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Positive News for a Change!

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A Win For Both People & Birds

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Rio Grande Water Conservation District are pleased to announce that the Final San Luis Valley Regional Habitat Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment (Final HCP/EA) are completed and available for viewing www.slvhpc.com/. The plan allows for routine activities to continue while also conserving two bird species native to the San Luis Valley.

The Final HCP is the result of a collaborative effort between the District; the counties of Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Mineral, Rio Grande, and Saguache; the municipalities of Alamosa, Monte Vista, Del Norte, and South Fork; the Colorado Department of Natural

Resources and the Service to develop a regional strategy for conserving riparian habitat and sustaining working lands in the San Luis Valley, Colorado.

The HCP provides regulatory certainty for the Permittees and ranchers of the San Luis Valley for routine agricultural, small infrastructure, and riparian conservation and restoration activities (covered activities), while conserving habitat for two riparian species: the federally endangered southwestern willow flycatcher and the Western U.S. distinct population segment of the yellow-billed cuckoo, a candidate for federal listing. The Permittees and landowners will receive authorization for any harm to these species that may occur as a result of the covered activities. The District will ensure that the anticipated impacts of this take will be offset through habitat protection, enhancement, and restoration.

According to Tom Schultz, Trust Land Management Division Administrator of the District, the HCP is a win-win for the counties entering into it as well as the endangered flycatchers and candidate cuckoos that call the San Luis Valley home.

“This HCP is the culmination of years of hard work and cooperative efforts with our partners and the Service to

develop a plan that provides tangible conservation for flycatchers and cuckoos. It will allow landowners and local governments to continue routine agriculture and infrastructure activities vital to the economic well-being of the entire Valley. These efforts by the District, the six counties of the San Luis Valley, Colorado Parks and

Wildlife, local municipalities, and many others have already contributed to more than 1,700 acres of private conservation of riparian habitat in support of this HCP. Implementation of this HCP will continue that heritage of conservation and cooperation that benefits both wildlife and the citizens of the Valley,” said Schultz.

Similarly, Noreen Walsh, acting Regional Director for the Mountain-Prairie Region of the Service, said the development of the HCP is an example of how cooperative conservation and working lands are complementary. “We’re happy to see our conservation partners in the San Luis Valley develop this plan that will allow people to sustain their rich tradition of working the fertile landscape of the Valley, while simultaneously contributing to the conservation of fish and wildlife in their own backyards,” said Walsh.

Issuance of the Permits by the Service is considered a Federal action that may affect the quality of the human environment, thus requiring preparation of an EA under the National Environmental Policy Act. The EA considered a no-action alternative and two action alternatives, one of which was the proposed HCP. The Service issued a Finding of No Significant Impact on November 15, 2012 for the HCP. The Final HCP/EA and other related documents will be available on-line at www.slvhpc.com Anyone needing a printed or electronic copy of the Final HCP/EA should contact the Service at 970-243-2778.

(Photos courtesy USFW-Left:Flycatcher, Right:Cuckoo.)



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Economics Are Battering Coal Power

By Jonathan Thompson/High Country News

This fall, as temperatures cooled down and politics heated up, red, white and blue signs sprouted in Delta County in western Colorado, just down from the North Fork Valley's three huge underground coal mines. "Stop the war on coal. Fire Obama," they say. By the time you read this, the world will know who won this particular battle. But the "war" will continue regardless. That's because Obama's not behind it. Coal is in trouble thanks to the market's vagaries and the abundance of cheap natural gas from the drilling boom that began a decade ago. If the coal industry wants to tackle the real culprit, it should attack a slogan from a few years back: "Drill, Baby, Drill."

Coal has long been America's favorite energy source: It drove the East's industrialization, powered our Allies during World War II, and has kept the Sunbelt's air conditioners purring cheaply ever since. It's also a dirty source of electricity, which is why greens have battled coal's impacts for decades, starting with the Nixon-signed Clean Air Act of 1970. It forced utilities to put scrubbers in their stacks to reduce the nastiest emissions, but didn't slow the coal binge.

In 1990, the first President Bush amended the law to address acid rain. That encouraged Eastern coal plants to start using low-sulfur coal - opening a huge market for coal from the West, which is rife with the stuff. That revived the North Fork Valley's mines and eventually made Wyoming's Powder River Basin the world's biggest coal-producing region. In 1973, the U.S. burned 563

million tons of domestic coal in one year. By 2007, we'd doubled that amount. The anti-coal landmines were planted during Bush II's administration. In the 1990s, natural gas combined cycle turbines — where combustion spins a jet engine-like turbine, and its waste heat creates steam to spin a conventional turbine — were improved. Cheaper and more efficient than coal generators, they took off; natural gas-generating capacity grew 96 percent from 2000 to 2010.

Beginning in 2005, advances in horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing opened up vast reserves in shale formations across the country, dropping prices from a high of nearly \$8 per thousand cubic feet in 2008, to around \$3 today.

That makes natural gas competitive with coal on a per-megawatt-hour basis — something to be used all the time, not just during times of peak power demand. By last April, coal provided just 32 percent of the nation's electricity, down from the 1990-2010 average of 50 percent. Domestic coal mines are on track to produce at least 10 percent less this year than in 2006. (They've cushioned themselves by exporting 100 million tons or so per year to Europe and Asia.) Things will only get worse — or better, depending on your outlook: In October, the Brattle Group forecast that between 59 and 77 gigawatts, about one-fifth of total U.S. coal power capacity, will go offline by 2016. Whether federal regulations are strict or lenient will make little difference.

The primary reason for the retirements, they say, is cheap natural gas. "I'm happy to take the blame (for the coal



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industry’s decline),” says Jeremy Nichols of WildEarth Guardians, a group often praised (or denounced) as the cavalry in the war on coal. “But I don’t think it’s justified. Green groups like ours understand that these issues are purely about economics, and if we don’t strategize around economics, we’re going to lose.” That’s not to say that other factors aren’t involved. Pressure from the Environmental Protection Agency and environmentalists contributed to the planned shutdown of two units at the San Juan Generating Station and three more at the Four Corners Power Plant in northern New Mexico, two of the biggest in the West.

This year, the EPA’s mercury emissions limits were finally put in place after languishing for a decade, and a proposed carbon dioxide emissions cap would make it virtually impossible to build a new coal plant without carbon capture technology. But even the libertarian Cato Institute acknowledges that this doesn’t amount to war. In a Forbes op-ed this August, Cato’s Jerry Taylor and Peter Van Doren chided their conservative peers for over-reacting to the greenhouse gas rule. “One might think that conservatives would be positively euphoric about these regs ... and environmentalists, likewise, spitting mad,” they wrote, because the administration could have enacted much stricter regulations — ones that would have targeted existing coal plants rather than just new ones — but did not. Coal is fighting back, nevertheless.

As soon as Obama took office, coal money poured into politics like never before. Since 2008, Peabody Energy and Arch Coal, the two big operators in the Powder River Basin, have spent about \$36 million on lobbying. They’ve also upped campaign contributions, mostly to Republicans. Oxbow Corp., which owns one of the North Fork Valley mines and belongs to Bill “the other brother” Koch, has donated \$3.75 million this year to the Restore Our Future super PAC, a major source of funding for Mitt Romney’s campaign, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

But Obama’s never been all that tough on coal. His Interior Department opened land to leasing in the Powder River Basin, despite protests and lawsuits from WildEarth Guardians and others. It also approved Oxbow’s

exploratory work for a major expansion in Colorado and exempted some mines from that state’s version of the Clinton Roadless Rule. Obama delayed his own EPA’s smog rule, which would have dealt another blow to coal, and the EPA continues to stall on coal ash disposal regulations that have been on the table since Clinton was in office. With enemies like these, who needs friends?

Then again, it’s hard to see how any administration could end the so-called war on coal. It could block carbon rules and continue to delay coal ash rules, or interfere with the markets à la the 1978 federal law that banned the construction of new gas power plants until its repeal in 1987. Maybe it could increase natural gas prices by upping demand, perhaps pushing methane-powered vehicles or subsidizing exports. Despite the challenge from natural gas, Western coal is holding its own. The Powder River Basin’s two biggest mines have 400 more employees than they did in 2007. In the North Fork Valley, there are more miners entering mines and more coal coming out than five years ago. Meanwhile, the Western natural gas industry is struggling, thanks to all that cheap gas from the East. Oil and gas drilling starts in Colorado are lower than they’ve been in a decade.

This news story originally appeared in an issue of High Country News (hcn.org)



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Bluesign Standards For Clothing

Dear EarthTalk: What is the “Bluesign” standard for textiles? Which if any well known manufacturers are embracing it? - Karin Romano, Bristol, CT

Bluesign is an emerging standard for environmental health and safety in the manufacturing of textiles. The Switzerland-based organization, officially known as Bluesign Technologies AG, provides independent auditing of textile mills, examining manufacturing processes from raw materials and energy inputs to water and air emissions outputs. Each component is assessed based on its ecotoxicological impact. Bluesign ranks its audit findings in order of concern, and suggests ways to reduce consumption while recommending alternatives to harmful chemicals or processes where applicable. Textile mills that commit to verifiably adopting Bluesign’s recommendations can become certified “System Partners” and attract business from a wide range of brands and retailers around the world looking for greener vendors.

Eco-aware consumers can feel confident purchasing clothing items with the Bluesign label that they are buying the most environmentally friendly, socially conscious version of the jacket, shirt, sweater, pants, hat or gloves in question. Given the push for greener products of every kind, Bluesign has gained serious traction in the last few years among some of the leading brands in the outdoor clothing and gear business.

Patagonia was Bluesign’s first “brand” member and has

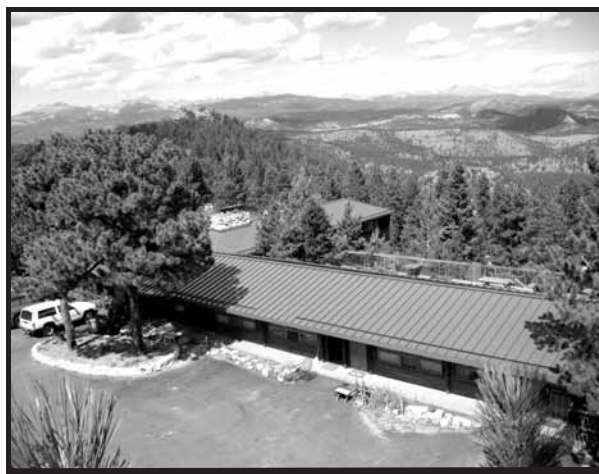
been supportive of the program since its inception in 2000. While only 16% of the products in its 2012 line contain Bluesign-approved fabrics, the company has set a goal with its suppliers to have all Patagonia fabrics adhere to the standard by 2015.

