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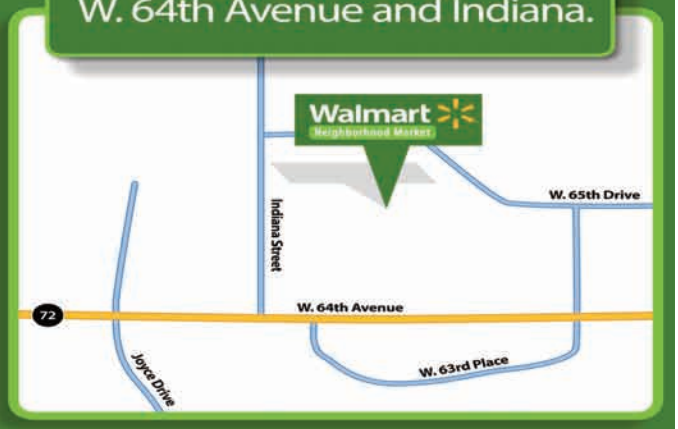

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About the Cover: ***Photos of wild turkeys by Molly Fisher in Coal Creek Canyon.***

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Air Pollutants, Climate Change: Human Health

Nitrogen-Related Air Pollutants and Climate Change Need Study in Tandem with Human Health Impacts, Colorado State University Scientist Says

Nitrogen-related air pollutants that come from sources such as cars, power plants, fertilizer and animal wastes have an impact on human health that needs to be considered together with likely impacts of global climate change, according to a new paper by a CSU professor and others. Jennifer Peel, associate professor of epidemiology and environmental health in the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at CSU and four colleagues from an NSF working group, took a broad look at nitrogen in the environment in the review article, which now appears online in the journal Biogeochemistry.

Their challenge - undertaken during a Fort Collins workshop in 2011 - was to think about human health impacts likely to result from the interaction of nitrogen-related air pollutants, such as ozone, particulate matter (PM), nitrogen oxides, and ammonia, with climate change. They reviewed evidence on the subject and evaluated where further research could be useful. The report also was submitted as part of a larger effort for the National Climate Assessment. “The state of knowledge regarding the likely impact of the interaction of nitrogen and climate change on ambient air quality and human health contains some critical gaps,” the scientists conclude in the paper. “We know that both climate change and nitrogen-related air pollutants have potentially serious independent impacts on human health,” Peel said. “So based on what we know, rather than think about each factor in isolation, the challenge was to evaluate how these two environmental phenomena will interact to impact human health and where more research is needed on this topic.”

Areas impacting the environment and health that need further study, according to the scientists: Greater exposure to ozone: Climate change will likely make summers warmer and longer, increasing our exposure to ozone. Ozone is dependent on those warm days with lots of UV radiation. Nitrogen emissions from increased air conditioning also can feed into ozone formation. Increased frequency and severity of wildfires: Drought is becoming more extreme and changing the frequency of wildfires and where they occur, thereby increasing human exposure to fire-related air pollutants.

Increasing nitrogen in the environment also could promote growth of fire-prone plants. Increased pollen emissions: Both climate change and environmental nitrogen could change the timing and the magnitude of pollen emissions from plants, possibly extending the period of the pollen season. Nitrogen-related ambient air pollutants can make pollen allergies worse. Increased heat waves: The frequency and length of heat waves is likely to increase with global climate change. Some evidence suggests that air pollution and heat waves are even more deadly when experienced in combination with each other, particularly for vulnerable populations such as the elderly and those without access to air conditioning.

The 'Truth' About Organic

By Ari LeVaux

The way headlines broke after a recent Stanford study comparing organic food to food grown on conventional farms, you'd think organic had been shot and left for dead. The New York Times, for example, announced that "Stanford scientists cast doubt on advantages of organic meat and produce." Maybe the doubt was inferred from the study's lukewarm synopsis: The published literature lacks strong evidence that organic foods are significantly more nutritious than conventional foods. Consumption of organic foods may reduce exposure to pesticide residues and antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

