency spurs new technology, growth and jobs around the world.

But industry underestimates its own capacity. Facing environmental challenges—clean air, unleaded fuel, acid-free rain, ozone without Freon—multinational corporations band together like a Greek chorus to predict job losses, soaring fuel prices, economic doom. The loss of Styrofoam cups made with chlorofluorocarbons, they once warned, meant the end of civilization.

Just as tobacco companies hired "scientists" in white lab coats to assure cigarettes do not cause cancer, industries (with

notable exceptions like GM and British Petroleum) showcase in-house "skeptics for hire" to create the illusion of scientific uncertainty. Their \$13-million ad campaign argues that the U.S. must do nothing until matched by countries like Nigeria (annual per capita income: \$395) or Bangladesh (\$224) who emit 10 tons of carbon dioxide to every 500 from the U.S.

The glacier appears ahead. I cut the distance in half. Another decade, another 15 ppm of carbon dioxide. By 1989, Earth's temperature rose .2 degrees, to 57.6 Fahrenheit.

But in 1989, the U.S. signed the Montreal Protocol, which phased out the use of ozone-destroying Freon and chlorofluorocarbons. Led by industrial nations and followed by developing countries, it was a huge success, a model for Kyoto.

I check my watch. Noon. Last year Earth averaged 57.9 degrees, or 1.6 degrees hotter than in 1850. Atmospheric carbon dioxide now measures 360 ppm; that's 30% higher than at the start of the industrial era, higher, in fact, than in the past 160,000 years. In half a century, that could double.

My shirt is damp. The glacier is melting before my eyes, flowing to the sea, drop by drop. A sign: *In 2030 these glaciers may be gone.*

No one asserts mankind alone caused ice glaciers to melt and sea levels to rise up in 10 inches this century. But we have undeniably created conditions that accelerate the process. Recall the Book of Job, where the Creator spoke out of the whirlwind after Job's suffering, demanding:

Where were you when I planned the Earth?

When I closed the sea with barriers and set its boundaries . . .

Have you seen where the snow is stored or visited the storehouse of hail,

Which I keep for the day of terror, the final hours of the world?

As we reset the sea's boundaries and liquidate glacial storehouses, this passage is not a prophesy of doom, but a call for humility. A call for action. A call at this moment in geologic time.

Bruce Barbitt is the secretary of the Interior.



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of the Secretary
For Immediate Release: March 14, 1997

Contact: Mike Gauldin
202/208-6416

Yellowstone Bison Body Count Continues to Climb

*Harsh winter, shooting by Montana state riflemen
claim almost two-thirds of nation's last wild bison herd*

Nearly half of the bison herd that roamed Yellowstone National Park have died so far as a result of the twin onslaughts of a harsh winter and the state of Montana's controversial policy of shooting bison which venture out of the park searching for food.

The Yellowstone Herd included an estimated 3200-3500 animals at the beginning of the winter season, but this week only an estimated 1300-1500 surviving bison could be accounted for based on an aerial survey earlier this week of the park and adjacent National Forest land. So far this winter 1,059 bison, about a third of the original herd, has been sent to slaughterhouses or shot by Montana state riflemen.

Montana has reported killing about 100 bison on public and private land since February 26, when Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt sent the Governor of Montana a letter urging him to stop the killing and work together to identify immediate solutions aimed at saving the bison.

"This needless and unnecessary shooting of Yellowstone bison must stop now," said Babbitt. "The continued killing of bison by the State of Montana is threatening the future of America's free roaming wild herd."

The bison at Yellowstone is the last remnant of the free-roaming wild herd of the American west, a national symbol of the nation's commitment to conservation. The unusually severe winter has driven a number of bison outside the boundary of Yellowstone in search of food. When bison roam outside of the park area, they are ordered shot by the State of Montana.

"The unacceptable killing of bison must stop. Between the ice and snow and what's left of the harsh winter weather yet to come, and the continued killing by Montana, there is cause for serious concerns of just how many bison will survive," said Babbitt.

To date there are no documented findings or cases of cattle contracting brucellosis from bison in the wild. Although elk and bison both can carry brucellosis, Montana allows elk to roam free.

BISON & BRUCELLOSIS IN THE GREATER YELLOWSTONE AREA Scientific Background

Bison Fundamentals: More than 30 million wild and free-ranging bison (*Bison bison*) once roamed the West. Yet by 1902 only a remnant population of 23 wild bison remained in Yellowstone National Park. That year, bison were translocated from domesticated herds in Montana and Texas to Yellowstone. These and the remaining animals formed the foundation for the current wild bison population found in the United States.

Yellowstone National Park is a harsh winter environment for bison. Cold is not a major concern because bison thermoregulate. In addition, hot springs and other thermal features aid their survival. However, one of the most significant challenges for bison in Yellowstone is deep snow. Bison have saved their energy by using plowed roads and compacted snowmobile trails that facilitate their travels especially to winter range. These energy savings and easier access to winter range, over the past seventeen years, are factors contributing to bison population increases.

The 1996-1997 winter in Yellowstone National Park has delivered dense, compacted, rock-hard snow that has made the traditional bison feeding areas unavailable. This situation has set the stage for natural population adjustments. The 1996 summer bison herd of roughly 3500, approximately a quarter occupying the northern range, were confronted with the winter of 1997.

Wild, free ranging bison do not recognize political boundaries. In search of scarce food resources in the 1996-1997 winter, bison move along the energy efficient snowmobile trails and groomed roads that lead the bison to their traditional winter range found at lower elevations. To date, more than 1,000 bison have been shot or sent to slaughter during the winter of 1997. Additional animals have died due to the harsh winter weather and other natural processes. Based on recent aerial surveys, the bison population is currently about 1,300.

Brucellosis Fundamentals: Brucellosis is a contagious bacterial disease caused by various species of the bacteria *Brucella* which infects domestic animals, wildlife, and humans worldwide. In North America the primary livestock hosts of *Brucella* are cattle, goats, swine, and sheep. The principal North American wildlife hosts are bison, elk, caribou, reindeer, and feral and exotic swine. Brucellosis may also occur in carnivores, including members of the dog family.

Brucellosis in Yellowstone National Park bison was first reported in 1917 and an endemic infection has persisted since that time. Approximately 45 percent of the current bison herd tests seropositive for the antibody to *Brucella*. However, not all seropositive animals are currently infected with the bacterium. The original source of infection is unknown; however, *Brucella abortus* was introduced to North America with imported cattle. Therefore, the bacteria probably was transmitted from domestic livestock to bison. Many elk residing in the Greater Yellowstone Area also test serologically positive for brucellosis. The percentage of animals testing positive varies from location to location within the Greater Yellowstone Area and may be related in part to the concentration of animals on winter feed grounds.

Brucellosis is typically transmitted through ingestion. The *Brucella* bacteria are transmitted in aborted tissues, reproductive tissues and discharges, especially just prior to, during, or soon after abortion or live birth. The bacterium may also be shed in milk for variable lengths of time. Although transmission has been shown to occur between and among cattle, bison, and elk under experimental conditions, the risk of transmission of brucellosis between bison and cattle in the wild has not been determined. There is disagreement over the primary means of brucellosis transmission among bison and current data are insufficient to resolve this issue.

Brucellosis in cattle is characterized by abortion, infertility, reduced milk production, and other reproductive

problems. Although on occasion abortion may occur in wild bison herds, brucellosis does not prevent the growth of the Yellowstone bison herd.

In humans, brucellosis was formerly known as undulant fever, a disease that is rarely fatal. Livestock and slaughter industry workers, veterinarians, and consumers of unpasteurized milk and products made from it have the highest risk of contracting the disease. If properly cooked, meat from infected animals is not a health risk. There have been two documented transmissions of brucellosis to humans from elk in Montana. The transmission arose from individuals handling elk fetuses and membranes.

There is no effective treatment or cure for animals infected with *Brucella*. However, a preventative brucellosis vaccine (Strain 19) has been developed for use in cattle. Its primary use is to increase herd immunity. On average it is 65 to 70 percent effective in cattle. The effectiveness of Strain 19 on captive bison is less than that for cattle. Two other vaccines, *B. Neotomae* and strain RB51, are currently under study. Strain RB51 has been licensed for use in cattle calves only. Initial trials of RB51 in captive, pregnant bison caused some bison to abort when given a dose via an inoculation route that had been proven safe in pregnant cattle. However, additional tests of the safety and effectiveness of RB51 on bison are underway. Methods for brucellosis prevention in wildlife including bison, using techniques currently employed on cattle have not proven to be effective. Currently, domestic cattle can be effectively inoculated against brucellosis-bison can not.

Knowledge Required: Combating brucellosis in wildlife populations such as the bison of Yellowstone National Park requires policies that are built upon a solid foundation of science. The National Academy of Sciences has agreed to undertake an independent study of the scientific issues associated with the brucellosis problem. Key elements of the study will address:

- o The transmission of *Brucella* among cattle, bison, elk, and other wildlife species;
- o The relationship, if any, between the bison population dynamics and brucellosis;
- o The ability of serology testing to estimate true infectiousness;
- o The efficacy and safety of existing vaccines for target and non-target species and the need for new (including bison-specific) vaccines;
- o The nature, and likely success or limitations, of a wild animal vaccination program; and
- o Optimal approaches to reducing the risk of transmission to cattle and among wildlife.