The North Face is a newer partner for Bluesign, but no less committed: The company has been going gangbusters for the standard since 2010, and offers several clothing items made with at least 90% Bluesign-approved fabrics. Over the two years it has been converting its supply chain over to Bluesign-approved vendors, The North Face has saved 85 Olympic swimming pools worth of water,

38 tanker trucks worth of chemicals, and carbon emissions similar to taking some 1,100 cars off the road for a year.

Another leading outdoor clothing manufacturer embracing Bluesign is Norway’s Helly Hansen. In its 2012 line, more than 100 of Helly Hansen’s 500 products contain fabrics that meet the Bluesign standard; that number is expected to increase by 50% in 2013. Some of the other big outdoor brands that have teamed up with Bluesign include REI and Canada’s Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC).

Whether Bluesign catches on more widely in this dog-eat-dog, economically stressed business climate remains to be seen. “Earning Bluesign approval costs mills and suppliers time and money,” reports MEC. *Bluesign Technologies*, www.bluesign.com; *Patagonia*, www.patagonia.com; *The North Face*, www.thenorthface.com; *Helly Hansen*, www.hellyhansen.com; *REI*, www.rei.com; *MEC*, www.mec.ca.



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Update - Buffalo Field Campaign

November 15, 2012 - As BFC's 16th season in the field begins wild buffalo that migrate into Montana are once again under the gun. The state of Montana's eighth buffalo "hunt" season begins today, while some First Nations have already, or will soon begin to kill wild buffalo. Migrations take the buffalo across the man-made boundary from Yellowstone National Park into their Montana winter range, yet this habitat is essentially available to them only during the hunting seasons. Between the few tribes hunting under treaty right and Montana's hunt, wild buffalo are vulnerable to hunters for six months of the year: from mid-September through late-March. Sadly, this is something wolves and buffalo have in common in Montana.

(BFC Photo by Kim Kaiser.)



To date one bull buffalo has been shot by a member of the Confederated Salish-Kootenai Tribes. BFC maintains strong opposition to hunting wild buffalo, as they are an ecologically extinct wildlife species with no access to year-round habitat in Montana and are sorely mismanaged and abused by current management schemes. In addition to hunting, wild buffalo are subjected to abusive actions - hazing, capture, slaughter, shooting in the field, quarantine, and experimental research - all carried out under the taxpayer-funded Interagency Bison Management Plan. State, federal and tribal governments are anticipating that hundreds of wild buffalo will be killed this year, either through state and treaty hunting or government slaughter, or both.

BFC's field patrols in both the Gardiner and Hebgen Basins, north and west of Yellowstone's boundary, are in full force, monitoring the buffalo's migration, talking with hunters in hopes of building strong alliances for wild buffalo, and documenting all actions made against them by

state and federal agencies. If we have a normal, cold and snowy winter things could go very badly for our friends the buffalo. As they follow their instincts to critical winter ranges and calving grounds they will be met with guns and traps.

Please join BFC in advocating for year-round habitat and lasting protection and respect of these gentle giants, America's last continuously wild populations. Please help

keep us on the front lines, in the policy arena, and in the courts to defend these sacred beings, and visit our Take Action page and urge your Members of Congress to take action on behalf of America's last wild buffalo.

Wild is the Way~ Roam Free!

Wild Bison Calendars - Do you have your Wild Bison 2013 Calendars? It will soon

be time to place a new calendar on the wall, and they make great gifts, so if you haven't yet gotten yours, or want or order more as gifts for your friends and family, do so today. Thank you for making our Wild Bison Calendars such an amazing project!

Last Words—Buffalo Inspiration”...*They have their own currents. You could watch a herd of running pronghorn swerve like a river rounding a meander and see better what I mean. But bison are a deeper, deliberate water, and there will never be enough water for any West but the one into which we watch these bison carefully disappear.*” From the poem **Herd of Buffalo Crossing the Missouri on Ice** by William Matthews.

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Dam Update~Concert~CINQ~Chorale~Editorial

Dear Readers,

“State of the Dam” - Come to the Coal Creek Canyon Community Center (CCCIA), 31528 Highway 72, on Thursday December 6th for the latest information about Denver Water’s proposed expansion of Gross Dam Reservoir (the Moffat Collection System Project). TEG, specifically through the efforts of its project group CSWM (Citizens for Sustainable Water Management), has been working hard throughout the year to find ways to stop the project.

TEG’s monthly board meeting will be held at 5:30pm, followed by a pot-luck and the “State of the Dam” event at 7pm. The evening is free and open to the public. The unnecessary expansion of Gross Dam, as proposed by Denver Water, would take 4 or more years to complete, with many detrimental impacts on residents in the mountain and foothills communities. The amount of environmental damage inherent in a massive construction project such as this is staggering, but this proposed project is unique in that it would nearly totally consume (diverting 80% of natural flows) the Fraser River on the other side of the Continental Divide.

Join us in our community effort to get the residents’ voices heard and put an end to this unnecessary expansion. Chris Garre, TEG President

Letter to the Editor,

“New Year’s Eve Gabrielle Louise Concert” - Ring in the New Year with class and style right here in Coal Creek Canyon. Join Gabrielle Louise the evening of December 31st at CCCIA (Coal Creek Canyon Community Center -

31528 Highway 72) for a night to remember!

A born musician, Gabrielle has spent 11 years performing professionally, actively touring the country using biofuels as an alternative to petroleum. She has 5 records to her name, with a 6th just around the corner, all independently produced, and has received numerous accolades including: two-time John Lennon Songwriting Contest finalist, and winner of the Jack Maher Songwriting Award. Last year, her song “Make You Remember” aired several times on the internationally broadcast news program Democracy Now!

Doors for the show will open at 9pm with the music starting shortly thereafter. Community Center policy doesn’t allow alcohol to be sold, so bring your own and we’ll enjoy a New Year’s toast at midnight together!

Tickets at the door are \$15/adult, \$5/children (12 and under). Discounted tickets can be purchased in advance via gabriellelouise.com. To hear some of Gabrielle’s music online, visit gabriellelouise.com Chris Garre

FROM CINQ - Citizen Involved in the Northwest Quadrant - We’re hoping the court will rule in our favor and require Fish & Wildlife to conduct a full EIS. An EIS would highlight many of the problems with the proposed toll road at Rocky Flats, most notably plutonium dust that could be spread during construction.

GOLDEN VS FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE From: Marjorie Sloan, Saturday, November 17, 2012. At the status conference Judge Brimmer stated that he would decide the case on the merits by the end of the year.

Golden’s special counsel, John Putnam, gave a litigation update at the November 1 city (Continued on next page.)

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Highlander Letters

council meeting. As he stated, the merits of the case have been fully briefed - meaning all the parties have submitted to the court all the written argument and relevant documentation in support of their positions. The court will now evaluate the parties' competing legal arguments. At the most recent status conference, the district judge stated that he will be issuing his decision before the end of the year. (The case raises purely legal issues, so it will be decided on the briefs without need for a fact-finding trial.)

Our contention is that the Fish and Wildlife Service failed to follow the proper procedure when it decided to transfer Rocky Flats Wildlife Refuge land for use as a high-speed highway. This claim has a sound basis in the law. And our lawyers have done a great job in making our arguments and positioning us in court. However, as Mr. Putnam explained at the council meeting, it is an uphill battle to get the decision of a federal agency because the agency is generally presumed to have used its expertise in making its decision. We firmly believe we have rebutted this presumption, and we are now waiting to see if the judge agrees with us. We won't have to wait much longer.

Dear Readers,

The following is the list for the upcoming Christmas Concerts performed by the Peak to Peak Chorale. All performances are free of charge but donations are always

happily accepted. FRIDAY NOVEMBER 30th at 6:30 PM at Tommy Knockers Potluck Dinner in the Teller House in Central City. We perform after dinner around 7:15 -7:30 pm.

SATURDAY DECEMBER 1st at 10:00 AM at Nederland's Holiday Mountain Market in the Community Center

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 5th at 7:00 PM at Black Hawk's Rocky Mountain Free Evangelical Church on Eureka St. Refreshments served after performance.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 9th at 3:00 PM at the Coal Creek Canyon Improvement Association Hall off Highway 72. Refreshments served after the performance.

Carol Mirarck

Dear Readers,

I'm sure if you're anything you are relieved that the political ads are gone for this election. As a swing state we got literally bombarded and it is finally over.

All too often this election season I heard hate spewed in the guise of partisanship and this is not an emotion acceptable among civilized citizens for use in politics. You are all free to have and even voice your opinions, but the moment you make hate a factor you have lost your 'eye on the goal' and it is time to keep it to yourself.

Politics is a subject that gets folks into heated discussions and even polarizes the best of intentioned, educated individuals. When you feel yourself getting hot under the collar and about to say things you'll undoubtedly regret, this is the sign to shut up.

It is now the Holiday season and while we've eaten turkey and given thanks for our blessings, it is also time to bury the hatchet and come together as a nation to make the best of our current situation. Sour grapes by those who didn't realize their goals or gloating by those that did is just acting like spoiled children - exactly what we despise about some of the politicians in Washington.

Be a bigger person and take the high road, especially if you have children at home who look to you for your lead. At the very least, if you can't say something nice, then say nothing at all. We'll all be thankful and be able to get along with one another, as examples. Highlander Editor

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Current Status Under Endangered Species Act

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently released its Candidate Notice of Review, a yearly appraisal of the current status of plants and animals considered candidates for protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Three species have been removed from candidate status, two have been added, and nine have a change in priority from the last review conducted in October of 2011.

There are now 192 species recognized by the Service as candidates for ESA protection, the lowest number in more than 12 years. This reduction reflects the Service's successful efforts to implement a court-approved work plan that resolves a series of lawsuits concerning the agency's ESA Listing Program. Since its implementation, this agreement has significantly reduced litigation-driven workloads and allowed the agency to protect 25 candidate species under the ESA, and propose protection for 91 candidate species.

The agreement will continue to allow the agency to focus its resources on the species most in need of the ESA's protections over the next five years, said Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe.

"We're continuing to keep the commitments we made under this agreement, which has enabled us to be more efficient and effective in both protecting species under the ESA, as well as in working with our partners to recover species and get them off the list as soon as possible," said Director Ashe. "Our ultimate goal is to have the smallest Candidate List possible, by addressing the needs of species before they require ESA protection and extending the ESA's protections to species that truly need it."

Ashe noted that the work plan will enable the agency to systematically review and address the needs of every species on the 2011 candidate list - a total of more than 250 unique species - over a period of six years to determine if they should be added to the Federal Lists of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants.

Candidate species are plants and animals for which the Service has enough information on their status and the

threats they face to propose them as threatened or endangered, but developing a proposed listing rule is precluded by the need to address other higher priority listing actions. Candidate species do not receive protection under the ESA, although the Service works to conserve them. The annual review and identification of candidate species provides landowners and resource managers notice of species in need of conservation, allowing them to address threats and work to preclude the need to list the species. The Service is currently working with landowners and partners to implement voluntary conservation agreements covering 5 million acres of habitat for more than 130 candidate species.