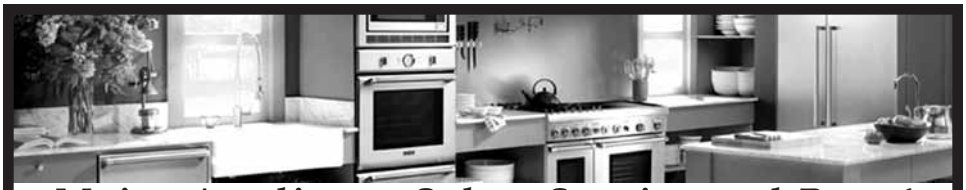
But wait a minute: Organic food has never been seriously touted as more nutritious or vitamin-rich than conventional food. Nor is it the cure for HIV, a recipe for immortality or the preferred diet of unicorns. Organic has always been defined by what it isn't, and the first rule of organic food is that it's free of things like pesticide and antibiotic residues, as well as synthetic hormones. The study confirms what organic supporters have long said was the simple truth: Organic food is less adulterated by things you don't want to eat.

The organic watchdog group Cornucupia Institute called the Stanford study "biased" in a Sept. 12 press release, which also raised questions about the study's funding. Several of the authors are fellows and affiliates of Stanford University's Freeman Spogli Institute, which has received funding from big-ag companies, including Cargill. The study synthesized the results of 237 previously conducted studies that had compared nutrient and pesticide residue levels in organic and conventional food. Although pesticide-residue levels in conventionally grown food, as compared with the EPA's allowable levels, mostly complied with the law, Cornucopia complained that the meta study failed to discuss any of the specific dangers posed by pesticides. For example, a 2010 study in the journal Pediatrics found that children with organophosphate pesticides in their systems were more likely to be diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

Another organophosphate pesticide, chlorpyrifos, also poses a risk to the brains of children, especially via prenatal exposure. A residential roach-killer, chlorpyrifos was banned for home use by the EPA in 2001, but the chemical is still permitted for agricultural use on fruit trees and vegetables, and is known by its Dow trade name Lorsban. According to the EPA, 10 million pounds of it is applied annually in the U.S.

Recently, chlorpyrifos was found to stunt development more in males than it did in females. A study conducted in New York City and published in the journal Neurotoxicology and Teratology found that while the IQ scores of both boys and girls were lower following exposure, the brains of boys were especially affected. Chlorpyrifos is just one of more than 1,400 pesticides regulated by the EPA.

Given our slowly evolving scientific understanding of pesticide chemicals and the glacial pace of political change, the Stanford study results support the idea that eating organic food reduces our exposure to things



that we may someday realize are bad for us, as well as things that we already know are bad, such as chicken and pork contaminated with antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

Had the Stanford study shown higher nutrient levels in organic food, you could be sure the organic industry would be parading those results like the Greeks dragging Hector's dead body around Troy. But if differences in nutrient content are what we want to look for, we should compare the nutrient levels of food grown on small, crop-diverse family farms with those of food grown within large monocultures. Practices common on small, integrated farms, such as composting, crop rotation and mulching, tend to build richer-than-average soil. It would be interesting to compare the nutrition levels on small farms that do these things with those on large farms that don't. There are also the issues of whether farm animals get to experience outdoor pasture and whether a particular farm contributes to pollution and inappropriate land use.

Nutrient levels, then, are just one part of the debate about agriculture. To many in the sustainable-food movement, factory-farmed organic - what you sometimes get at Whole Foods - remains an imperfect compromise. As a wise farmer once told me, "Most big-organic food is still grown by exploited brown people on massive monocultures, just without chemicals."

The Stanford report concluded with the kind of self-contradictory statement that embodies the general confusion the study has generated: The evidence does not suggest marked health benefits from consuming organic versus conventional foods, although organic produce may reduce exposure to pesticide residues and organic chicken and pork may reduce exposure to antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

In other words, organic isn't any better, but it might be somewhat less worse. If the Stanford team's idea of health includes adding pesticide residues and antibiotic resistant bacteria to my system, then I'd hate to meet its criteria for sick.

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

Editor's Note: Some people don't buy organic, even though they know it has less chance of exposing them to residual pesticides, bacteria or homones simply because it doesn't look like the perfect fruit, vegies or meat we're used to seeing. It seems to be a mind set we need to adjust to.

It's All In Your Mind

By Melissa E. Johnson

"Don't Make Assumptions.
Find the courage to ask questions
and to express what you really want.
Communicate with others as clearly as you can
to avoid misunderstandings, sadness and drama.
With just this one agreement,
you can completely transform your life."
~ Miguel Angel Ruiz

They stayed in the city that night instead of retuning home to the mountains, so they seized the opportunity to take a late night stroll through the neighborhood-past the restaurants and yoga studios, churches and schools; past the houses with lights on where people moved about the way they do before turning in for the night.