Secretary Bruce Babbitt has requested The National Academy of Sciences complete its study by October 1, 1997.

proposals and long-term solutions.

- Contrary to Montana's public statements that they are being "selective" in their shooting of bison in the West Yellowstone area, Montana has shot bulls and calves without knowing whether they were disease-free or not.
- If APHIS and NPS contingency proposals are not adopted by Montana, the Interim Plan would allow Montana to continue shooting most, if not all, bison in the West Yellowstone area of the Gallatin National Forest.
- The National Park Service has not removed bison, by shooting or slaughter, since February 13, 1997. Because NPS is doing all it can to protect the remaining bison herd, NPS will only shoot bison for humanitarian reasons (i.e., injury) or to protect against imminent harm to life or property.
- There are no cattle in the West Yellowstone area and cattle will not be returned to the area before summer. Any potential conflicts with cattle can be resolved by ensuring that cattle are managed to provide a sufficient time interval after the return of bison to the Park to avoid a significant risk of contact between bison and domestic cattle.
- There is no safe and effective vaccine for brucellosis in bison. Use of cattle vaccines in bison causes bison to abort their calves.

Bison Fundamentals

- The Yellowstone bison herd is the largest free-roaming bison herd and a national symbol of the nation's commitment to conservation. The National Park Service brought the last 23 wild bison back from the brink of extinction to return them to their place in the ecosystem of Yellowstone.
- The NPS estimates that about 1300 bison remain in Yellowstone National Park and adjacent National Forest land. Instead of an "overpopulation" of bison, at this point the NPS is concerned that the bison population may drop to critical levels if continued shooting adds to the expected winter mortality.
- An unusually harsh winter has forced bison out of the sanctuary of Yellowstone National Park and on to surrounding lands that historically served as their winter range. Snowpack in the park is 200% above normal. National Forest lands around the park, where bison are being shot, were established in part to protect winter range for the wildlife of the park.
- 1059 bison have been killed so far to protect cattle from an undefined risk of infection that might be present if cattle were to come into close contact with bison. There is currently no imminent threat of cattle coming in contact with bison. Under the Interim Bison Management Plan, Montana has slaughtered 504 bison (including 464 captured by the National Park Service). Montana has shot 548 bison. NPS has destroyed 7 bison due to injuries sustained during capture or shooting operations.
- Since January 30, the National Park Service, with USDA's Forest Service and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), has asked Montana to stop the killing of bison around Yellowstone National Park on National Forest lands, and to minimize Montana's killing of bison on private land around the Park. NPS, APHIS and Forest Service asked Montana to allow bison to roam free on National Forest lands because bison need to disperse over a wider area while their winter range in the Park is largely covered with ice and snow.
- Though elk and bison both carry brucellosis, Montana allows elk to roam free, and supports public hunting on public lands to control their numbers. Wyoming supports public hunting of bison on National Forest land adjacent to Yellowstone.
- Although transmission of brucellosis has been shown to occur between and among cattle, bison, and elk under experimental conditions, the risk of transmission between bison and cattle in the wild has not been determined.
- Montana has shot over 135 bison on public lands in the West Yellowstone area since January 30, when APHIS informed Montana that such shooting was not necessary to protect the State's brucellosis-free cattle rating. Montana is not caught between conflicting federal agencies; USDA and DOI are committed to reasonable contingency

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NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 12, 1996

Lisa Guide (O) 202/208-6416

STATEMENT OF INTERIOR SECRETARY BRUCE BABBITT FIRST GRANT AGREEMENT FROM 1996 FARM BILL FOR EVERGLADES RESTORATION

Today is an important day in the latest phase of history for the Florida Everglades. We spent the last 100 years draining and paving it. We spent the last few decades talking about fixing it. Today our commitment to restoring the Everglades takes a big, tangible leap forward.

Today the South Florida Water Management District and the Department of the Interior will enter into a grant agreement for the first installment on an expenditure of \$200 million provided for Everglades Restoration in the 1996 Farm Bill.

With this agreement, \$18.4 million in matching federal funds will be made available to the District to buy lands in the East Coast Buffer. The four properties purchased are a 1,658 acre parcel in Palm Beach County, a 197 acre parcel in northwestern Dade County, and two parcels of 94 and 277 acres in southwestern Broward County. These lands, and others the District has and will acquire in this area, will serve critical water storage and other restoration purposes, including rehydration of the Everglades.

The purchase of these properties will give the Everglades a new lease on life.

The acquisition of these lands for water preserve areas, along with lands in the Everglades Agricultural Area, was the highest priority recommendation of the intergovernmental South Florida Everglades Restoration Task Force for the use of the Farm Bill funds. These acquisitions were also the highest priority of the Governor's Commission for a Sustainable South Florida which represents all levels of government and leaders in the environmental community and agricultural and development industries in Florida.

This action represents my commitment to follow the recommendations of these Floridians involved in preserving and restoring the Everglades. It also furthers the Clinton Administration's full partnership with the State of Florida announced by Vice President Gore at Everglades National Park last February.

The partnership we began with the State of Florida three years ago to join forces and save the Everglades is strengthened by this agreement we reach today with the South Florida Water Management District.

-DOI-



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

For Immediate Release: July 26, 1996

DOI: John Wright 202/208-6416

DOT: Bill Mosley 202/366-5571

NATURAL QUIET WILL BE RESTORED TO GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK UNDER CLINTON ADMINISTRATION PROPOSAL

"Aircraft flying at low altitudes over national parks can, if not properly managed, mar the natural beauty of the parks and create significant noise problems as well."

President Clinton

Earth Day, April 22, 1996

Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña in consultation with Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt today announced a notice of proposed rulemaking designed to reduce noise from aircraft used for sightseeing tours over Grand Canyon National Park. The proposed rule will be issued by the Department of Transportation today and published in the Federal Register next week.

"This proposal makes good on the President's promise to restore natural quiet to the Grand Canyon while still permitting sightseeing access," Peña said. "The proposed rule, if implemented, will ensure both aviation safety and an unforgettable visitor experience."

"When the final rule is fully implemented, visitors will be able to experience the immense quiet that Major John Wesley Powell and his expedition found when they encountered the Grand Canyon over a hundred years ago," said Babbitt. "As a boy growing up in Flagstaff, Arizona, the Grand Canyon was my backyard. I believe most Americans, regardless of where they grew up, consider the Grand Canyon a unique treasure that belongs to all of us and should be protected. This proposed rule is a great first step toward resolving this important issue."

The rule proposes to expand and create new flight-free zones over the park. Compared to an existing 45 percent in such zones, it would increase flight-free areas to 87 percent of the park. In addition, commercial sightseeing flights would be prohibited from operation during the hours of 6 p.m. and 8 a.m. during the summer season, and 5 p.m. to 9 a.m. during the winter season.

The proposed rule seeks public comments on a range of options for establishing a framework to restore natural quiet to the park, including various ways of capping existing sightseeing operations and limiting the number of aircraft operating in the park at various times of day.

The rule specifically proposes to a two-year interim cap on the number of flights at the level established during the period August 1, 1995, through July 31, 1996, so that flights will not

- more -

increase while a comprehensive noise management plan is being developed. Public comment also is sought on whether to extend the freeze or cap on new flights to five years or more, on how to structure it, and on what alternatives should be considered.

The proposed rule is the first step in implementing a commitment made by President Clinton on Earth Day, to reduce noise of sightseeing aircrafts flying over one of the nations most precious national parks.

"Secretary Peña has done a remarkable job on this proposed rulemaking," said Babbitt. "This rulemaking will serve the goals of protecting national treasures like the Grand Canyon while making reasonable accommodation elsewhere for legitimate competing interests."

The public review and comment period will be open for 60 days. Copies of the proposed rule can be obtained by submitting a request to the Federal Aviation Administration, 800 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, D.C. 20591, or by calling (202) 267-9677.



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 12, 1996

Stephanie Hanna (O) 202/208-6416

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR BRUCE BABBITT ON ANNOUNCEMENT BY PRESIDENT CLINTON THAT WILL CLOSE MINE ON OUTSKIRTS OF YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

President Clinton's announcement today that the New World Mine, just outside Yellowstone National Park, will not be developed, should bring a great sense of relief to every American who cares about our oldest and most beloved national park. The United States and Crown Butte Mining Company have reached an agreement to suspend plans for mining at the New World site effective immediately.

This agreement will begin the final chapter to close off a great environmental threat, not only to Yellowstone, but to wilderness, a Wild and Scenic River, to threatened and endangered wildlife, watersheds and groundwater. There are many places where mining is suitable, but not in fragile landscapes of such great natural beauty.

The Department of the Interior has a lot at stake in the area. We are responsible for the unique landscape and wildlife resources of Yellowstone National Park, as well as for the migratory birds and threatened and endangered species whose habitat would have been harmed by the New World Mine. The Department has worked hard to assure that these threats will be eliminated. The best solution is the no mining solution, and we will follow up President Clinton's announcement by pressing forward to complete the land withdrawals that are necessary to protect the area from any future mining proposals.