This notice identifies two new candidate species: Peñasco least chipmunk (Sacramento and White Mountains, New Mexico) and Cumberland arrow darter (Kentucky and Tennessee). All candidates are assigned a listing priority number based on the magnitude and imminence of the threats they face. When adding species to the list of threatened or endangered species, the Service addresses species with the highest listing priority first. The nine changes in priority announced in this notice are based on new information in the updated *(Continued on next page.)*

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assessments of continuing candidates. These changes include five species that increased in priority and four that lowered in priority.

The three species removed from the candidate list include elongate mud meadow springsnail, Christ's paintbrush, and bog asphodel. Based on protections for almost all sites, the identification of additional sites, and updated information on threats, the bog asphodel no longer needs the protection of the ESA. The removal of the springsnail and paintbrush is based on the successful conservation efforts by other federal agencies. Efforts by the Bureau of Land Management for the springsnail fully addressed the threats from recreational and livestock use of the springs where the snail exists. Also, three additional populations of the springsnail have been discovered, making this species less vulnerable to random, naturally occurring events than previously thought.

For Christ's paintbrush, the U.S. Forest Service has successfully implemented numerous conservation actions that have ameliorated most of the previously known threats and established long-term monitoring programs to document their effectiveness on conservation actions. There is a long-term commitment by the Forest Service, through a 2005 Candidate Conservation Agreement and 2012 Memorandum of Agreement with the Service, to

continue to implement conservation actions for this species.

The Service is soliciting additional information on the candidate species, as well as information on other species that may warrant protection under the ESA. This information will be valuable in preparing listing documents and future revisions or supplements to the candidate notice of review.

The Service also has multiple tools for protecting candidate species and their habitats, including a grants program that funds conservation projects by private landowners, states and territories. In addition, the Service can enter into Candidate Conservation Agreements (CCAs), formal agreements between the Service and one or more public or private parties to address the conservation needs of proposed or candidate species, or species likely to become candidates, before they actually become listed as endangered or threatened. CCA participants voluntarily commit to implementing specific actions removing or reducing the threats to these species, thereby contributing to stabilizing or restoring the species. Through 110 CCAs, habitat for more than 100 species is managed on federal, state, local agency, tribal and private lands; many CCAs have multiple cooperators focusing conservation actions in an area supporting a single or multiple species.

Another similar tool is the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAAs). While these voluntary agreements are only between the Service and non-Federal landowners, they have the same goals as CCAs in addressing threats to candidate species, but with additional incentives for conservation actions on non-Federal lands. More than 71 landowners in 18 states have enrolled in CCAAs that cover over 1 million acres of habitat for 41 species.



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A Shoot-It-Yourself Primer

By Ari LeVaux

People hunt animals for a lot of reasons, from filling a freezer to festooning a wall with antlers. As a meat hunter, I'm looking for a year's worth of protein, with or without antlers attached. Even though I don't hunt for the post-kill posing or big racks, as a hunter I'm lumped together with everyone who shoots guns at animals.

I don't mind being associated with interior decorators and stuffed-animal collectors, assuming the trophy hunters in question actually eat their meat, but I don't like being grouped with those who shoot "varmints," or supposed pest animals, for fun. Perhaps "animal shooting" and not hunting would be more descriptive of what they do. But semantics can't change that I shop at the same gear stores as the sport killers, and we share space at the range and in the field as well. We respect each other's safety by following correct shooting etiquette. I'll even listen politely at the gas station if some proud killer has a story to tell.

The friend who took me on my first hunting trip to shoot elk is a varmint hunter, and we had a great time together. But we remained worlds apart with regard to how we really feel about shooting animals. A seldom-discussed divide exists in the hunting community between those who hunt because they enjoy shooting at living targets, and those who hunt despite the killing part. There are also those who hunt as part of their overarching obsession with guns: After all, guns were designed for shooting at living things.

In my experience, though, very little time spent hunting is spent actually killing. You can hunt hard for days or even weeks and come up empty, and I'm OK with that. It's part of the process. And even when you're successful, the kill itself is about as fast as a speeding bullet. Trophy hunters can at least decorate their homes with skulls, fur and bones. But with sport killers, as soon as one animal is down it's usually onto the next, like a gambler sitting at a slot machine.

Varmint hunters can generally shoot as many animals as they want, since the targeted animal is a legally ordained pest. I'm a rifle hunter, but not devoted to guns, though I do love my Ruger .270 and think of it as a friend. The annual journey we take together has given me some of my

life's best moments, as well as many freezers-full of the best meat in the world. Medical research has found several benefits to eating wild game, as distinct from feedlot-raised livestock, but many of these discoveries have yet to permeate standard dietary practices.

You've probably seen endless reports linking red meat to cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and other so-called diseases of civilization. But until very recently, few of them distinguished between an Oscar Meyer wiener and Wilbur the pig, never mind Bambi. A 2010 Harvard School of Public Health meta-study found a clear correlation between diseases of civilization and processed red meat, but the correlation with unprocessed meat was weak. The take-home message, not surprisingly, is that whole cuts of meat are better for you than meat that's been adulterated in all sorts of ways.

In contrast, wild game is the ultimate unprocessed meat, from the ground up. These animals consume no processed feeds, which in addition to their questionable main ingredients can also contain anything from antibiotics to candy to concrete mix. Wild game also has more omega-3 fatty acids, branched-chain amino acids, creatine and other nutrients than domestic cattle. Another area that needs more study involves comparing wild game with grass-fed beef. The two are often lumped together and billed as nutritional equals, but it would be interesting to know if this is true.

From an environmental standpoint, hunting your own is one of the few defensible approaches to eating meat. Growing food to feed livestock, we all know, is a terribly inefficient use of land and water. As for hunting, these days it can help everyone. Now that humans have killed off most deer predators and replaced much of their habitat with farms or the backyards of subdivisions, deer populations have exploded like rats in the city. Several states allow for the harvest of 10 or more deer in a season, and taking your share does farmers a favor. And hunting sure beats crashing your car into a deer when you're driving to the store for a shrink-wrapped, grain-fed beefsteak.

Ari LeVaux is a contributor to Writers on the Range, a service of High Country News. He writes about food politics in Placitas, New Mexico.



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Tapestries

By Melissa E. Johnson

*“Any human life situation
is like the momentary position of a kaleidoscope;
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a new design, a new combination of elements.
And so on, again and again, time after time,
always different . . . always it is significant, and always
there is a dynamic and purposeful intention. “*

~Gina Cerminara, PhD - Many Lives, Many Loves

New York, New York - I met Connor on a plane from New York City. At the time, I was dating an aspiring young photographer whom I had met on the beach in Florida months before. He had flown to New York to surprise me for Valentine's Day. I was surprised alright; especially when I learned over dinner that he hated children so much that he had had a vasectomy when he was 30 just to make sure he didn't father any.

There I was, at yet another relationship crossroads trying to sort out the truth of my desires. Did I even want to have children? Did I see myself as a mother? What was motivating my decision?

We had argued when I broke up with him. The next day, he insisted that I accompany him to Ground Zero. In an effort to appeal his case, he reminded me that the people who went to work there on September 11th fully expected to return home that night. "Life is uncertain," he said. "How do you even know that you can have children?" True, he had a point, and we really did have fun together. But logic notwithstanding, a red flag waivered in my mind's eye.

The Meeting - So it was on my return flight to Florida that Connor introduced himself. He was my age, single, ruggedly handsome, had never been married but wanted to be, and he adored children. He couldn't wait to have a family of his own, information he proudly volunteered over in-flight cocktails. We talked non-stop, and by the time we arrived at the gate in Atlanta it was as if we were old friends. He asked if he could call me sometime; he would look me up the next time he came to Florida. I gave him

my number and we parted ways.

Meanwhile, I vacillated with the photographer. I knew I needed to call things off (again), but I was in a state of flux-questioning myself, swayed by indecision and basically avoiding the inevitable. Then Connor called.

It had been more than a month since we met. I had thought of him often, remembering his passion for children and family and finding comfort in that. So when he called to tell me that he would be in my area at the end of the month, I readily accepted his invitation for dinner and, that night, I ended things with the photographer.

But Connor and I never did have that dinner. His trip was delayed. I went to L.A. We re-scheduled. His flight was cancelled. I went back to New York. We rescheduled. Through it all we continued to speak by phone almost every day for three months until, finally, we came up with a plan: A double concert weekend with James Taylor in Atlanta and Elton John in Pensacola. We planned every detail, excited to see each other again when I returned from New York.

A Love Connection - Then one night about a week before our date, Connor and I were talking on the phone and the subject turned to love. "Have you ever been in love?" I asked. Connor laughed, and then told me of his childhood sweetheart Karley. They had grown up together, both from large Irish-Catholic families. In the 4th grade, she had given him a homemade Valentine, and he kissed her. They were inseparable after that, dating throughout high school and college. The summer after graduate school, she gave him a Celtic friendship ring and proposed marriage. He accepted. A year later, Connor called the whole thing off.

"Why?" I asked. "She didn't want to have children." "Is that the only reason you broke things off?" I pried. "Yeah, I guess so." "What would make her not want to have children?" I furthered. "Well, she had just finished grad school and was about to start a new job . . ." "How long has it been since you've seen her?" I coaxed. "At least four years, but I hear about her from time to time through mutual friends."

"What would you do if she came back to you and said, 'Connor, I've changed my mind; I do want children'?" I posed. "Honestly? I don't know. I've never considered that. When she said 'no children,' all bets were off. What about you?" he asked, changing the subject, "When was your last relationship?" I told him about my recent break-up with the photographer for similar reasons, and we marveled at the parallel. But I couldn't ignore the small voice within warning me that Connor was not mine to love.

Calling All Angels - Two days before our long-anticipated first date Connor called, "I've got good news, and bad news," he said. "Okay, let me have it; good news first." "Well, Monday, after we spoke, I couldn't quit thinking about your questions. They stirred up a lot of painful memories for me. I stayed up all night reading old letters and looking at pictures of Karley . . . of us . . . just



thinking about things. Then, yesterday, I called her. We talked for six hours and guess what? She's sick of Manhattan; bored with the corporate world. She wants to have children! She's ready to begin that part of her life! No joke. We're meeting in Hilton Head this weekend, can you believe it?"

"Oh my goodness, that's . . . wonderful?" I said, shocked yet fascinated! "And so the bad news is, well, I'm canceling our date. Are you mad?" "Are you kidding? How could I be mad? The whole time you were talking about Karley, I knew she was your soul mate. Just promise that you'll keep me posted; let me know what happens." He promised that he would.