Thrilled to be out walking past 9 p.m. (something they rarely did in their mountain community), they walked slowly, hand-in-hand, savoring the night, as they moved comfortably between sound bites of their busy week and absolute silence. Then it happened, one of those "Aha!" moments that brings understanding. The exchange went something like this:

HE SAID: You know, if we kept our place in the mountains and bought a house or condo in the city, we could go walking like this every night. SHE SAID: That would be fantastic! HE SAID: But once our child starts school we couldn't do that. SHE SAID: Why not? We could just go after dinner. HE SAID: No, that won't work. Once our kid starts school we won't be able to do that! SHE SAID (with growing frustration): Well, why the heck not? I mean, once the kid starts school he'll be old enough to stay up past 7 p.m., so why couldn't we just have an early dinner and go right after? HE SAID (also with growing frustration): What are you talking about? Once the kid starts school it won't even be an option!

SHE SAID (eyebrows cocked, hands on hips and evermore frustration): What am I talking about? What are YOU talking about? It's not like our kid has to go to bed at 5 p.m.-why couldn't we just go after dinner? HE SAID (voice raised, chest bowed and that tone he gets when he's convinced he's among idiots): Once school starts we're not going to be running back and forth like that just to go for a walk in the City!

They stopped in their tracks and looked at each other, their faces colored with a mix of amused irritation and a hint of understanding; something in their communiqué was amuck! Turns out, she had assumed that if they had a second home in this lovely neighborhood that their child would attend the prestigious Academy, a charter school located right in the middle of the development, so there was no reason why they couldn't make this walk every night after dinner if they chose to. But she didn't say that; not to him anyway; not out loud.

And it turns out that he had assumed that once the kid started school they would be staying at their mountain home during the week because that's where he would be registered for school, in his home community. But he didn't explain any of that; not to her anyway; not out loud.

But the real kicker is that this "child" they spoke of, the one whose schooling would prevent these fabulous evening

walks through the city-completely fictitious; an unborn idea between an unmarried couple dreaming out loud about the future.

All the while, she thought he was being uptight about their child's bedtime and he thought she had gone mad thinking they would be driving up and down the mountain to accommodate a late night city stroll, neither making any sense to the other at all. But as the hole in their communication cleverly revealed itself, real magic happened. There, in the gap, they saw the unspoken assumptions that had led them down this path of confusion. They laughed so hard it hurt!

Thing is, so much of our experience of life takes place in our heads! Sure, we move about in our day-to-day existence, grounded in the physical. Yet whole worlds exist up there in the space between, real or imagined-for good or ill-and our perception of the world and the people in it and what's going on around us all come from that place; including our disappointments about the way things "ought to be," which points the finger of our personal suffering right back at us!

We make assumptions and then we make assumptions about those assumptions-assuming others are operating with the same understanding-many of which are flawed and which, in oft surprising ways, triggers our emotional experience and inflames our hotspots. Next thing you know, you find yourself in that proverbial heated debate over why you can or can't take an evening walk in the city after dinner with your unborn child because of where he'll go to school!

Fascinating and a little bit scary when you consider that on some level we're all doing this-experiencing the world around us in our heads, which may or may not produce an accurate picture of what's really going on. Dr. Wayne Dyer describes this phenomenon best: "As you think so shall you be! Since you cannot physically experience another person, you can only experience them in your mind. Conclusion: All of the other people in your life are simply thoughts in your mind. Not physical beings to you, but thoughts. Your relationships are all in how you think about the other people in your life. Your experience of all of those people is only in your mind. Your feelings about your lovers come from your thoughts. For example, they may in fact behave in ways that you find offensive. However, your relationship to them when they behave offensively is not determined by their behavior, it is determined only by how you choose to relate to that behavior. Their actions are theirs, you cannot own them, you cannot be them, you can only process them in your mind."

And so the key, I think, is to ask questions. Make clarity and truth a priority. Acknowledge when you don't understand something. Seek to bridge those communication gaps rather than assuming another's intent when you feel confused or offended. You'll be surprised at the outcome and, who knows, you might just have a good laugh!