The New World Mine was proposed in an area already heavily contaminated by past mining activities. Hazardous substances such as mercury, arsenic, lead, zinc, sulfides, barium and cadmium have been released into creeks, wetlands, groundwater and downstream areas for more than a century. Under the agreement, Crown Butte has pledged to clean up much of the contamination from historic mining activities on its lands. Funding will also be made available to restore or acquire equivalent natural resources injured by releases of contaminants from the site. The Department of the Interior is trustee for many of these resources.

Part of the legal underpinning for the New World Mine proposal was the 1872 Mining Law. This antiquated legal relic from the days of Ulysses S. Grant gives away public lands for about \$5 per acre with little protection for the environment. The New World Mine proposal emphasizes the need for Congress to reform this antiquated law to ensure that precious environmental and scenic resources, and the wildlife that inhabit them, receive the protection they deserve.

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Today's agreement will stand as a lasting tribute to the Clinton Administration, and the skilled negotiators from the White House and numerous federal agencies who worked thousands of hours to find a way to protect the sensitive and beautiful landscape in and around Yellowstone National Park from mining operations at the New World Mine.

-DOI-

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Jackson Hole, Wyoming)

For Immediate Release
12, 1996

August

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN ANNOUNCING AGREEMENT TO SAVE NATIONAL PARK
FROM MINE DEVELOPMENT

Yellowstone National Park
Wyoming

11:25 A.M. MDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. This is not the hardest speech I ever had to give. (Laughter.) What a happy day. Let me thank you, Sue Glidden, for all the work you've done. Just before she came up here one of the folks sitting back here with us said, well, "Now, what are you going to do?" And she said, "Now I have my life back." I'm sure she'll find something to do with it. Highly productive.

Thank you very much, Mike Clark, for all the great work you have done. Thank you, Mike Finley and Mark Jenson and all the people at Yellowstone who do such a magnificent job preserving our nation's great treasure. I'd like to thank John Schmidt and Jim Pipkin. Ian Bayer, thank you very much for what you said and for what you've done.

I can't say enough to thank the other people in the administration -- Katie McGinty who has been wonderful about this. And you mentioned the Vice President -- I thank you very much. We have lunch once a week and at least every other lunch I asked him or he reported to me on whether this was ever going to get done or not. So in the middle of Bosnia and the budget and everything, we were -- for one year -- I know more about this some days than I wish I had known. (Laughter.)

Thank you, Jack Core Thomas*. I'd like to thank some other people who are here, and a couple who aren't. Thank you, Senator Birch Bayh, for your role in this. I want to thank my good friends, Congressman Pat Williams and Congressman Bill Richardson for working on this. Bill Richardson has been making peace all around the world the last two years, but he found time

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to do this as well.

I want to thank Senator and Mrs. Rockefeller who came up with me. Jay and Sharon Rockefeller are your neighbors; as you know, they live near the Grand Tetons and are very concerned about it. And I want to thank former Wyoming Governor Mike Sullivan, and his wife, Jane Sullivan, who came up with me and they've been longtime friends of Hillary's and mine.

And I want to thank all of you who were in that meeting with Hillary and with me a year ago. We learned a lot. It was a great occasion for us and we've relived it several times. I also want to say a special word of recognition for the two families that are behind me. We just hauled them up here. (Laughter.) They're laughing -- are they agreeing with me? (Laughter.) They are the Franklin family, from Sioux Falls; and the Pamprin family from Green Bay, Wisconsin. (Applause.) I asked them to come here -- ask them to stand up here. (Applause.)

I asked them to come to make this point: This fight was not simply waged by those of you who live here for your families and your community and your future. You waged this fight for all the people of the United States and, indeed, the people of the world who love and believe in the preservation of our natural resources who come and participate. And I thought it was important that somebody be reminded somehow by their presence here that there are millions and millions and millions of people who will directly benefit from the decision we announce today. And you're seeing some of them -- (applause.)

Let me say, for all kinds of reasons I'm also glad to see that John Denver is here today, and thank you very much for coming. (Applause.) And if you want to sing, I won't talk. (Laughter.) We're glad to have you here.

Hillary and Chelsea and I came back here this year, drawn by the magnet of this magnificent place, reconnecting something that I think is in all of us -- the yearning to have a bond with the nature that God has given us. Yellowstone, as all of you know -- but as I think we should remind the country today -- our first national park has our largest herd of elk and bison; more than 200 geysers; marvelous, pristine lakes and majestic mountains; places where we can teach our children about the power and the mysteries of nature.

Yellowstone was entrusted into our care as a people, a whole people, more than 120 years ago now. And today we are saying to the rest of the world, to the rest of our country and to future generations of America, we have been worthy of that trust and we are giving it on to our children and our children's.

children. (Applause.)

Again, I want to thank those who were part of the Yellowstone dialogue. I want to thank Senator Baucus, who could not be here today, for his five-point plan for maximum protection of the park before the proposed mine could go forward. I want to thank the members of my Cabinet who are not here, including, especially Secretary Babbitt and Secretary Glickman and EPA Administrator Browner and Attorney General Reno, because they all supported this, as well. And I wish they could be here with us to celebrate this day. (Applause.)

The agreement that has been reached with Crown Butte to terminate this project altogether proves that everyone can agree that Yellowstone is more precious than gold. (Applause.) As has been said before, this is a victory for everyone involved -- the American people and our future win because Yellowstone will be protected from the environmental hazards of mining. Crown Butte's shareholders win because their property rights will be protected. We are all protected from years and years of expensive and bitter litigation. And while there is still work to do, and work in which members of the general public must and will be involved, we are going to move forward. And this signing today means that it will come out the way so many of you have worked for, for so many years.

Mining jobs are good jobs, and mining is important to our national economy and to our national security. But we can't have mines everywhere, and mines that could threaten any national treasures like Yellowstone -- that's too much to ask of the American people. The company has recognized this, and we thank them. (Applause.) Again, I want to emphasize they are not only walking away from a gold mine, they have also agreed to finance the clean-up of historic mining pollution that predates their work at the site. That is a very important part of this agreement, and the company deserves a lot of credit for it and we ought to appreciate what they're doing. (Applause.)

Again, I want to thank Ian Bayer and Joe Baylis of Crown Butte for their extraordinary commitment. Let me thank the members of Congress again, those who are here and Senator Baucus, who isn't; and, also, my senior Senator and a great friend of Yellowstone and the nation's environment, Senator Dale Bumpers, who very much wanted to be with us today. (Applause.)

I also want to say in closing that the way this was done should become a model for America's challenges, not only in the environment but in other areas as well.

When we deal with problems of national

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significance that have to be resolved by people who understand the particulars and who will be most affected by it, it will be well to remember how this was done. Yes, I did say that I wanted to preserve this park. And, yes, I did put the Vice President and Katie McGinty and the Cabinet on it. But the reason it worked, especially given the way the mining law works, as all of you know, is that we had a collaborative process that involved people reflecting all the interests involved who worked in good faith. That is the way we have to meet America's challenges as we move into this new century.

We don't have to make a choice between the environment and the economy. We don't have to have every single challenge we face drag on forever and ever and ever, into court suit after court suit after court suit, being fodder for politicians that campaign from rhetoric that divides us instead of unites us. All of you have proved that America can be better than that. This is a very, very great day for our country not only because what we have done is right, but because of the way we have done it. That is right as well.

When Yellowstone was created as the world's first national park over 120 years ago, it was as a result of a bipartisan agreement and a consensus which existed at that time that this place was too precious not to be preserved. God created the mountains of Yellowstone and the minerals beneath them, but it is up to us to preserve them. You have done that today. And you have done it in the right way.

So I ask you today as you leave here to make sure that we all teach our children and grandchildren the lessons we have learned today; to make sure that future generations of our country never forget that we have something here we can never replace, but also never forget that when we meet each other across the lines that divide us in good faith, with honest, open hearts and a real desire to move forward together, we can do it.

We celebrate that today. And as your President, I am very grateful for every single one of you who played a role in this historic moment for America. Thank you and God bless you all.
(Applause.)

Now I can't forget the actual purpose for which we came. (Laughter.) Katie, Mike and Ian are going to sign the agreement. (The agreement is signed.) We're adjourned. (Applause.)

END

11:38 A.M. MDT

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PRESIDENT CLINTON

PARKS FOR TOMORROW



*A PLAN TO RESTORE AND PRESERVE
AMERICA'S NATIONAL PARKS*

APRIL 22, 1996

68

Our National Parks are places of wonder, recreation and enjoyment for all Americans. The Clinton Administration's "Parks for Tomorrow" is a comprehensive plan for restoring and preserving our National Park system.

Our "crown jewel" parks, like Yellowstone and Yosemite, are the destination point for millions of American families for their annual vacations. Our historical parks, national seashores and other units of the park system are extensions of America's backyards, hosting countless family day outings and school class trips.

Soaring visitation levels approaching 300 million annually have accelerated wear on park roads, buildings and landscapes. The Clinton Administration's plan, "Parks for Tomorrow," will protect and rebuild America's park system.

The plan includes more than 20 different actions to be implemented through either legislative proposals or Presidential directives. Following is a complete explanation of the President's proposal, which includes: *Executive Actions, New Initiatives and Action Plan on Pending Legislation.*

EXECUTIVE ACTIONS

AIRCRAFT OVERFLIGHTS

The noise of sightseeing aircraft at low altitudes over national parks is a problem of significant proportions to the millions of visitors who spend their vacations in these magnificent places. While commercial sightseeing aircraft is the only way to see parks for some visitors, there are 30-40 parks facing various types of overflight problems, including Grand Canyon National Park where substantial restoration of natural quiet is mandated by law, parks in Hawaii, and many in the intermountain west.