The following Tuesday Connor called with news of his engagement. "We have you to thank," he said. "I told Karley that if it hadn't been for your questions, I never would have called her. You're an angel; really, I think you're an angel."

I was so happy for them, yet I could hardly believe it was





true. I had met this guy once on a plane and hadn't seen him since. Now here we were, more than 3 months later, sharing this incredible moment of transformation. I would never view my relationships the same again.

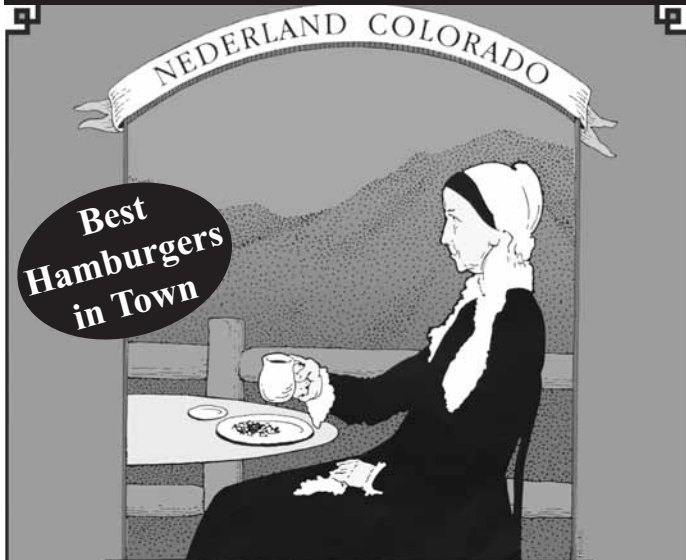
Giving Thanks - Today I am humbled as I reflect on my life-filled with gratitude for the brilliant threads linking past, present and future-and as I step confidently in the direction of my dreams, hand-in-hand with my beloved, I know that I am exactly where I'm supposed to be, comforted by the delicate intertwining of spirits linking everyone and everything

around us, meaningful and purpose-driven. When we're open and willing to look beyond our immediate needs, our connections with others will bring the most significant opportunities for self-discovery, expanding our capacity for human understanding, and leaving space for love.

Melissa is a writer, photographer, artist and lawyer. Read more on her blog at www.HeartLaw.blogspot.com, or visit her website at www.MelissaEJohnson.com.

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Groups Whistling Past The Graveyard?

By Heather Rogers, Samantha Cook - Remapping Debate

Environmental groups have long warned that America's ravenous consumption of fossil fuels is not sustainable as a matter of public health or economic health - either on a national or planetary level. But on the heels of a boom in domestic natural gas production - most of it the result of the adoption of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking - their opponents are in the ascendancy. The conservation and convert-to-clean-fuels messages of the environmentalists are increasingly derided as out of touch, unrealistic, and harmful to the economy.

Former Governor Mitt Romney wants ever more drilling for fossil fuels in ever more places; at the same time, President Obama embraces an "all-of-the-above" energy policy, which includes fossil fuels, and celebrates the United States as "the Saudi Arabia of natural gas."

Are environmental groups facing up to the new challenges? Developing messages and strategies that resonate with more voters and more public officials? Building broader and deeper coalitions? Demanding that politicians who nominally agree with them go on the offensive? Remapping Debate spoke with several environmental organizations and discovered that many were not.

In denial, or merely providing a positive spin? Despite the anti-environmentalist shift in the political and media rhetoric concerning fossil fuels, three well-established environmental organizations painted a rosy picture about the prospects for green energy in the U.S., insisting that renewables continue to make great strides.

Cathy Duvall, national political and public advocacy director for the Sierra Club, said the shift in rhetoric does not signal that renewables are in trouble, but that fossil fuels are on the defensive. "We have made huge progress over the last four years, and what's really clear to me is the industry is fighting back tooth and nail," she said.

Further, she said that the recent flood of pro-fossil fuel messages demonstrates that there's a "good, vibrant conversation about clean energy in the election." Are environmental groups facing up to the new challenges? Developing messages and strategies that resonate with more voters and more public officials? Demanding that politicians who nominally agree with them go on the offensive?

Remapping Debate asked Duvall whether the surge of positive rhetoric on fossil fuels actually constituted a discussion about renewable energy and the environment. "Absolutely," she replied. "More than half the political ads

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being run on television [during the recent presidential campaign] - that would be hundreds of millions of dollars - are talking about energy." When Remapping Debate pointed out that the vast majority of these ads were in favor of fossil fuels, Duvall was undeterred. "Outside of health care, this is the most talked about issue in this election," she said.

Similarly, Phillip Radford, executive director of Greenpeace U.S.A., thought that the shift in rhetoric had positive implications. "In some cases it's like a last gasp of these really ancient industries, especially coal. [They're] working to change their image when really the market and the future are not on their side," he said.

Remapping Debate pointed out that in recent years domestic production of fossil fuels, including oil and natural gas, has increased (at a faster rate, in fact, than renewables). Radford said that while this is true, the fossil fuels industry is nevertheless in decline. "It's just a matter of time before battery technology and electric cars or plug-in hybrids really start to replace the need for oil," he stated.

David Goldston, a senior advisor at the NRDC Action Fund, of which the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) is a parent organization, acknowledged that "the 'all-of-the-above' language has developed more" in President Obama's statements. "But if you look at the actual positions, I think that hasn't been a big shift for the administration, and they haven't backed away at all from their commitment to clean energy."

Remapping Debate asked Goldston what he made of the fact that drilling for oil and gas has increased during the Obama Administration, and that the President has supported Shell's opening up of new offshore platforms in the Arctic. "While [the President's] policies are not in lockstep with what we would want," Goldston said, "there's a real commitment to cleaner energy." Goldston referred to President Obama's recent increase in fuel economy standards to 54.5 mpg by 2025. "Look no further than the standards to see the proof of it," he said.

When asked whether higher fuel efficiency represented only a very small part of the steps NRDC believes are necessary, Goldston agreed that these standards alone wouldn't solve climate change. Most of the groups Remapping Debate talked to praised the increase in renewable energy (from a meager starting point) in recent years. Radford, too, asserted this as evidence of real change, arguing that there has been massive growth of solar and wind. "If you look at the trends of

where dollars are flowing and what's being installed," he said, "I think fundamentally green energy's winning." Duvall concurred. "We've made huge strides in generation of clean energy," she said. "We are so not where we were four years ago in this."

Cai Steger, an energy policy analyst at NRDC, agreed, insisting that the rate of growth in renewables represents a historic transformation of the energy sector. But, in 2007, renewable energy made up 7% of all energy consumed; four years later it constituted just 9%. Remapping Debate asked Steger whether this marked significant growth. "Good Lord, yes," he said.

Yet the burning of fossil fuels continues apace, a pattern that only worsens climate change. In light of that, Remapping Debate asked Steger if current renewable energy growth is actually sufficient. He insisted that it was, explaining that patience is needed. "The energy sector moves very slowly," he said.

This article originally appeared in Remapping Debate, an online public policy news journal - RemappingDebate.org



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GMO Inside - How To Avoid For The Holidays

Tips Include Ways To Spread the Word Among Friends and Family

Genetically modified ingredients can be an unwelcome and hidden guest at your holiday celebrations. This year, GMO Inside, a new coalition that advocates for increased consumer awareness of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in foods, is offering tips and suggestions for consumers on how to remove unwanted GMOs from their holiday feasts. From identifying GMO-laden products and offering non-GMO alternatives to giving tips on how to help spread the word on genetically engineered foods.

Alisa Gravitz, president, Green America said: "The holidays are a time to celebrate with family and friends. Consumers should be able to do this without worrying about feeding hidden GMOs to their loved ones. GMO

Inside's holiday campaign allows people to make educated decisions about what will be served at their holiday gathering."

Some common products that are suspect for GMOs include: Campbell's Tomato Soup, Wesson Canola Oil, Bruce's Yams, Hershey Milk Chocolate, Pepperidge Farm Crackers, Kraft Classic Ranch Dressing, Rice-a-Roni chicken flavored rice, Ocean Spray Cranberry Sauce, and Kraft's Stove Top Stuffing. GMO Inside offers consumers the following ways to spread the word to friends and family:

If hosting a holiday dinner, print out a menu of foods served for your guests and make sure to note that they are non-GMO and organic. GMO Inside believes that all U.S. citizens have the right to know what is in the food they eat. Genetically engineered foods have not been adequately tested for human consumption. It is unethical to put an experimental technology into the food Americans feed their families without providing information on the label that allows Americans to choose whether or not their food contains GMOs. Americans deserve to know if there are GMOs inside.

ABOUT GMO INSIDE: STEERING COMMITTEE - Food Democracy Now is a grassroots community dedicated to building a sustainable food system that protects our natural environment, sustains farmers and nourishes families. Food Democracy Now members know we can build a food system that gives our communities equal access to healthy food, and respects the dignity of the

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Green America is the nation's leading green economy organization. Founded in 1982, Green America (formerly Co-op America) provides the economic strategies, organizing power and practical tools for businesses, investors, and individuals to solve today's social and environmental problems. www.GreenAmerica.org

Institute for Responsible Technology, Jeffrey M. Smith. Smith is an international bestselling author and the leading spokesperson on the health dangers of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). He documents how the world's most powerful Ag biotech companies bluff and mislead critics, and put the health of society at risk. In 2003, he founded the Institute for Responsible Technology; a world leader in educating policy makers and the public about genetically modified (GM) foods and crops.

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Vani Hari is a management consultant, food activist writer and a two-time elected North Carolina delegate, endorsed by President Obama. Vani started foodbabe.com in April 2011 to spread information about what is really in the American food supply. She teaches people how to make the right purchasing decisions at the grocery store, how to live an organic lifestyle, and how to travel healthfully around the world. The success in her writing and investigative work can be seen in the way food companies react to her uncanny ability to find and expose the truth.

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CSU Grant-Water Mgt.

Ken Carlson, a civil engineering professor at CSU, will work with Noble Energy Inc. on a new \$1.4 million U.S. Dept. of Energy grant to optimize water management associated with Noble's oil and gas production in the Denver-Julesburg Basin in Weld County. The two-year project, awarded through DOE's Research Partnership for Sustainable Energy in America, aims to assess and improve water acquisition, transportation and disposal.

Carlson and his partners will work to develop computer modeling and online training materials in partnership with industry. He expects that the project will also benefit communities by reducing truck traffic, air emissions and use of water resources. The study will develop tools that will assist industry in siting and designing water treatment plants that are an essential part of the drive to recycle oil and gas related wastewater. "This is driven by efficiency and if the industry's more efficient with water use, there's less risk of environmental impact," he said. "Another benefit of recycling is a reduction of stress on agriculture water and a reduced risk of regional water depletion."