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.

Update - Buffalo Field Campaign

Victory for Bears and Buffalo: DOL Helicopter Grounded!

A Montana Department of Livestock helicopter hazed wild buffalo on Horse Butte last May. Scenes like that created a veritable war zone in the Hebgen Basin may now be over, thanks to a lawsuit filed by the Alliance for the Wild Rockies.

According to our stellar legal team, the State of Montana Department of Livestock has ended its helicopter hazing program!

Buffalo Field Campaign provided expert assistance to the nonprofit Alliance for the Wild Rockies, who filed a lawsuit in federal court against the Interagency Bison Management Plan (IBMP) agencies for permitting the use of helicopters to haze wild bison in threatened grizzly bear habitat. Filed by attorney Rebecca K. Smith of the Public Interest Defense Center, the complaint made a compelling case that low-altitude bison-hazing helicopter flights violate numerous federal laws by harassing and displacing not only wild bison, but also threatened grizzly bears, a species that is federally protected under the Endangered Species Act.

Buffalo Field Campaign's field volunteers provided substantial evidence including signed affidavits, photographs, and videos of the DOL's helicopter disturbing a distinct and isolated grizzly bear population. This documentation resulted in a court order preventing the helicopter's use for two full weeks last spring. The good news came recently when the DOL stated that without federal funding, they will no longer use the helicopter to haze or capture bison. The federal government has stated they will not fund the DOL's helicopter because of the ongoing lawsuit for grizzly bears.

A grizzly bear considers a bull bison *(Pictured here)*. Bison, especially wolf- and winterkill carcasses are a very important food source for grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem. Photo by Kim Kaiser.

The federal agencies have re-initiated consultation with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to analyze the impacts of IBMP hazing on grizzly bears. The U.S. Department of Justice filed a brief recently stating, in part: "Through adaptive management adjustments to the Interagency Bison Management Plan, the hazing of bison now occurs more often from December through June than in the past. The hazing of bison during spring and early summer may affect threatened grizzly bears in a manner or to an extent not considered in the 2000 Biological Assessment." Our lawsuit is forcing the federal agencies to take a very close look at how all bison hazing impacts grizzly bears. BFC knows through first-hand experience that getting the DOL's helicopter out of the sky is going to provide major relief to wildlife. This is a huge victory! As the lawsuit progresses, BFC will help further demonstrate that screaming cowboys on anxious horses and atvs, escorted by flashing lights and sirens from law enforcement, stampeding wild buffalo through sensitive habitat, also provides a major disruption to grizzlies.

You are a huge part of this victory because it is you who keeps us on the front lines and in the courts, able to bear witness and stop the insanity. Please continue to help keep

BFC strong so we may continue to document all actions made against America's last wild bison, and threatened grizzly bears.

Thank you for being with us for the buffalo. Wild is the Way ~ Roam Free!

Take Action! Endless Pressure, Endlessly Applied - There are many ways you can use your voice to advocate for America's last continuously wild buffalo! One important way is to keep letting decision-makers hear from you, which you can do easily from BFC's Take Action page. Even if you have already taken these actions, the letters are editable, so you can refresh your message in defense of North America's largest land mammal!

Last Words—Buffalo Inspiration

The eagle, he glides over lands so vast and wide.
While the bison mother gives birth to the next generation.
The fish, she does move through waters icy and smooth.
While the bison calves frolic with carefree youthful elation.
The bear, he ambles between aspen and bramble.
While all bison eat well during the most ancient migration.
The skunk, she does dig in the leaf litter and twigs.
While the bison live freely and without intimidation.
The wolf, he does sing and through the basins it rings.
This is how it should be for the benefit of all nations.
May the plants, animals and all peoples live freely and without artificial borders - of this we can dream.
~ J. Bahorich, 2012

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http://www.buffalofieldcampaign.org

Green Box Recycling ~ Color Issue At Website

Dear Coal Creek Canyon Readers,

Those residents in the Coal Creek Canyon area that have gotten used to using the "Green Box" at the CCCIA hall parking lot for their single stream recycling have undoubtedly been aware that the container has been absent from the parking lot for the last few weeks. The purpose of this letter is to provide an update on the recycling program. According to the supplier of the container, John Moore with Clean it Waste Solutions, the resale market for the single stream waste (all types of waste mixed in one container) has dropped to such a low demand that the recyclers in the Denver Metro area have nearly stopped buying the waste. The recycler that John was using did in fact stop taking the single stream containers due to low demand and dollars from their buyers.