ACTION: Secretary Pena, in cooperation with Secretary Babbitt, will build upon recent cooperative efforts between the Departments of Transportation and Interior by issuing proposed regulations to place appropriate limits on the noise caused by low-flying sightseeing aircraft overflights over the Grand Canyon National Park, completing rule-making by the end of 1996 and completing "the substantial restoration of natural quiet" within 12 years. Regulations will also be developed to manage overflights over other priority parks, including Rocky Mountain National Park.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

For fiscal years 1994-97, the National Park Service (NPS) estimates a \$470 million backlog in rehabilitation and restoration of thousands of historic structures and cultural landscapes in the national parks.

ACTION: Secretary Babbitt will report to the President within six months on options outside of the traditional appropriations process for preserving historic park structures. Such options should include the possibilities for partnerships with businesses, associations, and individuals in the private sector.

ROAD AND TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

The number of vehicles on park road systems is increasing at such a rate that roads are deteriorating faster than the NPS can maintain them. Too many pot holes, broken guard rails, deteriorating road beds, and simple overcrowding can make for bad vacations.

ACTION: The President is directing Secretary Babbitt, in cooperation with Secretary Pena, to develop a plan for a comprehensive effort to improve public transportation in the national parks. This plan will include design of pilot programs in the Grand Canyon, Zion and Yosemite National Parks.

NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION (NPF)

Congress created the National Park Foundation in 1967 to receive gifts and make disbursements to benefit the parks, but left in doubt its ability to solicit donations and other fundraising techniques to support the parks. The Foundation has expressed interest in various options to enhance its effectiveness in providing appropriate private support for the national parks.

ACTION: The President is directing Secretary Babbitt to prepare within 30 days a specific proposal to invigorate the National Park Foundation's important role in fostering public-private partnerships.

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT AUTHORITY

Gives the NPS clearer authority to enter into contracts and agreements to share talent, gear, and ideas with local governments and entities to preserve and maintain parks.

ACTION: The President is directing Secretary Babbitt to prepare a legislative proposal to permanently extend cooperative agreement authority.

WILDERNESS IN THE PARKS

The fact that wilderness exists in America is a modern miracle, due in large measure to the foresight of citizen leaders earlier in this century, like Aldo Leopold and Howard Zahnizer, Bob Marshall and key Members of Congress in the 1960s. The National Park Service, and Presidents Nixon, Ford and Carter recommended wilderness designations in 17 national parks, covering some 5 million acres, which the Congress has never seriously considered. They include such well known places as Yellowstone, Glacier, Grand Teton, Great Smoky Mountains, Zion, Bryce Canyon, and Canyonlands National Parks.

ACTION: The President urges Congress to act on previous park wilderness recommendations and directs Secretary Babbitt to work with Congress to make any technical changes to these proposals during the legislative process.

POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE EXPANSION

In 1995, the National Park Service completed a study that recommended expanding the boundary of the Point Reyes National Seashore by 38,000 acres to protect the viewsheds of the park. Recognizing the benefits from continued private ownership of the large cattle ranches within the proposed expansion area, the study proposed only acquiring partial interests in land through voluntary conservation easements that would limit the type and amount of development that could take place on the property, while allowing existing and future ranching operations to continue. This consensual approach would protect both the interest of the public users of the area, and of the private owners of the lands.

ACTION: The President directs Secretary Babbitt to work with Congress to prepare and pass legislation that would allow the National Park Service to protect the scenic vistas surrounding Point Reyes National Seashore. In addition, the Secretary will use existing authority to make up to make minor boundary adjustments to the Park and use up to \$1 million to acquire easements within the revised boundaries.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND

Grants administered by the National Park Service to state and local governments and Indian Tribes from the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF), will assist every state and many cities, counties and localities with the preservation of local historic properties, which are not owned or operated by the federal government.

ACTION: The President directs Secretary Babbitt to prepare a legislative proposal to reauthorize the Historic Preservation Fund through 2005.

ACTION PLAN FOR PENDING LEGISLATION

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE 1997 BUDGET

This is an increase of \$181 million over the estimated amount for FY 1996, which includes critical increases to continue the restoration of the Everglades (the most threatened ecosystem in the country), to begin the restoration of the native salmon runs of the Elwha River in Olympic National Park, and increases in park operating budgets to provide better visitor services and protection of cultural and natural resources.

ACTION: The President calls on Congress to enact the FY 1997 budget for the National Park Service fully and on time.

FEE REFORM

The National Park Service budget alone cannot provide adequate funds to maintain the parks for visitors. Currently, there are numerous limitations and prohibitions on fee collections in the parks that need revision. Some of these restrictions should be lifted, while keeping park entrance fees low and retaining the current cap on fees for the elderly and free entrance for children.

ACTION: The President calls on Congress to pass the NPS fee legislation that supports the Administration's 1997 Budget, which would remove inappropriate restrictions and return 80 percent of revenue to the parks.

CONCESSIONS REFORM

Private companies enjoy the privilege of operating the hotels, restaurants, gift shops, boat and horseback tours, and other park visitor services, under contract to the National Park Service. Over \$650 million in gross receipts in 1994 were generated by 652 of these "concessioners," but they paid only a tiny fraction of this to the NPS for the privilege, and very little of it remains with the NPS to improve the parks. The 30-year-old Concessions Policy Act, which governs their operations in the parks is obsolete and needs reform to increase competition.

ACTION: The President calls on Congress to pass S. 309 (Bennett/Bumpers) with the Administration's amendments.

NATIONAL HERITAGE AREAS SYSTEM AND RELATED LANDS

There are many beautiful natural and cultural places across America which are significant and should be restored or preserved, but cannot and should not be turned over to the federal government. These places can often be best protected and most wisely used if they are under local management and have local leadership and decision-making about their care, with assistance from the National Park Service.

ACTION: The President calls on Congress to pass the Administration's heritage

initiative, which authorizes the Park Service to provide technical assistance and small grants to state and local heritage areas.

PRESIDIO

Across America, as more and more people live their lives in urban areas, open space in our cities is increasingly in short supply. In October 1994, the Presidio of San Francisco became part of the National Park System when it was transferred from the Department of Defense. A bill, H.R. 1296 (Pelosi), is moving through Congress to create a Presidio Trust. The Trust will manage the property and reduce its cost to the federal government by leasing many of the buildings found on the Presidio while preserving historic structures and ensuring the continued preservation of the scenic beauty and natural character of the area.

ACTION: The President calls on Congress to protect this unique resource by passing legislation with the Administration's amendments.

STERLING FOREST

New York is facing a stark choice -- either make major expenditures on chemical treatment of water, or protect the remaining natural watershed which lies just outside New York City. This 18,000-acre tract in New York State, known as the Sterling Forest, is critical to the water supply and open space needs of the millions of Americans who reside within 50 miles.

ACTION: The President calls on Congress to pass S. 223 (Bradley), a bill to authorize the NPS to participate in the acquisition of the Sterling Forest, sharing in the cost to the extent that it will protect the federal interest in the Appalachian Trail.

OLD FAITHFUL PROTECTION ACT

One of the best known icons of the national parks is *Old Faithful*, the steam geyser of Yellowstone. What is not well known is that the geothermal "plumbing" system that supplies the water and heat to the geysers, hot springs, mud pots and other features of Yellowstone extends well outside the boundary of the park, and threatened with development that could divert or disrupt the delicate system controlling the surface activity. Legislation is necessary to ensure true protection.

ACTION: The President calls on Congress to pass H.R. 723, the Old Faithful Protection Act (Williams)

MINOR BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS

Park boundaries are set in law when a park is established, but often prove to have been drawn by Congress without all relevant information, with the result that over time the NPS must go back to Congress for amendments to law to fix boundary problems. This is often an unnecessary and burdensome process

ACTION: The President calls on Congress to pass generic legislation authorizing minor boundary adjustment.

MANAGEMENT OF MUSEUM PROPERTIES

The National Park Service preserves many millions of historic objects -- including some well-known ones, like the Liberty Bell, George Washington's wooden dentures and Thomas Edison's phonograph, as well as many others. The National Park Service needs authority to manage museum properties in the same professional manner that museums do.

ACTION: The President calls on Congress to pass H.R. 694 as reported by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

HOUSING AND LEASING

If the National Park Service is to continue to attract the "best and the brightest" young people to work for that agency, it needs to provide safe and sound housing for them in isolated locations where no other housing is available. The housing stock is old and deteriorating and in many cases is unsafe.

ACTION: Congress should pass legislation submitted by the Administration in May 1995 addressing housing and leasing for the National Park Service.



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 10, 1996

Stephanie Hanna (O) 202/203-6416

INTERIOR SECRETARY BABBITT RALLIES SUPPORT FOR RESTORATION OF FLOOD-RAVAGED HISTORIC C & O CANAL

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt today kicked off a broad-based community effort to repair the extensively-damaged C & O (Chesapeake & Ohio) Canal and adjacent towpath and historic structures.