Carlson notes, "Optimizing management of water during drilling and hydraulic fracturing could mitigate other environmental impacts including ecological degradation due to excessive truck traffic and the associated dust and land disturbance. "There are 19,000 active wells in Weld County and most produce some water. Do we have 100 water treatment plants? Do we have one? Is it better to use some water for reuse in industry and other for agriculture?"

The study will develop industry targeted geographic information system (GIS) based tools that can be used to assess the logistics of water use, transportation, reuse and disposal." "This is the kind of public-private partnership that we support in Weld County where we have to balance the economic benefits of industry with environmental impacts on our communities," said Weld County Commissioner Barbara Kirkmeyer. "We look forward to the results of Dr. Carlson's research." "Our corporate purpose is Energizing the World, Bettering People's Lives," said Ted Brown, Senior Vice President - Northern Region of Noble Energy. "As we continue to increase activity in the DJ Basin, we seek solutions to maximize efficiencies while minimizing impacts.

Our ongoing partnership with CSU is key in achieving this goal, and living up to that corporate purpose." "Working together with environmental groups, industry leaders and scientists, Colorado State can act as an objective third-party to understand the complexities of the energy industry and communicate those complicated issues to the general public," Carlson said. "We hope this collaboration will provide a unique opportunity to protect Colorado's water resources while also enabling economic growth from the boom in oil and gas development in the region."

Kirkmeyer is the chair and Carlson is the co-director of the Colorado Energy Water Consortium, a partnership in northern Colorado that includes government, industry, environmental groups, agricultural interests and CSU leaders working together to solve water issues associated with oil and gas drilling development including hydraulic fracturing. Carlson is an expert on water management associated with oil and gas drilling and pollutants that can affect drinking water supplies.



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31528 HWY. 72

New Geothermal Technologies Edge Out Fossil?

By Nate Seltenrich/High Country News

At the northern edge of the Geysers, the world's largest geothermal complex, which sprawls over nearly 40 square miles north of Santa Rosa, Calif., Houston-based power company Calpine is conducting an experiment. On the surface, not much sets the project apart from the 18 ridge-top power plants and dozens of other drilling platforms here, most of which Calpine owns. The site, high on a sun-baked hillside, is home to a 110-foot drill rig surrounded by a couple of trailers and a mass of machinery. But two miles underground, something big is happening.

Traditional geothermal systems draw steam from naturally occurring underground reservoirs - typically found only along continental plate boundaries and in areas of subsurface volcanic activity - and pass it through turbines to convert it to electricity. Calpine's new project, however, takes advantage of the ubiquitous heat of the

Earth's crust — drilling into hot, dry rock, injecting cold water under low pressure to expand existing cracks and gaps, and drilling a second well at the other end of the system.

Once a link is established, water is pumped into the first well, heated as it passes through the network of fractures, then drawn back up as steam. These enhanced geothermal systems, or EGS, could theoretically work in all 50 states, a prospect that appeals to the U.S. government. Over the past four years, the Energy Department has spent \$60 million on six EGS demonstration projects in Alaska, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada and California, including Calpine's.

This summer, the agency nearly doubled its annual geothermal budget, allotting two-thirds of it - about \$44 million - for EGS research. The technology's profitability remains uncertain, but its potential is huge. The U.S. Geological Survey believes that the West alone - where the geothermal heat EGS requires tends to be shallower, about one to two miles down - may harbor enough energy to supply about 75% of the nation's needs. Our total current production capacity from all power sources is 1,100 gigawatts.

The Energy Department conservatively pegs the entire country's EGS potential at 100 to 500 gigawatts, but a national assessment funded in 2008 by Google's philanthropic arm - which has invested more than \$1 billion in various forms of clean energy, ostensibly to feed its server farms - estimates closer to 3,000 gigawatts. "EGS could be the 'killer app' of the energy world," said Dan Reicher, Google.org's director of Climate and Energy Initiatives. Tapping even a fraction of that power could be an enormous boon for efforts to rid our energy supply of carbon emissions.

Unlike intermittent solar and wind, geothermal can provide always-on power to displace fossil fuels without storage or back up natural gas power plants. Environmental impacts appear to be relatively few. The EGS fracturing process can cause small earthquakes, but seismic monitoring of Calpine's project has shown the risk to be considerably smaller than with hydraulic fracturing for oil and gas, in part because water is injected at low instead of high pressure. EGS fracturing also uses clean water, and is thus unlikely to contaminate drinking supplies.

Still, geothermal energy supplies only 0.4% of the nation's total capacity, mostly due to its upfront cost. A single

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well can cost \$10 million or more, while the infrastructure needed to convert steam to energy runs into the hundreds of millions. And there's no guarantee of success, even at a known reservoir. In recent years, price competition from natural gas, biomass, solar and wind has further constrained growth. EGS is even more expensive than traditional geothermal. Mineral content, temperature and permeability have to be just right, but without reliable remote sensing technologies, now being developed with Energy Department money, developers can't know what's underground until they get there.

"We're all looking at this huge resource and the question is, how can we economically use it?" says Karl Gawell, executive director of the Geothermal Energy Association. "You're going to need sustained government investment to make progress." Calpine's project is the furthest along, with one well in Oregon and two in Nevada close behind. The Idaho project won't be complete until 2015, and the Alaska experiment is on hold after the first well failed.

Calpine recently proved that its \$13 million Geysers experiment can generate enough steam to produce up to 5 MW, enough for about 1,250 homes. There's only one problem: It can't find a power buyer. Until it does, it won't be able to build a new plant nearby or a planned network of wells to feed it. The Energy Department hopes its investments will help EGS plants produce power at 9 cents per kilowatt-hour by 2020 and 6 cents by 2030 - prices competitive with natural gas and other renewables.

Currently, however, Calpine is trying to find a buyer at 11 or 12 cents in order to afford the plant. But as long as California utilities can get power elsewhere for less, they aren't biting. "We're going to keep trying," vows Calpine

Senior Geologist Mark Walters. Doug Hollet, manager of the Energy Department's Geothermal Technologies Program, has a more modest aim for now: "Our goal is that when people discuss renewables like wind and solar, they mention geothermal in the same sentence."

This story originally appeared in an issue of High Country News (hcn.org).

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Picking Up What You Throw Away

By Jeff Chen

Since March 2010, I've become intimately acquainted with many of the things that people in our society no longer want to live with: empty liquor bottles, deflated soccer balls, the guts of deer, aluminum siding. My team and I have picked up this stuff on roadsides from the Atlantic Coast to the Pacific Coast. It's taken us the better half of three years to get this far. We collect garbage as we go, six out of seven days a week, for eight months of the year. We do this to make a statement about America.

That statement is about the sheer immensity of waste. We've hauled away some 188,593 pounds of garbage: ripped plastic, failed kitchen devices, jagged tires, flying Styrofoam, sex toys, beer cans and bottles and outrageously excessive packaging. Although I do not believe that litter is the biggest environmental catastrophe of our time, I do think it is a powerful indicator that our economy is out of whack - built on the rapid consumption of mostly virgin resources in the form of throwaway packaged goods.

We're highly skilled at buying things we don't necessarily need, but we're not very good at disposing of them properly. Picking up litter from a roadside involves

repetitive motion. We all wear neon reflective vests and carry 3-foot-long trash grabbers. With each squeeze of the handle, the rubber suction cups at the other end grasp a piece of rubbish that gets stuffed into the giant bag that we hold fast with our other hand.

Each piece of trash can tell a story, and the story begins inside the Earth, because all materials begin there, and it usually ends in a comingled, massive burial. But aside from the occasional surprising envelope full of cash or the duct-taped live chicken in a box, there is no juicy story behind most of the trash.

Who really cares about the cigarette butt, bubble-wrap or roof shingle? Sent to a 30-acre landfill, most trash just sits there, surrounded by a plastic liner. The waste this signifies is something most of us don't know about, or don't want to know about. The truth is: We're addicted to consumption, and I've seen a cross-country trail of trash to prove it. Each day that my team walks the roads of this country, I find myself obsessing over our addiction to "stuff." Each time I pick up an aluminum beer can, I picture a person hurling that can out of a car window; if it's a can of soda pop, I can't help thinking about our dependency on corn. I envision the damming of the Amazon River and the upheaval of its people to bring in bauxite-ore production.

With each passing car, I smell oil addiction. And in each

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economically depressed town I pass, I sense corporate greed that promotes mono-economies like monoculture crops. Here in the arid West, UV-degraded plastic is so brittle it shatters when touched, releasing a few more of those plastic polymers and persistent organic pollutants that bio-accumulate in our ecosystems.

I admit it: I'm not exempt from my own addiction to what's available in our still-rich culture — but that's also how I understand the need for this ongoing campaign for reform. Economists call the impacts of drilling, manufacturing, selling and disposing of used up or unwanted products "externalities," but a better term for that is "eternalities," because this stuff is eternal. Nothing ever goes completely "away."

Externalities is a term that cloaks impacts on our finite resources and impacts on the health of people and the land. It takes a lot of mining and industrial might to create what quickly become useless products. These companies - aided by tax breaks and cheap overseas manufacturing - don't take any binding responsibility for the waste they create. Instead, the burden descends on us, individual citizens and our cash-strapped municipalities, to haul away the waste that's created, sometimes reducing some of that waste through community-supported recycling.

It's time to pass a law requiring Extended Producer Responsibility so that companies remain responsible for their products. We have nothing to lose but our growing mountains of trash.

Jeff Chen is a contributor to Writers on the Range, a service of High Country News (hcn).

He is the co-founder of Pick Up America, the nation's first coast-to-coast litter pick-up movement. The group of young people celebrated the completion of their trek on Nov. 11 at Ocean Beach, California.

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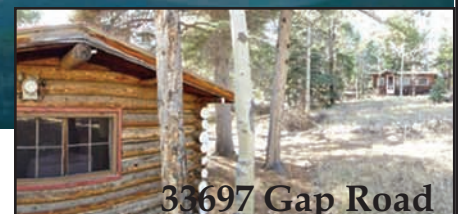
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The Violent Story Of Our First National Park

By Hal Herring/High Country News

*Empire of Shadows:
the Epic Story of Yellowstone*
by George Black

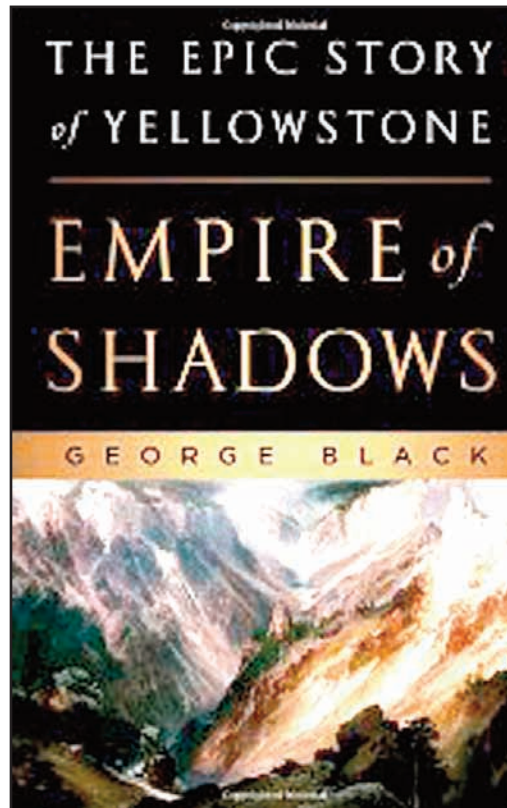
548 pages, hardcover: \$35.
St. Martin's Press, 2012.