So what is going to happen now? John has been negotiating with Waste Management to take our canyon single stream recycling materials. It is anticipated that the contract will be settled by October 20. So, if you see the container back on the lot by the time you read this article, the recycle program is back in business.

We would appreciate everyone's continued support for this valuable program. AND, PLEASE follow the posted recycling guidelines. Tom Mulvany - CCCIA President

Dear Highlander Readers,

In case you have yet to go to the Highlander Monthly website to see your regional magazine in color, please check it out this month, especially. The cover pictures are great, and even more so in color.

Now, more than ever before advertisements in the issues are in color in the PDF version. This file is optimized to allow viewing and downloading to your computer quickly and can be read with the pages facing each other, just as you see it in the hard copies.

All you need is Adobe Reader (which is free on the internet) and can be used for other files also. Just click on the link at the top of our Home Page and save it to your computer and then open it in Reader, go to the top toolbar View, choose page layout and facing.

This way if you do not happen to get or pick up a copy one month, you can still read our publication. You can also keep them on your computer instead of cluttering up your magazine 'keep' pile if you wish to save them.

There are archived issues back to April 2012, which is when we started the feature. It has been well received and allows folks from everywhere to read the news and views from our Four Canyon Region.

Thanks go to Michele Barone of Wondervu Consulting for updating new issues & cover each month. Editor

Grand County Sawmills & Beetle-Kill Wood

Colorado State Forest Service

Where There's a Mill, There's a Way: Grand County sawmills find success in beetle-kill wood markets

The smell of fresh-cut pine, the steady sound of heavy machinery and the site of semi-trailers dropping off regular truckloads of logs are clear indicators that Grand County sawmills are alive and kicking.

Colorado's timber industry has seemingly been in dire straits in recent years. After decades of struggling to stay afloat in a flagging wood products market, the industry faced the mountain pine beetle epidemic, which left behind millions of acres of dead lodgepole pine forest. Yet three determined sawmill owners in Grand County have managed to remain successful by finding regional markets for beetle-kill and other local timber. They obtain the majority of this wood from timber sales on local private lands, where forests are harvested based on advice and assistance from the Colorado State Forest Service.

"These guys are actually processing high volumes of wood harvested from beetle-kill areas," said Ryan McNertney, forester for the CSFS Granby District. "This is wood that many people incorrectly assume is of low quality, but these mills have managed to find ways to process and market it effectively."

Three Mills, Three Niche Markets - One thing the owners of Grand County's three largest sawmills agree on is that adaptability is vital to success. Each owner has found a way to meet niche demands in the current wood products market, which means they have a heavy focus on beetle-kill wood. All three businesses are family owned and operated.

"They're each taking the same wood and doing something different with it," McNertney said. The mill owned by Leonard Peeling in Fraser, a second-generation operation in existence since the 1940s, cuts and peels lodgepole pine logs to produce fence posts and corral poles. The semi-processed lumber ships to wholesale wood treatment facilities, which weather-proof it before remarketing the finished product to farmers, ranchers and homeowners. Owner Rick Leonard says that a major advantage of having a smaller mill operation is the ability to adapt to a changing market. "We're flexible. If I have a customer who wants a nine-foot post, I can cut a nine-foot post," he said.

Farther north, near Granby, Ranch Creek LTD also focuses on the wholesale market, *(Continued on next page.)*

but with a heavy emphasis on rough-sawn dimensional lumber, such as crating material for pallets, banding boards for pipes and landscape timbers. And while Leonard Peeling and Ranch Creek focus on providing unfinished product to the wholesale market, Hester's Log and Lumber in Kremmling focuses on selling custom products directly to the retail market, such as decorative beams, flooring and wood paneling - much with the distinctive blue-stain signature seen after a beetle outbreak. Ironically, a glut of beetle-kill wood has been a boon to the success of the local mill owners. "The beetle has definitely been a boost for our business," says Kent Hester, owner of the Kremmling mill and a former forester.