The kick-off "Rally to Restore the C & O Canal" was held at the Great Falls visitors center (historic Great Falls Tavern) on the Maryland side of the Potomac River, at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, February 10.

Joining him at the rally were hundreds of representatives from organizations and clubs interested in saving the canal, as well as Secretary of Transportation Federico Pena; Senators Paul Sarbanes and Barbara Mikulski; Congresswoman Connie Morella; Maryland's Secretary of Natural Resources John Griffin; Montgomery County Executive Douglas Duncan; National Park Service Director Roger Kennedy; Flip Hagood, Director of the Student Conservation Corps; and C & O Park Superintendent Doug Faris.

The 185-mile canal, dating from the times of George Washington, is operated as a national historic park, and every year attracts millions of visitors, hikers, bikers, fishermen and a wide variety of boating enthusiasts. It flows through western Maryland: Harpers Ferry and Williamsport to Cumberland.

"This wonderful place survived the relentless tide of history: wars, highway expansion, periodic floods and the pressures of development," Secretary Babbitt said. "The knock-out blow it has suffered at the hands of January's severe flooding will be fatal unless the communities, organizations and each person who appreciates this unique resource joins together to save it." Secretary Babbitt also serves as Chairman of the National Park Foundation, chief fundraising organization for the National Park Service.

(more)

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS:

Bruce Babbitt
Secretary of the Interior

Federico Peña
Secretary of Transportation

Paul Sarbanes
(D) U.S. Senator - Maryland

Barbara Mikulski
(D) U.S. Senator - Maryland

Constance Morella
(R) U.S. Representative - Maryland

John Griffin
Maryland Secretary of Natural Resources

Douglas Duncan
Montgomery County Executive

Roger Kennedy
Director of the National Park Service

"Flip" Hagood
Director of Student Conservation Corps

Doug Faris
Superintendent of C&O National Historic
Park

FACT SHEET

C & O CANAL RESTORATION TOLL-FREE HOTLINE -- 1-800-434-9330

Concerned citizens can call **1-800-434-9330** to make a dollar contribution or volunteer time and services to assist in the restoration of the C & O Canal National Historical Park. Callers to the toll-free number may make tax-deductible, credit card contributions to the National Park Foundation, the official, nonprofit partner of the National Park Service, which has set up a special dedicated fund for the restoration effort.

Gifts to the **C&O Canal Restoration Fund** will be sent directly to the C&O Canal National Historical Park and used for the priority projects determined by the Park Superintendent.

People who use and care about the future of the Canal also should call this toll-free number to offer volunteer services, whether for indoor/outdoor labor or office work. The need for volunteers, particularly for some of the outdoor labor, will be great in the months ahead.

A coalition of community-based and national groups banded together to set up the hotline. Coalition members include: National Park Foundation, American Hiking Society, C&O Canal Association, National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Park Service, National Parks and Conservation Association, Potomac Conservancy, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Road Runners Club of America, and the Student Conservation Association.

Procall Communications of Beltsville, Maryland has generously provided the phone operators to take the 1-800 number calls.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 10, 1996
Contact: Nina Jaeger, 202-785-4500

NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION RAISES \$400,000 FOR C&O CANAL RESTORATION

Great Falls, MD -- At a community rally today, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, Chairman of the Board of the National Park Foundation, reported on the Foundation's progress in raising \$400,000 in one week from private contributions to aid the C&O Canal restoration effort. Babbitt organized the rally to bring together Washington, Maryland, and Virginia residents and community groups who use and enjoy the Canal and ask them to unite and form partnerships to help repair and clean up the flood-ravaged C&O National Historical Park.

As the official, nonprofit partner of the National Park Service, the National Park Foundation has been working closely with Secretary Babbitt and National Park Service Director Roger Kennedy to bring together public and private resources to aid in restoration work. The restoration need involves stabilizing eroded areas, reconstructing Canal walls, repairing damaged stone work, cleaning up flooded historic buildings, and much more.

"I am very pleased and encouraged by the outpouring of private sector and individual support," said Babbitt. "Although the scope of the damage is daunting, through creative partnerships with the private sector, the Park Service may ultimately have the resources necessary to renew the Park to its former state."

The National Park Foundation is pleased to announce that major donations have been received from the Fannie Mae Foundation (\$100,000), Marriott International Inc. (\$100,000), the Mobil Foundation (\$100,000), and the Mars Foundation (\$50,000). Allegheny Power System, Lever Brothers Company, NBC-4, Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO), and The Walt Disney Company all have pledged in-kind contributions to assist the restoration. Five hundred individual donors have contributed nearly \$50,000 to the C&O Canal Restoration Fund in the past week. Babbitt thanked all private sector partners by name.

NPF President Jim Maddy applauded the generous response to the fund-raising drive and stated his confidence that the campaign would be successful: "I know that other area employers, philanthropic organizations, and individuals will want to join this critical effort."

At the rally, Secretary Babbitt urged Park users to call the newly established C&O Canal Restoration Effort hotline at -- 1-800-434-9330 -- to make a donation or offer volunteer services, whether for indoor/outdoor labor or office work.

The National Park Foundation is the private, nonprofit organization chartered by Congress in 1967 to channel private sector support to the nation's 369 National Parks. With its C&O Canal restoration fund-raising campaign, the Foundation aims to raise \$2 million dollars from individuals, area corporate employers, and private foundations to match the recent \$2 million dollar appropriation from Congress.



NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1996

THE WASHINGTON POST

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1996

Bruce Babbitt

We Can Rebuild the Canal

The C&O Canal is a wreck.

All along the 185 miles from Washington to Cumberland in the Appalachians, the recent floodwaters have washed away sections of the towpath, flooded lockhouses, and blown out locks and levees.

In the upstream reaches, the graceful aqueducts of hand-cut stone that carry the canal across Antietam Creek, Monocacy River and other tributaries are still threatened by high water and huge rafts of driftwood and ice.

The flood of 1996 comes at a very bad time in the history of the National Park Service.

One congressional committee is threatening to close down and sell off units of the system: "C&O Canal National Historical Park" is on the hit list of House closure bill ER 260. Still other committees are holding the Park Service hostage, threatening mayhem on all parks unless President Clinton agrees to more clear-cutting of old-growth forests in the Pacific Northwest and in Alaska.

At this rate, it could be that the ruins of the historic C&O will simply remain there as a symbol of how Congress has abandoned our National Park System.

There could, however, be a brighter outcome.

It is just possible that the friends of the C&O can rally support for the restoration of the canal and in the process awaken grassroots support for the National Park Service in its time of greatest need.

Every citizen who has ever spent a spring morning on the towpath above Georgetown, or lingered on a summer day at Great Falls, or visited the boat basin at Williamsport in a voice for the canal. It is the only canal in the country that is a public place from start to finish—an entire system from the great age of canal construction, a watercourse that helped move America over the Appalachians into the Ohio Valley and beyond to create a continental nation.

And some 3 million to 4 million Americans still experience that journey each year, walking, biking or riding the towpath that hugs the Potomac River. On this same path, mules once towed canal boats loaded with coal, cement, flour and barrels of whiskey through the Piedmont farm country, past the hallowed ground of Antietam, along the Blue Ridge to join the Shenandoah at Harpers Ferry, where John Brown met his fate.

To restore the canal in this time of fiscal austerity will require a vital partnership between Congress, the corporate sector and individual citizens, all pulling their share of the weight of restoration.

Congress last week authorized \$2 million in emergency restoration funds—a hopeful sign. But it must follow up by releasing the full Park Service budget from its crude attempts at extortion. It then can energize a new restoration partnership with two additional steps: Authorize the use of visitor fees for repair and pass meaningful concession reform.

Under existing law, the admission fees paid by park visitors do not stay in the National Park System; they flow straight to the Treasury. But Congress can and should change that law so park visitors can help restore our parks by allowing the Park Service to keep all or a portion of the fee increases in the park to finance restoration. In the case of the C&O, a \$1 increase in the existing \$4 per-car-fee for admission to Great Falls and other entry points would generate \$1 million each year for maintenance and restoration.

Second, it is an enduring scandal that Congress has forced the National Park Service to hand out park concessions for as little as 2 or 3 percent of gross revenue. Meaningful concession reform would enable the Park Service to raise real revenue for park restoration. There are dozens of historic buildings, lock houses and old mill buildings that could be leased out for bed and breakfast houses and other ser-

vices to the benefit of visitors and historic preservation alike.

The private sector must also help. Out West, Yosemite National Park receives nearly \$1 million per year from corporate and business supporters. There should be a similar level of support from the many businesses in Washington and on both sides of the Potomac in Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia.

In coming weeks, the National Parks Foundation, a private support group chartered by Congress, will mount a corporate support campaign designed to match congressional restoration appropriations dollar for dollar.

We can also help as individuals with both contributions and volunteer work in the restoration effort. The National Park Foundation accepts individual, tax-deductible donations for a C&O restoration effort. NPF is at 1101 17th St. NW, Suite 1102, Washington, D.C. 20036; the phone number is (202) 785-4500.

Once the damage assessment is complete and emergency stabilization is set, the long process of restoration will begin, and there will be plenty of opportunity for volunteers to make a real contribution in cleaning up and helping to repair stretches of the canal. The National Parks and Conservation Association, the Potomac Conservancy, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the C&O Canal Association are all working with the Park Service to coordinate volunteer efforts, which should be underway by early March.