Whenever my country's absurd politics wear me out, I remind myself that we were the first nation to have a true national park: Yellowstone. Sometimes, I'll even drive the four hours or so south from my home to the park and simply marvel at the vast rich high-altitude caldera and its wealth of wildlife, space and cold waters. What other nation, in the late 19th century, would have had the foresight to preserve such a place? Yes, Homo sapiens clogs the nearby countryside in the summers, filling the alpine air with exhaust fumes, sewage and the stink of snack foods. But Yellowstone National Park, all 1 million or so acres of it, is larger by far than any traffic jam or even the number of corpulent tourists sent airborne on the blunt horns of a bison bull.

The early Western editorialists called it "Wonderland." It was every bit of that, and it still is. George Black, a fly-fishing writer and the editor of OnEarth magazine, has written *Empire of Shadows: The Epic Story of Yellowstone*, a worthy historical doorstopper detailing exactly how the park came into existence. Why was the Yellowstone caldera so mysterious, so untouched, until long after the Civil War? The answer lies with the Blackfeet Nation, whose creation story commanded the tribe to prevent any trespass on its territory, a mandate that it followed with terrifying efficiency for centuries.

Intrepid scouts like Kit Carson and Jim Bridger told campfire tales of geysers, brimstone and scalding garishly colored springs, but until the Blackfeet were vanquished, the Upper Yellowstone was simply too dangerous to explore. As Black makes clear, the history of Yellowstone is inextricable from the violence required to conquer the territory surrounding it. In the decade following the Civil War, campaigns against Indians and outlaws consumed leaders of both commerce and the military alike.

Black explores a fertile territory here: These upstanding pioneers, some of the most brutal men in the history of the West, were also the leading proponents of preserving the wonders and beauties of the Yellowstone country. Among them was Nathaniel Pitt Langford of Helena, who led Montana's infamous Vigilantes, hanging the unrighteous



and the suspect from the goldfields of Bannock to the windy prairies of the Sun River Valley.

Lt. Gustavus Cheyney Doane, who would head the first hardscrabble expedition to explore the legends of the caldera and remain obsessed by the upper Yellowstone country for the rest of his life, commanded troops at the horrific Baker Massacre of Chief Heavy Runner's band of Blackfeet on the Marias River in the winter of 1870. Haunted and deeply intelligent, Lt. Doane is one of the West's most tragic characters, and Black deftly captures the contradictions that marked his life.

Contradiction, as *Empire of Shadows* makes clear, defined the nature of the West's settling from the mid-1860s through the mid-'80s. The United States was a

nation in wild ferment, roiled by waves of immigrants and an increasingly corrupt, roller-coaster economy. The Civil War with its preternatural level of violence (an estimated 620,000 dead) colored every aspect of those decades. Civil War veterans like Gen. Phil Sheridan applied the "deadly arithmetic" of Sharpsburg and Chickamauga to the last recalcitrant Native Americans, issuing orders to exterminate both the bison and the Blackfeet, even while writing letters that celebrated the beauty of the forests and plains.

The wholesale slaughter of wildlife was accelerated, and the first conservation movements were born almost simultaneously. As the wilderness was ruthlessly eviscerated, a new idea, that nature's wonders might be preserved rather than destroyed, swept the nation. Once the Yellowstone region was mapped, President Ulysses S. Grant declared it a public park on March 1, 1872. Few openly opposed the declaration. Yes, the impulses were partly mercenary - a railroad, tourism, hotels and kickbacks were already in the works - but Black goes beyond this fascinating historical and political maelstrom to examine the more complex and enduring American impulses to both vanquish and preserve.

Empire of Shadows will resonate with any reader who loves the West and hopes to preserve its Wonderlands, which still survive despite the rampant energy development, sprawling subdivisions and devouring homogeneity of modern America.

Papa's Gems
by Myles Mellor and Sally York

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
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69					70					71				

Across

- 1. Young salmon
- 6. Kisser
- 10. Droops
- 14. Lowest point
- 15. ___ believer
- 16. Small gull
- 17. 1952 novel, with The
- 20. Split
- 21. Rowboat adjunct
- 22. Not too brainy
- 25. ___ Rebellion of 1857-59
- 26. Twisted
- 30. Hoodlum
- 32. Fuse
- 35. Sniff out
- 41. Author of 17 and 63 Across
- 43. Meager
- 44. Broad view
- 45. Square
- 47. Che or gen followers
- 48. Item with a ladder
- 53. Pastoral poems (var.)
- 56. Wheels for mom
- 58. Lest
- 63. 1929 novel
- 66. Cost of living?
- 67. Ashtabula's lake
- 68. Exhaust
- 69. Deuce topper
- 70. Turned blue, maybe
- 71. Interesting

Down

- 1. Prig
- 2. French Sudan, today
- 3. Betting data
- 4. Beer garnish
- 5. ___ housing
- 6. "Harper Valley ___"
- 7. Ashes holder
- 8. Logic game
- 9. "La Scala di ___" (Rossini opera)
- 10. Inscribed stone
- 11. Greek moralist
- 12. Artist, with El
- 13. Sinuous
- 18. ___ degree
- 19. "48 ___"
- 23. Yen
- 24. Sang like a canary
- 26. Scores high
- 27. Do the trick
- 28. Doctor Who villainess, with The
- 29. Big bang matter
- 31. Beam
- 33. Sixth sense
- 34. Peeper problem
- 36. "Walking on Thin Ice" singer
- 37. Shrek, e.g.
- 38. Holiday opener
- 39. Weak
- 40. Young falcon
- 42. Lots
- 46. Napa Valley area
- 48. Sting
- 49. Certain inmate
- 50. Empty
- 51. Kind of pool
- 52. "Give It To You" rapper
- 54. Illuminated
- 55. Muzzle
- 57. Blown away
- 59. Hombre's home
- 60. "Iliad" warrior
- 61. Blue books?
- 62. See
- 64. Go horizontal
- 65. Directed

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(Completed puzzle
on page 40.)

Green Chile Soup

Brown 4-6 trimmed pork cutlets (cut up to bite size before or after they are browned) or a container of firm tofu (cut up) or a box of tempeh (broken apart) in a cast iron dutch oven with a small amount of canola oil. Add a diced red onion and let simmer until onion goes slightly transparent.

Add a 27 ounce can of green chilies, if whole - cut up into bite size or smaller pieces. Add a 15 ounce can of green chile enchilada sauce plus three (of the same size) cans of water (a container of vegetable stock could be used.) Let come to a boil and add your



favorite raw veggies (fresh or frozen): broccoli, bell peppers (the yellow or red add color), mushrooms, carrots: all diced up to bite size pieces - about 2 or 3 cups of veggies. For those of you who like your green chile spicier you can cut up a jalapeno pepper or two and add them now. Add a 15 ounce can



of either the tri-bean blend or kidney, pinto, black or garbanzo beans. If you want to use dry beans you have to be sure to soak them overnight and then add to the



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soup.

Let simmer on low medium (or lower if you're



which is handy when preparing the other ingredients while your soup is cooking. While letting the soup come to a boil, the nutrients in the ingredients are better kept if you do not let it get so hot as to boil over.

The soup is best after a night in the refrigerator and brought back to just a boil before serving: plain bowl with tortilla chips or bread, poured over fried eggs on



using an aluminum pan instead of cast iron).

Spice to taste: half teaspoon Thyme, salt, sage, cayenne pepper & Rosemary, whatever you prefer.

Once the veggies have had a chance to soften, add one third cup grits/polenta (a can of refried beans can be used) and a peeled, diced sweet potato to thicken.

At this point add a cup of water or broth and let simmer on low for at least an hour before serving, stirring occasionally with the pot lid slightly ajar. A handy tip with soups is that if you let your wooden spoon sit on top of the liquid it will not boil over,

a tortilla with cheese (Huevos Rancheros, pictured above), inside a rolled tortilla and cheese with lettuce (burrito style), poured over a flat warmed tortilla with cheese (quesadilla style). Use your own imagination and you'll find it is a versatile soup for many of your favorite dishes. Most children like it best when it is not too spicy (leaving out the jalapeno peppers).

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Arctic Sea Ice ~ Government Predator Control

Dear EarthTalk: I heard that the Arctic summer sea ice is at its lowest level since we began recording it. What are the implications of all this melting?

- Jo Shoemaker, Bowie, MD

It is true that on September 16, 2012 the world reached a new low: The National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) reported that the extent of sea ice across the Arctic was at its lowest since satellite record-keeping began in 1979. On that date the sea ice reached its summer minimum, 1.32 million square miles, half of what the average size of summer ice was between 1979 and 2000, and almost 20 percent lower than the previous record minimum of 1.61 million square miles set on Sept. 18, 2007. NSIDC added that, despite especially warm conditions in 2007 being much



more favorable for sea ice loss than this year, the thinning of sea ice due to climate change has made the ice more vulnerable to breakup and melting.

Meanwhile, researchers with the European Space Agency's CryoSat-2 probe reported in August that beyond the loss of sea-ice extent, the thickness and volume of the ice has also been declining significantly faster than expected. They found just 1,679 cubic miles this past summer as compared to 3,118 cubic miles in the summer of 2004. They anticipate that the Arctic could be ice-free in the summer for a day or more by the end of the decade.

The implications of such melting are potentially immense. For starters, wildlife like polar bears, seals and walrus depend on sea ice for their survival; their habitat is literally being pulled out from under them. Polar bears were added to the federal Endangered Species List in 2008 for this very reason in what environmentalists herald as a

great victory in that the federal government officially recognized the existence of global warming and would therefore be able to take more decisive action to rein in carbon pollution-of course, that part of the dream has yet to be realized.

Perhaps even more alarming is the fact that melting sea ice and accelerating Arctic warming spur changes in the jet stream that increase the frequency of weather extremes like droughts, floods, heat waves and cold spells in the mid-latitude regions of the Northern Hemisphere. The fact that 2012 has been a scorcher all around-July was the hottest month on record, with two-thirds of the U.S. in drought, wildfires running rampant and half the counties in the country

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designated as federal disaster areas-only makes the connection between carbon pollution and the greenhouse effect all the more apparent.