The mill owners know that wood quality is unaffected by prior mountain pine beetle infestation, and are grateful that consumers also now recognize this fact. As a result, the blue-stain quality of the wood actually has increased in popularity with some consumers - including many who reside out of state. The processed wood from these mills is shipped to addresses in Colorado and at least 10 other Western states. Hester says he has even shipped product as far away as Hawaii. And Mike Jolovich, owner of Ranch Creek LTD, says his goal is to market 20 percent of his product outside Colorado. He attributes his success in part to finding clients who are willing to spend a few extra dollars for a higher quality finished product. "We've tried to stay away from the main line to make a little more revenue," says Jolovich.

Mills Provide Jobs, Boost Local Economy - Although much of the wood-milling process can now be automated - Ranch Creek has an electronic merchandising system that uses an optical scanner to cut and sort logs by size - these Grand County sawmills still create and support many local jobs. Together, the mills employ approximately 50 full-time workers. They also support many more local and regional jobs upstream and downstream from milling operations: loggers, truck drivers, treatment plant workers and even businesses that ultimately sell the finished product to the consumer, such as Lowe's and Home Depot. And then there are the jobs they provide for themselves and their family members. "My desk is right in there," Leonard says, pointing inside the cab of his mechanized log cutter.

Jolovich, who now employs 23 year-round workers at Ranch Creek, says that a year ago he had only 11 on staff. And the money that goes to his employees stays local. He points out that they buy local hardware and go to local restaurants and grocery stores. "I don't know what you call that. Good business, I guess," he says. "These are local businesses with local wood employing local people," said McNertney. "They're all smaller operations, but they're critical for this economy."

Besides creating jobs, the mills provide inexpensive

wood resources for area residents. Much of the unusable lumber becomes firewood that is sold for nominal prices, or even given away free if of lower quality. And Hester sells compost produced from sawdust and wood peelings, while Leonard's peelings end up as animal bedding and other products. "I've been here 27 years, and we haven't hauled anything off to the landfill," Hester said.

Wood Utilization Helps Keep Forests Healthy - With few exceptions, only local wood is utilized by these sawmills, and most of the current supply comes from standing dead trees lost to the mountain pine beetle epidemic. Leonard says that it's better for both the environment and the economy to remove the timber now. "Use it now before it falls on the ground and becomes useless," he said.

Leonard's operation alone takes in approximately four truckloads of logs per day, or more than 100 tons of wood. The other mills process a similar amount of wood. Each day, their operations collectively take in roughly 1,500 trees from up to 12 acres of land - land that desperately needs active forest management. McNertney said utilization of the beetle-kill wood makes a truly significant impact and helps foresters like him better manage the land. "These mills are outlets for the products that result from forest management practices," McNertney said. "To prevent future forest health issues, we need to keep them in business."

Shared Concern about Future Wood Supply - With all the timber made available by the bark beetle epidemic, obtaining wood hasn't been a problem for the mills in recent years. They get most of their wood from timber sales on local private lands, where forests are being harvested based on advice and assistance from the CSFS, but also obtain logs from federal and state lands. "We're one of the biggest benefactors of what the Colorado State Forest Service does," Jolovich said.

The other major benefactor could be considered the forests themselves. Local timber harvests help landowners manage for healthy forests and clear hillsides of standing dead timber, but accessible beetle-kill timber in adequate milling condition will eventually run out.

"As this timber ages, it becomes tougher and tougher to utilize," said Jolovich. He says that once wood-rot starts in dead trees - which happens much faster as they fall down - the wood no longer will be usable. Most lodgepole pines killed by bark beetles are predicted to fall within approximately a decade of infestation.

McNertney says increasing public acceptance of long-term forest management is a key factor in making wood available to the industry. This will allow public land managers to continue timber sales, and encourage private landowners to allow loggers on their own lands. However, if land managers and private landowners opt not to make timber available in the near future, the outlook for Colorado sawmill owners, those they employ and the forests around them could be bleak.

Bobcat Data

Bobcats More Likely to Get Diseases from Urban Areas, CSU Scientists Say

Bobcats are more likely to pick up parasites such as Giardia when they're closer to urban areas with a heavier human impact on the environment, according to a new study by Colorado State University wildlife and veterinary scientists.

The paper appears in the September 2012 issue of the Journal of Clinical Microbiology. Researchers collected fecal samples in Ventura County, Calif., and along Colorado's Front Range and Western Slope, and tested them for Toxoplasma gondii, Giardia duodenalis and Cryptosporidium spp.- all parasites that cause health issues in people and wildlife, with the latter two causing diarrhea and other gastrointestinal problems.