I plan to be the first volunteer when the call goes out.

The C&O Canal is too valuable to lose to the ravages of time and weather. It is part of who we are as Americans, and it can be restored. Perhaps it may even be the landmark catalyst for what I call Restoration Partnerships, marking a new era of support for the National Park System all over America.

The writer is secretary of the interior.



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 9, 1996

Stephanie Hanna (O) 202/208-5416
Mary Helen Thompson

MEDIA ADVISORY

INTERIOR SECRETARY TO KICK OFF VOLUNTEER EFFORTS TO RESTORE FLOOD-RAVAGED HISTORIC C & O CANAL

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt will host a kick-off rally on Saturday, February 10, to ignite a broad-based and community effort to restore the extensively-damaged historic C & O (Chesapeake and Ohio) Canal.

The "C & O Restoration Rally" will highlight large and small-scale volunteer efforts and contributions that are already being offered, as well as provide information on how communities, organizations and individual volunteers can contribute time or financial donations to the restoration of the canal.

"The terrible winter weather in the east and midwest has created many victims," Babbitt said. "As Secretary of the Interior, it is not only my duty but my personal desire to do anything I can to ensure that damage to national park facilities, other conservation lands, and urban greenspaces is repaired as quickly as possible."

Babbitt will be joined by National Park Service Director Roger Kennedy, Senators Barbara Mikulski and Paul Sarbanes, Congresswoman Connie Morella and Montgomery County Executive Douglas Duncan as well as volunteers from the Student Conservation Association, the Boy and Girl Scouts of America and other groups already involved in conservation efforts.

The C & O Restoration Rally will be held outside the Visitors Center (Great Falls Tavern) at Great Falls, on the Maryland side of the Potomac. The visitors center is located at 11710 MacArthur Blvd., Potomac, Maryland. Due to extensive damage to the canal and adjacent support facilities, the event will be limited to media and participants. It will begin on Saturday at 10:00 a.m.

-DOI-

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 5, 1995

Stephanie Hanna (O) 202/208-6418

**STATEMENT BY DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR ON DESIGNATION OF YELLOWSTONE
NATIONAL PARK AS A WORLD HERITAGE SITE IN DANGER**

Today's decision by the World Heritage Committee to name Yellowstone National Park to the List of World Heritage Sites in Danger alerts the rest of the world to serious potential threats to natural resources in the world's first national park. In taking this action, the commission recognized that these are domestic issues and that we are seeking solutions through existing environmental laws and agency actions.

We share the goal of the World Heritage Committee to raise awareness of the need to protect this premier national park and to draw attention to potential and existing environmental threats. However, today's action does not supersede any U.S. law. It will also have no effect upon the orderly public process of developing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the proposed New World Mine that is now underway. This process will identify and analyze the potential impacts of the mine and a range of alternatives. We look forward to the publication of a draft EIS early in 1998, and the continuing public and federal agency review that will follow.

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DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

For Immediate Release
October 17, 1995

Contact: Paul Bledsoe (202) 208-3171 or
Mary Helen Thompson (202) 208-6416

BRUCE BABBITT TO TOUR APPOMATTOX COURT HOUSE; WARNS OF GOP BILL IN CONGRESS TO CLOSE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt will visit Appomattox Court House on Thursday, October 19, to emphasize the importance of preserving historic sites in the Old Dominion and the nation, and to warn Virginians of a bill in Congress to set up a commission to close national parks and historic sites.

"The battlefields of Virginia are sacred places," Babbitt said. "They are shrines to the most important period in our history. Yet many in Congress seem contemptuous of preserving them and other units of the national park system."

"Just last month, the House debated and rejected a commission to close national parks and historic sites. But then, just ten hours later, in the dead of night, the very same bill was sneaked onto key budget legislation by the Republican Congressional leaders. No discussion. No debate. Now a park closure bill may become law, risking more than ten sites in Virginia. I don't think that's what the people of Virginia voted for in the last election," said Babbitt.

H.R. 260, the bill to set up a park closure commission, was defeated by the House of Representatives on September 19 by a vote of 231 to 180. However, the bill was then attached to the general Congressional revenue bill which funds such items as medicare and is still pending.

At Appomattox Court House National Historic Site, Secretary Babbitt will meet with local business and community leaders and discuss the significance of the site with local junior high school students and other parks supporters.

The event will begin at 9:00 a.m., Thursday, October 19. Secretary Babbitt will be available to meet with members of the media immediately following the event.

Babbitt will also visit Norfolk, Richmond, Charlottesville and Old Town Alexandria in the three-day sweep of Virginia, discussing measures in Congress to close national parks and historic sites, allow billion-dollar giveaways of taxpayer mineral rights, weaken Clean Water Act protection, and eviscerate the Endangered Species Act.

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THE GOP vs. OUR NATIONAL PARKS
Are Great Smokies Next On Closure Hit List?
(790 words)

By Bruce Babbitt

Back on the campaign trail, Tennessee's former Governor Lamar Alexander made a crucial observation about his own party and the new GOP leadership in Congress:

"The Republicans in Washington," he warned, "are missing out on an historic opportunity to seize the high-ground on the environment. Instead of sounding like we want to close some of the national parks, we should be making the case for supporting them."

He's right of course. GOP lawmakers should "avoid rhetoric that drives a wedge between themselves and Americans who enjoy the outdoors." Trouble is, he's too late. The Republican party's unprecedented assault on the environment goes beyond rhetoric. The newly elected Congress already has a written agenda to close our national parks, and shows no hesitation to carry it out.

That agenda began on the eve of the 1994 election, Nov. 5, when Rep. James Hansen (R-Utah) told the Denver Post: "If we take over, we're going to do a Parks Closing Commission." Upon becoming Chairman of the House public lands subcommittee, Mr. Hansen clarified his position to a crowd in Albuquerque: "One hundred and fifty parks of the some 368 need to be dropped." Finally, in a letter to constituents, he wrote: "The question is not whether to close some parks but how to accomplish this goal."

His colleague, Rep. Joel Hefley (R-Colorado) quickly answered him by introducing H.R. 260, which sets up the Parks Closure Commission because, in Mr. Hefley's words, "Some of those silly parks don't make sense."

Among the "silly parks" in Tennessee that GOP bill has targeted for possible closure: Big South Fork National Recreation Area, Fort Donelson National Battlefield, Oben National Wild and Scenic River, Shiloh National Memorial Park, Andrew Johnson National Historic Site, Cumberland Gap National Historic Park and Stones River National Battlefield.

Every year, Tennessee's national parks collectively draw 18 million visitors, who spend \$69 per day, pump \$750 million into the state and local economy and create 11,241 jobs.

Yet two Tennessee Republicans in Congress -- John J. Duncan Jr. and James H. Quillen -- actually voted for this closure bill. As 1996 dawns, the bill remains alive and well and living in Congress. For closing national parks is not merely a rhetorical issue for the GOP on Capitol Hill. It's a legislative obsession.

As Mr. Alexander rightly observed, "we shouldn't be squeezing the great national parks as if they were just another inefficient federal project." And surely, GOP sponsors knew they would face a wrathful public if they tried to include the Great Smoky Mountains National Park on their hit list.

Or so I'd assumed. It turns out the GOP agenda is harsher than anyone had imagined.

In the current Interior appropriations bill, for example, the Republican leadership has included language ordering the closure of America's newest national park: the magnificent Mojave Preserve in the California desert. Little wonder President Clinton, at my urging, vetoed that bill. But Congress is still obsessed, their Mojave Desert closing language is still included as part of the Interior appropriations bill, and they're still asking President Clinton to sign that park out of existence.

No chance.

For this Administration believes in our National Park System; I've never heard anyone in Tennessee, or for that matter anywhere else in the country, say that we have too many parks.

Yet the GOP agenda presses on.

Just last week, Republican Governor of Arizona Fife Symington proposed that Congress abolish Grand Canyon National Park. He promised to take his crusade straight to Speaker Newt Gingrich. Once they can go after Grand Canyon, Great Smoky Mountains can't be too far behind.

So what's behind this crusade to close down our national parks? Out in the California desert the mining companies are unabashed: They want the Mojave park for mining.

In Grand Canyon, the last mining operation was finally closed down by a reluctant Congress in the 1960s; those companies are still lurking at the border, salivating for the chance to re-enter the park.

And at Great Smoky, where the great forests have grown back since the park was established in 1926, the timber companies would love to get their hands on those trees, with developers chasing right behind.

The Great Smokies of Tennessee boast 1,400 flowering plants, a hundred types of trees, mosses and lichens; their mists hide an understory of mountain laurel and rhododendron; the temperate forest is home to some of the rarest plants and animals in God's creation. In one session, the GOP Congress can destroy it all.

The people of Tennessee can't let it get to that point. The time is now at hand for all who care about our national parks to raise their voices, to recognize the danger, and to explain how important these parks are to local economies like Gatlinburg, to state pride, to our spiritual well being and to our future.

Teddy Roosevelt's Legacy vs. the New Republicans.
(730 words)

By Bruce Babbitt

It was with disbelief that I read how Governor Pife Symington proposes to abolish the Grand Canyon National Park.