Environmentalists argue that we already have the technology and the legal tools to achieve rapid greenhouse pollution reductions “Full use of all of the Clean Air Act’s successful pollution-reduction programs is our best route to quick reductions in greenhouse gas emissions,” says Shaye Wolf, climate science director at the Center for Biological Diversity’s Climate Law Institute. “The Obama administration, however, has been too slow and timid in using this bedrock law to cut pollution.”

“The polar meltdown shows we’re teetering on the brink of climate-change catastrophe,” adds Wolf. “Arctic sea ice plays a critical role in regulating the planet’s climate. We can’t wait any longer to cut carbon pollution.”

Center for Biological Diversity; www.biologicaldiversity.org; National Snow and Ice Data Center, www.nsidc.org; European Space Agency’s CryoSat-2, www.esa.int/esaLP/LPcryosat.html. earthtalk@emagazine.com

Dear EarthTalk: A friend of mine told me that our government kills thousands of wild animals like bears and wolves every year in the name of protecting livestock. How can the government, which is supposed to protect dwindling numbers of animals, instead be killing them?

— Amy Pratt, Troy, NY

Actually, the federal government kills some 100,000 carnivores every year under the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA’s) Wildlife Services program. While the program does much more than so-called “predator control”-threatened and endangered species conservation, invasive species mitigation, wildlife disease monitoring, airport bird strike prevention, rabies and rodent control-killing bears, wolves, coyotes and mountain lions to protect livestock does take up \$100 million of the federal budget each year.

Animal advocates say it’s not fair to kill animals owned in essence by the public trust and indispensable to ecosystem health just to protect privately held livestock, let alone spend millions of tax dollars doing it.

“Working directly with commercial operators and state and local governments, Wildlife Services uses a combination of lethal control methods, like trapping, aerial gunning, poisoning, and denning (killing young in their dens), and some non-lethal control methods,” reports the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). “But driven by narrow agricultural interests, these predator control activities often ignore the greater public need for a healthy environment, fiscal responsibility, and safe public lands.”

NRDC cites USDA statistics showing that most livestock losses result from weather, disease, illness and birthing problems-not predation. *(Continued on next page.)*

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They also argue that the lethal methods employed by Wildlife Services have led to dozens of human and pet injuries and deaths and degrade ecosystems that rely on healthy predator populations to function. Also the two most commonly used poisons, Compound 1080 and sodium cyanide, go beyond killing animals and wreak havoc on entire ecosystems.

Predator Defense, another group committed to ending federal predator control efforts, says that it is important to maintain healthy populations of the very predators Wildlife Services works to kill. When, for instance, predators are around to keep deer and elk populations in check, more and varied kinds of plants are given space and time to grow, in turn preserving and creating habitat for many different species.

“Wildlife Services’ predator control work cries out for reform,” says NRDC. The group recommends bringing

more transparency to the process so the public can assess how tax dollars are being used; taking a more scientific approach instead of centering the program around the

demands of commercial interests; holding the program to higher environmental standards; ending the cruelest, most hazardous and environmentally harmful killing methods; and requiring non-lethal methods when possible.

There has been no decisive legislation to stop predator control efforts, but a bill introduced into the House by California Republican John Campbell III calls for amending the Toxic Substances Control Act to prohibit the use of Compound 1080 and sodium cyanide for predator control. The bill (H.R. 4214) was referred to committee and may or

may not see a floor vote this year. *NRDC*, www.nrdc.org; *Predator Defense*, www.predatordefense.org; *H.R. 4214*, www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/112/hr4214.



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A New Way To Observe Weather From Space

CSU researchers discovered that a combination of starlight and the upper atmosphere's own subtle glow can help satellites see Earth's clouds on moonless nights. During the daytime, ultraviolet light from the sun bombards the Earth's upper atmosphere and breaks apart gaseous molecules and atoms. During the nighttime, these molecules and atoms recombine, emitting faint visible light in the process. This "air glow" combined with starlight illuminates clouds at night, and by using a new and improved satellite instrument, scientists can take advantage of this signal for the first time from space, according to a groundbreaking new study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences by Steve Miller, a research scientist at CSU's Cooperative Institute for Research in the Atmosphere (CIRA), along with colleagues from National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Northrop Grumman and the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD).

Miller and his research team captured the data from a new advanced weather-and-climate monitoring satellite. The satellite, a joint venture between NASA and NOAA, is called the Suomi National Polar-orbiting Partnership, or Suomi NPP, and carries five advanced instruments at an orbit approximately 512 miles above the earth. "We actually thought there might be a problem with the instrument, at first," said Miller. "It took us a minute to realize that what we were seeing was something real and extraordinary."

This new ability to see clouds at night could have significant implications for weather and climate observations for forecasters and research scientists alike. "This development is exciting and impressive," said Mary Kicza, assistant administrator for NOAA's Satellite and Information Service. "This could be especially useful to our meteorologists in areas like Alaska, where the winter months have long periods of darkness." Among these sensors is the Visible/Infrared Imager/Radiometer Suite (VIIRS), which includes a "Day/Night Band" that is sensitive to extremely low levels of light.

"The Day/Night Band is a new capability for NOAA users," said Mitch Goldberg, program scientist at NOAA Joint Polar Satellite System (JPSS) Office. "We are very encouraged by this remarkable discovery by the CIRA scientists." The scientists were applying methods to reduce "noise" in the Day/Night Band measurements, when they

found that the instrument was sensitive enough to see clouds and other objects in what would appear to the human eye as complete darkness. The new capability will be useful for improving our views of very low clouds and features such as sea ice at night, potentially benefiting travel and commerce.

"Most weather satellites aren't even sensitive enough to see the lights from a large city like Denver, much less the reflected moonlight, which is nearly a million times fainter than sunlight. These air glow/starlight sources are 100-1000 times fainter still," Miller said. "Instead of using visible light, nighttime observations are typically relegated to infrared (heat) measurements, where near-surface features (such as fog) can blend into their surroundings because they have nearly the same temperature." The Day/Night Band was intended to advance the low light-sensor technology pioneered in the 1960's on the DoD's meteorological satellite program, but no one expected it to see clouds on moonless nights, Miller said.

"In some ways, the day just got twice as long and that's pretty exciting for scientists," he added. In addition to the clouds, Miller said that sensitivity of the Day/Night Band to direct emissions from air glow allows the sensor to see waves moving through the upper atmosphere, forced by thunderstorms below - which appear like ripples in a pond atop some of the stronger storms.



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Vagabond Journal - Wanderlust

By Craig Childs/High Country News

Savoonga is the place to be on the Fourth of July. The village is a cluster of roofs on the north side of St. Lawrence Island, a treeless hump of capes and dormant volcanoes rising out of the Bering Sea, battered by Arctic weather. The Native Yup'iks here celebrate the holiday with more gusto than people in most small Western towns. On that clear and sunny morning, folding chairs were placed in front of the two-story plywood town hall. People of all ages came out of their small, boxy government houses, some walking in family groups, others arriving on four-wheelers from the other side of the village. They greeted each other with a spritely, "Happy Fourth of the July!"

St. Lawrence Island is Alaskan, though far out of view of the American mainland and barely within sight of the mountainous Siberian coast. Villagers told me they celebrated the Fourth because it was better than being Russian. Savoonga holds foot races that day, and bike races, and hot dogs are served on paper plates with bags of Doritos and a little stack of cookies for dessert. Out came

the old, red fire truck, siren wailing in celebration. A PA system announced the raffle winners' numbers. I listened for my own, but it was hard to tell the difference between English and the Siberian Yup'ik tongue spoken on this island. Besides, I didn't want to hear my number called; I was a stranger in this subsistence village, and I dreaded the embarrassment of having to get up in front of everyone to claim a prize.

I was here for other reasons. I had come with questions about the Yup'ik sense of place. This sea-hunting culture has survived on these desolate sub-Arctic capes for 2,000 years, ever since its Siberian Eskimo ancestors first crossed the Bering Strait. Home freezers are stocked with walrus and seal. Even though they also rely on canned meat, deep-fried pork rinds and Pop Tarts from the cavernous village store, people still go out in small aluminum skiffs and harpoon the occasional whale by hand.

You don't come to visit empty-handed, according to scientists who'd worked here, so I'd brought gifts: fresh fruit, bags of vacuum-packed coffee, Celestial Seasonings blueberry tea as a special request. When I arrived by plane on their gravel strip several days earlier, handshakes welcomed me, and if I stayed in one place for too long, women brought me fresh baked bread or cookies wrapped in foil. Conversations flourished around kitchen tables and over hot coffee in front of woodstoves.

A vagabond myself, I had come to Savoonga hoping to learn what it means to belong to one spot on the map, to say that this place is your home and always has been. Many described how the island is changing. They spoke from a perspective of generations: Seasonal weather patterns shifting, new pelagic fish species and migratory birds appearing that are unlike anything ever seen in their history. They saw the world in longer timeframes than I

was used to, and they were oddly unfazed by the idea of climate change, as if they already knew that the only thing one could do on an island this remote was adapt to whatever came next. I wondered what it would be like to know an island that well, to remember it through stories that recede over a horizon of centuries — not just what you learned from your folks or in school, but what was remembered and preserved by the land itself.

That evening, I went to the high school gym and sat in packed bleachers while men on the floor struck walrus-gut drums. People left the bleachers and danced. They knew their places, every gesture, every footstep memorized. Toddlers came onto the floor and tried to imitate what they were seeing, while little boys

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stomped for their grandfathers, and little girls painted the air with their arms for their grandmothers. A man snatched fur-lined mitts from the floor, tugging them on as he dropped into a boot-stomping promenade. He swung at the air with his mitts in swift, ritualized gestures, using expressions I didn't know.

I imagined these same movements repeated generations or centuries or thousands of years ago, danced not in a gym, but out on a gray cobble spit. Women in one line, men in another, they would have scuffed the ground with their steps. Dressed in skins and furs, living on a rock in the cold and wild Bering Sea, they began something that still hasn't ended.

A couple days later, I borrowed a four-wheeler and followed a hunter east out of Savoonga. We cut across roadless, trackless tundra, going around racks of abandoned reindeer skulls, and in and out of grass gullies. A storm from the Arctic was blowing in, steel-gray clouds and pale mist swirling like ghosts across the eerie expanse. When we neared shore, mist whipped off the sea, wetting our faces, soaking our outer layers. Our fat tires crunched over generations of whalebones and butchering camps. Several miles out on a cape, we stopped. Wearing a colorful wool cap and greasy Carhartt coveralls, the hunter threw a shovel over his shoulder. We walked together through blowing fog onto a mound of tundra-gnurls and pits.

It was an ancient Yup'ik village where nobody lived anymore, and it was honeycombed with dig-holes. The hunter climbed down into one. He had told me that sometimes he hunts seal, and sometimes walrus. There are seasons for salmon and seasons for murre eggs. On a scant, windswept island like this, you take what you can get. Now, he said, was the season for artifacts. Permafrost had loosened its grip enough for him to push a shovel into the ground. He'd been digging here, he said, most of his life. His current pit was a little over waist-deep, with water collecting at the bottom where he dug out heaping shovelfuls of muck, seeking a prehistoric harpoon tip or a chunk of fossilized walrus tusk, something worth selling.

The site was surrounded by spoil piles of countless walrus skulls and bits of artifacts useless on the market. I picked up a beveled whale rib and poked mud out through holes drilled into the bone. It was a sled runner, I saw, and the holes were where it had been laced under a footboard. St. Lawrence Island is a Native corporation, not an Indian reservation. Under U.S. law, Siberian Yup'iks have the legal freedom to do whatever they want with what they have on their land, even if what they find is thousands of years old. Then again, they were here a thousand years before U.S. law ever existed.

Although some of the villagers reject the practice, many Yup'ik hunters rely on harvesting artifacts in today's cash economy. The ancestors have helped them, they say. A rare cache that includes scrimshawed ivory, or maybe a set of beautifully carved snow goggles, (Continued on next page.)

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can fetch hundreds of thousands of dollars on the antiquities market. But you can also sell broken carved ivory tips and parts of useless, ancient halibut hooks for \$5 or \$10. It all adds up, if you're persistent.

The hunter told me I could take a souvenir: anything I found on the surface. Even though I was captivated by the pieces of drilled or carved bone scattered around us, I couldn't do it. None of it was mine. I wasn't even sure how I felt about the hunter's ethics, but it wasn't my place to speak. I crouched and thumbed one of the ice-scrapers out of the ground. Five hundred years old, or maybe a thousand? Whatever the case, it was far beyond the scope of my horizon. What artifacts do I have? My grandmother's wedding ring from Big Bend country in West Texas; a box of arrowheads from my great-grandfather in southern New Mexico? Even those were beyond my scope; I had moved too many times. What should I say when I was asked where I was from? Where I was born, maybe? My most recent home? The place I get my mail?

Here on this mist-driven mound, I felt a long way from ever being native. My ancestry lacked roots: a veneer of cities and trash dumps, maybe a pile of rusted cans, and — if you looked back far enough — a handful of sickly Pilgrim villages, now archaeological sites on the Northeast Coast. I had nothing like this in the ground beneath my feet, no ancient bone tools or skulls of animals eaten by my ancestors.

There are older people than Yup'ik, though. You can't see them anymore, but they lived here, too. At the height of the last Ice Age 20,000 years ago, sea levels were down more than 300 feet and a land bridge connected Siberia to Alaska, back when St. Lawrence Island was not an island, but a high point in a landscape of seemingly endless steppe roamed by mammoths. This is where the first people are thought to have crossed into North America. They lived in what is now called Beringia, the subcontinent that connected Asia to North America. Anatomically, they were identical to modern people. Most would have had northern-Asian facial features and copper-brown skin. They used stone tools, hunted, fished, and gathered plants or eggs, whatever they could find in this hungry, wild country.

Years before I visited St. Lawrence Island, I traveled the rim of the Arctic Circle across Yukon Territory and Alaska. A college buddy and I were running a thousand miles of river through rumpled mountains and flats. We were traveling through what remains of Eastern Beringia, part of this lost subcontinent that stretches from northwest Canada across Alaska to the sea. The region's ecology has changed relatively little over tens of thousands of years; the landscape is considered an Ice Age relic.

Recent graduates of the University of Colorado, out to see the world on a grand adventure, the two of us had a 17-foot canoe and more leathery, home-dried fruit than anyone should ever consume. The Yukon River carried us north through spindles of black spruce clustered around open plains of tundra, sweeping us into a land utterly unlike anything we knew. With our sunglasses, mosquito nets and rich Arctic-sun tans, we felt like Lewis and Clark, our paddles gliding as green-backed mountains rose ahead of us, then fell to our backs.

The mouth of the incoming Porcupine River gaped wide among scrawny black spruce. As we passed, we stared

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along its passage and wondered what was up there, what other worlds we were passing by. We had no idea that 250 miles up the Porcupine is a cluster of high limestone grottos known as the Bluefish Caves. Raised atop a hill, they look across rolling, hummocky country, similar to what this region looked like when the first people reached North America. Inside these caves, human-related deposits start showing up 23,000 years ago, putting one of the oldest pins into the map of the Americas.

We were entering one of North America's great historical crossroads. All around the northern bend of the Yukon and its fat, ox-bowed tributaries, paleontologists have scratched and scabbled at the riverbanks, discovering rich deposits of what appear to be human-worked mammoth bones. This part of Beringia may have been a massive butchering ground. If this anomalous layer of mammoth bones was created by people, as some believe, then human presence

here in Eastern Beringia may go back as far as 40,000 years ago. Regardless of how many zeroes there are in the number, this is a lot of history to confront when you are a stranger, your generations in North America fewer than you can count on your hands. But I was still in my early 20s, and I had never questioned my ancestry or my right to be here. I was on the Yukon to explore, to feel the shape of the land.

The river opened wide as it passed the Arctic Circle. An anatomizing labyrinth, the Yukon braided until it was 20 miles wide. Backwater channels increased and became a challenge to avoid, some dammed by logjams from spring runoff. Spinning in eddies half a mile wide under a circle of endless sky, we were bedazzled, the sun looping around us like a slow hula-hoop.

The entire essay originally appeared in a special issue of High Country News (hcn.org).

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Westfalen Hof - pg 13 303.642.3180
Whistlers Cafe - pg 17 303.258.0614

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Golden Mill pg 11 303.279.1151
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TAXES

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WATER & WELL

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DECEMBER
2012

POWER UPDATE



Small Change Has a Big Impact

It's only small change—an average of 50 cents per month—but when you multiply that by the thousands of generous United Power members who participate in Operation Round-Up it makes a BIG difference in your local communities.

Operation Round-Up has provided funds for local fire departments, community health clinics, youth programs, food banks, needy families and many other worthwhile causes.

Put your small change to work!

Sign up on your next bill statement, online or by calling 303-637-1300.



Free Trip to D.C.

Apply now for United Power's 2012 Washington D.C. Youth Tour – it's easy and it's a fun opportunity. The tour is scheduled for June 13-20, 2013 and is a unique opportunity for local students to gain an understanding of American history, develop leadership skills, and have a better understanding of electric cooperatives.

Three students will be selected to represent United Power on this all expense paid trip to our nation's capital, along with 1,500 other students served by cooperatives from across the country. United Power is committed to educating students in the community about electric cooperatives and the role they play in developing strong communities. Students must complete an application and submit an essay about ways that they would recommend for their school to use electricity more efficiently.

The deadline for the United Power Washington D.C. Youth Tour is January 11, 2013. The tour is open to high school students 16 years of age or older entering 11th or 12th grade, and whose primary residence is in United Power's service territory. Applications and more information can be found online at www.unitedpower.com, through your local high school counselor, or by calling United Power's External Affairs department at 303-659-0551.



Cooperative Youth Tour
Washington, D.C.
June 13-20, 2013

The Last Water Heater You'll Ever Buy



United Power members can take advantage of up to \$650 in rebates when they replace their gas water heaters with an energy-efficient electric Marathon® water heater and utilize the Time-of-Day rate.

All-electric Marathon® water heaters have one of the highest efficiency ratings of any water heater on the market. And Marathon® water heaters are built to last a lifetime in your home, not in a landfill. Every Marathon® comes with a manufacturer's lifetime tank warranty. They are built with an inner tank that won't rust, corrode, or leak—ever.

Call an Energy Management Specialist at 303-659-0551 to get your Marathon® water heater today!

IT'S THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR!

VIEWSI



11536 Coal Creek Heights
Gorgeous Executive Home!
3 BD/ 3 BA. **\$524,900**

Retro Charm



33867 Ave de Pines Lane
Perfect Mountain Retreat!
1 BD/ 1 BA **\$169,000**



200 The Lane Road
2 Ac! Beautiful Horse Set-Up
3 BD/ 2 BA **\$249,900**

NEW LISTING!



11794 Vonnie Claire
Loaded with Charm & Character!!
2 BD/ 1 BA 2-Car **\$229,000**



10844 Diane Drive
Exquisite Updated Home
4 BD/ 3 BA 3-Car **\$475,000**

NEW PRICE!



267 N. Beaver
10 Acres - SNOWCAPPED VIEWS!
3 BD/ 3 BA + Office. **\$479,900**



540 Lakeview Drive
Walk to everything in Ned!
4 BD/ 3 BA 2-Car **\$369,000**

NEW LISTING!



11833 Hillcrest Road
Comfy, cozy A-Frame
1 BD/ 1 BA 2-Car. **\$179,900**



25 Crescent Lake Road
Perfect Horse Property!
3 BD/ 2 BA. **\$349,000**



307 Divide View
Updated w/garage, shed, sep. cabin.
2 BD/ 1 BA **\$199,900**



102 Highpoint Circle
Gourmet Kitchen - Great Location!
3 BD/ 2 BA 1-Car+Shed. **\$319,000**



33080 Janelle Circle
Panoramic Views Abound!
3 BD/ 4 BA **\$339,000**



175 Rudi Lane
Passive Solar + Luxury
3 BD/ 3 BA 4-Car. **\$449,500**

Vacant Land

33966 Nadm Drive - \$75,000
1+ Ac. City Light Views!

11547 Shimley Road - \$39,000
Great Price - City Views!

11883 Lillis Lane - \$164,000
4.6 Ac. Super Solar Potential!

595 Black Gulch Rd. - \$184,900
Spectacular 21.7 Level Acres!

4 Leon Lane - \$46,900
Dream Home Lot!

0 Moss Rock - \$74,999
2.85 Ac. Snowcapped Views!

0 Coal Creek Canyon - \$50,000
Drive cut-in; Septic design done!

0 Pennsylvania Gulch - \$299,900
17.7 Ac. @ Glacier Lake!



101 Kirkwood Way
Thorn Lake Privileges!
3 BD/ 3 BA **\$379,900**



0 Sunny Skies
20.66 Ac Beautiful Divide Views!
Good Access **\$45,000**



430 Creekwood Trail
Gorgeous Log Home - Glorious VIEWS!
3 BD/ 3 BA **\$339,000**



537 Gap Road
Backs to Golden Gate State Park!
3 BD/ 1 BA Horse Property **\$219,000**



11777 Brook Road
Wonderful Open Floor Plan!
4 BD/ 4 BA + Loft/Office. **\$399,999**



Kathy Keating,
CRS, ABR, GRI
EcoBroker,
Broker Associate



For additional information and photos:

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