Many of my friends in Arizona are telling me not to overreact; that this proposal -- enunciated in his State of the State address -- is just another one of the Governor's headline-grabbing stunts, designed to distract public attention from real problems closer to home.

And yet I do take it seriously.

For this proposal fits squarely into the legislative agenda put forth by radical Republicans in the Congress, an agenda to dismantle the entire framework of the 80 year old National Park System.

That agenda began on the eve of the 1994 election, Nov. 5, when Rep. James Jim Hansen (R-Utah) told the Denver Post: "If we take over, we're going to do a Parks Closing Commission." As soon as Mr. Hansen became Chairman of the House public lands subcommittee, he clarified his position to the Post, and "estimated that his committee may have to close more than 100 of the Park Service's 369 units." Finally, in a letter to constituents, he wrote: "The question is not whether to close some parks but how to accomplish this goal."

His colleague, Rep. Joel Hefley (R-Colorado) answered that question by introducing H.R. 260, which sets up the Parks Closure Commission because, in Mr. Hefley's words, "Some of those silly parks don't make sense."

It took us three generations of hard work to carefully build up national park units here in Arizona. Yet under the Park Closure Bill, 17 of them could be eliminated all at once. Consider the following "silly parks" on a list for potential closing under the bill: Canyon de Chelly and Casa Grande, Pipe Spring and Sunset Crater, Wupatki and Walnut Canyon, Tonto and Tuzigot, Chiricahua and Coronado, Montezuma Castle and Oregon Pipe Cactus, to name but a few.

All five Arizona Republicans in Congress actually voted for this bill. The lone Democrat opposed it.

Our Grand Canyon was not included, presumably because not even the radical Republicans in Congress believed they could put that over on the American people. But now that Arizona's own governor has given them political cover, I have little doubt that Grand Canyon will soon be added to the list.

The real motive behind these proposals, of course, is to sell off our public lands. And who might be the speculative buyers? I can't speak for other parts of the country, but history indicates that in Arizona, the mining corporations will be sitting up front when the auction begins.

Should anyone doubt this, recall that they were mining within the Grand Canyon itself clear up until the 1960s when the Park Service finally persuaded a reluctant Congress to phase it out. There are inactive claims in the Canyon right now, just waiting for the correct political climate to spring back to life.

Or go north up the Continental Divide, where a Canadian mining conglomerate is poised to begin excavating a mountain that borders right on Yellowstone National Park.

Meanwhile, in the closed committee rooms on Capitol Hill, lobbyists from the mining industry are busy working with House Republican leaders to shut down our newest National Park in the California desert. And now Gov. Symington has joined up with the radical Republicans in the House, specifically asking Speaker Gingrich to take up his proposal in Congress.

So it is now urgent that all Arizonans who care about our natural heritage, who built this national park system -- a tradition of both Republicans and Democrats like Barry Goldwater, Carl Hayden, John McCain and Mo Udall -- put a permanent stop to this foolishness.

Those Republicans who want to break apart and sell off the National Parks System might do well to remember that it was a Republican named Theodore Roosevelt who first set aside the Grand Canyon as a place of national importance.

And they should engrave in their hearts what that great conservationist said when he visited the South Rim for the first time: "In the Grand Canyon Arizona has a natural wonder which, so far as I know, is in its kind absolutely unparalleled throughout the rest of the world.... Keep it for your children, your children's children, and for all who come after you, as the one great sight which every American, if he can travel at all, should see. Keep the Grand Canyon as it is."

Symington's attack on Grand Canyon is real

By Bruce Babbitt
Special to the Tribune

JAN 21 1996

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Bruce Babbitt, former Arizona governor and current secretary of the Interior, wrote this article exclusively for the Tribune.

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Giving Something Back To A Generous Companion
(790 words)

By Bruce Babbitt

When my wife Hattie and I landed in Washington three years ago, we settled on a home built not three few blocks from the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. The decision was not coincidence; I was immediately drawn to the historic, recreational and natural world of this National Park, so close to a crowded, high pressure city.

Hugging Maryland's Potomac border, it is the only canal in the country that is a public place from start to finish -- an entire system from the great age of canal construction, a watercourse that helped move America over the Appalachians into the Ohio Valley and beyond to create a continental nation.

Some 3 to 4 million Americans still experience that journey each year, walking, biking or hiking the towpath that hugs the Potomac River. On this same path, mules once towed canal boats, loaded with coal, cement, flour and barrels of whiskey, through the Piedmont farm country, past the hallowed ground of Antietam, along the Blue Ridge to join the Shenandoah at Harpers Ferry where John Brown met his fate.

While the Interior Department manages this park, my strongest connections to the canal are not professional, but deeply personal. An outdoor companion, it has welcomed me at all hours and every season: from a brisk, fall, morning jog with our dog Maggie, to a long summer stroll at sunset, to listening to the water and wind move through the spring evenings. There have even been days when, after winter snowfalls, I cross country ski into work.

But this past winter was too brutal, and one morning I awoke to find that the C&O Canal is a wreck.

All along the 185 miles from Washington to Cumberland in the Appalachians, the recent floodwaters have washed away sections of the towpath, flooded lockhouses, and blown out locks and levees.

In the upstream reaches, the graceful aqueducts of handcut stone that carry the canal across Antietam Creek, Monocacy River and other tributaries, are still threatened by high water and huge rafts of driftwood and ice.

The flood of 1996 comes at a very bad time in the history of the National Park Service.

One Congressional committee is threatening to close down and sell off units of the system ("C&O Canal National Historical Park" is on the hit list of House closure bill HR 260). Still other committees are holding the Park Service hostage, threatening mayhem on all parks unless President Clinton agrees to more clear-cutting of old growth forests in the Pacific Northwest and in Alaska.

At this rate, it could be that the ruins of the historic C&O will simply remain there as a symbol of how Congress has abandoned our National Park System.

There could be, however, a brighter outcome.

It is just possible that the friends of the C&O can rally support for the restoration of the canal, and in the process

awaken grass roots support for the National Park Service in its time of greatest need.

That means giving something back to the land, water, structures and wildlife that have given so much to us. To restore the canal in this time of fiscal austerity will require a vital partnership between the Congress, the corporate sector and individual citizens, all pulling their share of the weight of restoration.

Congress last week authorized \$2 million in emergency restoration funds -- a hopeful sign. But it must follow up by releasing the full Park Service budget from its crude attempts at extortion. It then can energize a new restoration partnership with two additional steps:

First, authorize the use of visitor fees to stay within the park for repair rather than going to the Treasury. Allowing the Park Service to keep a \$1.00 increase in the existing \$4.00 per car fee for admission to Great Falls would generate one million dollars each year for maintenance and restoration.

Second, it is an enduring scandal that Congress has forced the National Park Service to hand out park concessions for as little as 2 or 3 percent of gross revenue. Meaningful concession reform would enable the Park Service to raise real revenue for park restoration.

The private sector must also help. In coming weeks, the National Parks Foundation, a private support group chartered by Congress, will mount a corporate support campaign designed to match congressional restoration appropriations dollar for dollar.

As individuals, we can contribute money and volunteer work. The NPF accepts individual, tax-deductible donations for a C&O restoration effort (at 1101 17th St. NW, Suite 1102, Washington, DC 20036; the phone # is (202) 785-4500).

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Will We Erode or Restore Our National Parks?
(890 words)

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Bruce Babbitt address to the American Institute of Architects
Delivered in Atlanta at 11 a.m. on Friday May 5, 1995

For most of our history, we have taken for granted the interdependence of architecture and the American landscape.

The contours of the land guided the patterns of settlement and design. Where there was a natural harbor, we started with a wharf. Where there was a dense, virgin forest, we built log cabins. In the treeless desert, we built adobe homes close to the ground. And where our only roads were rivers, we built on their banks.

But with increased industrialization, we saw ourselves as free from the confines of place.

The rise of a powerful, urban, mobile, industrial economy brought many good things. Scientific breakthroughs brought air conditioning to the humid South, electric heating to the Alaska wilderness, irrigation to the arid desert, asphalt to muddy roads, and reenforced concrete to earthquake zones.

Another measure of our freedom from place: from 1909 to 1939, people anywhere in the US could stuff a check in an envelope and order a prefabricated house delivered from a Sears Roebuck catalogue.

The birth of generic sprawl

But the dark side of this new technology is that by freeing us from the confines of place, it severed our connection with the natural world.

In modern cities today, phalanxes of skyscrapers block out the warmth and light of the sun. Asphalt spreads over the land, and inside the buildings, the only reminders of nature are stylized landscape paintings on the windowless walls.

Even outside, all we have are scraggly trees planted on top of cement sidewalks, a few shrubs in planters, and flocks of foraging pigeons.

And in our daily lives, technology has torn our towns and communities apart. Schools and markets, once within walking distance have been stretched to driving distance. Banks and restaurants were reduced to drive-thru windows. We cut ourselves off from the landscape with three thick inches of tar and asphalt.

For the last half-century we have lived by the doctrine of "unlimited low-density growth." We've written it into the canon of our zoning laws and other public policies. And as a result

we've witnessed a national hejira to suburbia, sprawling away from Main Street in search of new lives, wide streets and big lawns.

The result is a sea of subdivisions, strip malls that run main street out of business, parking lots that lap at the walls of our schools and workplaces, and generic buildings that further degrade our sense of place and attachment to the land.

The grassroots heritage movement

Well, that's all rapidly changing. All over the country, people are standing up for their heritage, and for the identity that sets them apart from the rest of the world.

From Charleston to San Francisco, New Orleans to Chicago local neighborhoods have oriented themselves through laws that protect their local heritage. Philadelphia preserves its architectural mosaic that stretches from colonial-era brick buildings like Independence Hall, to Modernism's PSFS building. New Orleans' wrought iron balconies of the Vieux Carre still firmly anchor the character and identity of that bayou city.

Outside of the cities, this movement is manifest on the cultural landscape. With help from the National Park Service, rural areas have remained rooted, and impart their identity to the people who live and work there.

Consider the Blackstone River Valley, where American craftsmen first built the machines that harnessed water to spin cotton at the outbreak of the Industrial Revolution. Along the fifty or so miles that the Blackstone meanders through Massachusetts and Rhode Island, mill towns, canals, old factories, markets, farms and the entire landscape testify to the way people lived and worked, from Native Americans to farmers to craftsmen and immigrant factory workers. These are not museums; life goes on in the Blackstone Valley and people whose traditions helped to shape the landscape continue to leave their mark on it.

Atlanta's Auburn Avenue

Right here in Atlanta, as you walk down Auburn Avenue through Martin Luther King, Jr.'s old neighborhood, you find a place that has been a symbol of success and achievement for the city's African-American community, a place where, just after the Civil War, African American entrepreneurs and factory workers bought homes, started businesses, and built their places of worship. And now Sweet Auburn resonates for all Americans, evoking a spirit that transcends the physical site.

No doubt each of you here could add an example of your own. You have worked with people who have discovered the truth that, to know where you're going, you have to know where you've been. They know exactly what makes each neighborhood unique, what gives a place its identity, and by celebrating, cherishing, and

restoring what makes their neighborhoods or landscapes unique, they strengthen their own identities.

A momentous shift

In the past few decades, we have rediscovered the interdependence between architecture and the American landscape. We have recognized the link that tells us not only where we are, but who we are. And we have begun to infuse that recognition into the design of new buildings and new communities.

Where once we ran away from context, abandoning the past, we now turn around, walk back down main street, and embrace it with our experience.

Where once we would have taken a wrecking ball to a historic building, now we pause, and ask: Can we make it relevant? Can we renovate it? Can we restore it with new, stronger materials? And can we make it resonate, not as just a monument, but as a functioning part of the community?

Where once we paved over an open field, diverted a stream, drained a marsh, and cut down an ancient forest, now we have begun to ask: Can we work to preserve the living, natural elements that are unique to each particular place and give it its character and identity?

I believe that we not only can, but we must.

Architects and planners have been rediscovering an important reality: that the human spirit is greatly diminished when it is isolated from the sights and sounds of the natural world.

In his book Biophilia Edward Wilson suggests that this affinity between people and their natural landscape is rooted in our evolutionary origins in the savanna landscapes of Africa. Other writers like Emerson and Thoreau interpret nature as a reflection of the divine presence to which we aspire.

Whatever the ultimate source of our yearning toward nature, I share it, and believe with Rene DeBos, that when we alter our natural landscapes, we need not destroy them, but should rather try to integrate them with our design. In fact, the fusion of the built environment and the natural landscape can enrich both the human spirit and the diversity of nature.

We must find ways to work this concept into every building and community we design. We must create tools that not only make this connection possible, but encourage it.

I would argue that we have these tools in such laws as the Clean Water Act and Endangered Species Act.

Both these laws, enacted in the 1970's, recognize and give form to the national interest in protecting the biological diversity and productivity of our lands. And each of these laws presents opportunities for integrating natural values into development projects. They point the way towards the sacred places on the American landscape, and give us the means to integrate that landscape into our lives.

On South Padre Island

The Clean Water Act halted the pervasive dredging, filling and destruction of our wetland along sea coasts, in estuaries and marshes and in lakes and streams and adjacent watersheds. In the upper middle west the protection of prairie potholes has helped to restore the flights of migratory waterfowl to their highest levels in a quarter century. The wetlands legislation has helped to restore fisheries from New York harbor to Chesapeake Bay to the Gulf Coast to the shores of the Pacific.

The wetlands law does not prevent development; to the contrary, it invites us to devise new ways to interconnect human habitat and the natural world. Last summer I saw an impressive example of how nature wetlands values can be integrated into develop. The place is South Padre Island off the coast of Texas. On the mainland side of the Bay you can the effects of old style, humanity at war with nature, development. Tidal wetlands were filled with rubble clear to the top of seawalls built in deep water. With the tidal flats destroyed, the flocks of shorebirds, terns, sandpipers and wilets have disappeared. The white egrets and the blue herons which fish in the shallow tidal waters have also moved out, leaving an impoverished place where concrete and seawater meet in silence.

Just Across the Bay on the island side, a visitor can see what architects and developers have created since the passage of wetlands law. architects and developers have developed in a new style, worked out since passage of the wetlands act. There are no sea walls. The waves still wash across tidal flats filled with shorebirds and egrets and herons. Flocks of red headed ducks and pintails and shovelors feed on the shallow sea grasses. And just beyond the tidal reaches are the are residences, hotels, condominiums restaurants, and a convention center, all carefully laid out to incorporate the tidal zones as part of the overall design. In fact the interconnection is so skillfully wrought that the terraces of the convention center are the best place to watch wading birds and shorebirds interacting in the timeless procession of the seasons, the tides, the wind and the sea.

Butterflies on San Bruno Mountain

The Endangered Species Act, like the wetlands legislation, provides the flexibility for creative solutions to habitat protection and development. The specific provision is the Habitat Plan, which encourages developers to resolve conflicts

with endangered species by designing in harmony with the natural landscape. It can provide sufficient open space and natural lands and to ensure biological vitality on the landscape. Seen in this perspective, habitat conservation is just another form of open space planning, thoroughly in tune with the modern movement to put nature back into our neighborhoods and our daily lives. Habitat conservation plans are a way of selecting and blending the desirable and biologically important attributes of the landscape into the selection and maintenance of open space.

It all started with three endangered butterflies found only in the San Bruno Mountains, just south of San Francisco. For local residents, these butterflies were part of the character of their home. So, in a pioneering effort, biologists and developers worked out a plan allowing for more dense development at the foot of the mountain in exchange for permanent protection of the higher slopes of the mountain for butterfly habitat.

This plan, however novel from a biological perspective would sound very familiar to a land planner, for it is really just another form of planned unit development, exchanging higher density on one part of the landscape for open space on another. And indeed that simple, time honored concept is what lies at the heart of habitat planning, introducing biological as another ingredient in the selection and layout of open space.

Sonoran landscapes

In recent years I have seen these concepts reflected in developments in and around my hometown of Phoenix. In the foothills, architects have abandoned the old practice of stripping the land down to mineral soil and are now designing residences that fit into an undisturbed landscape of saguaro, ocotillo, creosote, opuntia and the other xeric plants of the Sonoran desert.

In some of these developments buyers must sign a covenant to landscape only with plants on an approved list of desert vegetation. Even golf courses are designed to minimize manicured fairways so that golfers can encounter the aroma of creosote after a rain shower or the silhouette of saguaros on the skyline at sunset.

Texas cave country

The most recent, large scale Endangered Species Design doesn't involve a plan at all, because there is no "take" of any species.

In central Texas, the Del Webb Corporation recently announced plans to build a retirement community in the oak savanna hill country, south and west of Austin. This region, constituting some of the most beautiful country in the southwest, is also the home of two endangered beetles, that live only in the

subterranean limestone caves of that region. Now, you wouldn't think that most people could get too excited over cave invertebrates, but like the endangered species of other parts of the country, these gave unique significance to this particular landscape.

Not only did the developers protect the species, they designed their buildings around the habitat, even putting in a nature trail that gave residents more access to this special resource. Contrary to popular myth, developers assert that the presence of these species and their cave habitat actually increases the value of the property.

Yet, even as these innovations are producing results, the laws are now under challenge. The House of Representatives is likely to eviscerate the Clean Water Act next week. And on Monday, a bill will be introduced in the U.S. Senate that can be summed up in seven words: The Endangered Species Act is hereby repealed. And proposed takings laws would weaken countless other laws that protect the American landscape and each American's unique sense of place.

Reconnecting with the landscape

My view of architecture is constantly shaped and reshaped. And it happened again only a short while ago.

I visited the birth home of Rachel Carson, the great wildlife biologist and writer. I walked silently through this simple, old farmhouse -- this simple, elegant building. I felt the floor boards creak beneath my feet and I looked closely at the workmanship of the moldings and window sashes.

As I walked the grounds, I began to sense how natural the setting was -- how natural this home was. This building.

This woman, from a very young age, had an intense personal relationship with the landscape -- with the land. That relationship drew her to the natural sciences and to writing. She wrote with the joy that comes with the love of nature. And then she wrote with the fury that comes in seeing it destroyed. And her writing changed the course of history.

That intense personal relationship with the landscape is what we, as a people, now require. For Rachel Carson, that relationship began on the front porch of a small building. A small home, perfectly settled into the Pennsylvania countryside.

You have the power to help reconnect the American people with their landscape. I urge you to be aware of it -- and to use it wisely. That is no small challenge.