Findings revealed that bobcats near urban areas of Boulder, Colo., and Los Angeles were more likely to have those parasites than bobcats living in more rural areas in Colorado. Faculty and students collaborating on the project represented Warner College of Natural Resources and the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at Colorado State. "We found support for our hypothesis that bobcats become exposed to and shed zoonotic parasites in fecal material around human-occupied landscapes," said Kevin Crooks, professor in the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Biology.

"Bobcats seem to have acquired Giardia from humans rather than the other way around - they were probably exposed to the water supply around cities," VandeWoude said. "Giardia can infect people and may cause gastrointestinal disease." The study also found a high

incidence of bobcat exposure to the parasite Toxoplasma gondii, but did not find evidence animals were shedding the disease. This parasite can infect humans and causes mild to minimal disease in healthy people, but can cause complications for infants and people with a compromised immune system.

Cats only spread toxoplasma in their feces for a few weeks following infection with the parasite. This study suggests the lifecycle of the parasite in bobcats is similar to domestic cats. There was no evidence that the bobcats shedding these parasites were actually sick, researchers said. The paper is a follow-up by the same scientists who released a study in February showing that domestic cats, bobcats and pumas that live in the same area share diseases - and may bring them into family homes.

The study provided evidence that domestic cats and wild cats that share the same outdoor areas in urban environments can also share diseases such as bartonellosis and toxoplasmosis, both of which can be spread from cats to people. The earlier study looked at urban areas of California and Colorado and shows these diseases can spread through contact with shared habitat and how the diseases can be clustered due to urban development and major freeways that restrict animal movement. Both studies involved collaboration with field biologists, federal and state agencies, animal shelters and other institutions.

Fight For Life Requires A Tax On Carbon

By Tom Bell

I am 88 and have seen a lot of change over the decades, but I do not think anyone living now has ever faced a more serious threat to life than the threat of global climate change. As President Obama said recently, "More droughts and floods and wildfires are not a joke. They're a threat to our children's future."

I come from a far different time. Born in a coal-mining town, I was raised on a ranch five miles out of Lander, Wyo., just two miles from where my mother was born, in 1901. I went to one-room schools and graduated from Lander High School at 18, just in time to become gun fodder for World War II. My crew of 10 young men flew a B-24 bomber from New York City to South America, then across the Atlantic to Africa's Sahara Desert and a temporary training camp in Tunisia. At last we crossed the Mediterranean to our tent camp among olive trees near Foggia, Italy. Five of those young men with me never returned home alive. Just two of us are still living.

My 32nd mission finally ended my Air Force career. Five miles above Vienna, Austria, on May 10, 1944, a German's flak burst pulverized the right side of my face and destroyed my right eye. There was a long recovery, and for my actions that day, I was awarded the Sliver Star, the nation's third highest combat military decoration. Yet when I left the military at 20, I was still not old enough to vote or even buy a drink. I went on to college, got involved in wildlife and environmental work, and never wavered in my love of Wyoming, the West and the very planet itself.

So now, while I still have a voice to speak, I want to communicate a warning: I believe we are at a crossroads that puts our civilization at risk. If we do nothing to stop carbon dioxide from going into the atmosphere, the Earth will face a future similar to that of Mars, becoming barren and lifeless. When World War II was thrust on us, we turned our economic system into a war machine as every American agreed to sacrifice in order to defeat Nazi Germany and its allies. That is the model for what it will take to overcome what now threatens our planet.

Hitler and Tojo and Mussolini, however, were human beings with faces, while carbon dioxide is invisible and yet a part of our everyday environment. How can you overcome something you can't see? ABC journalist Bill Blakemore thinks one of the reasons Americans don't - or can't - accept the threat of climate change is because of the

"unprecedented scale and complexity of the crisis of manmade global warming." And he adds, "It's new, and therefore unknown, at first. And we're naturally frightened of the unknown."

Yet Rob Watson, an environmentalist, likes to say: "Mother Nature is just chemistry, biology and physics. That's all she is. You cannot sweet-talk her. You cannot spin her. Do not mess with Mother Nature. But that is just what we are doing." You only need a lick of sense to see that something is terribly wrong. Devastating events, attributable to climate change, are destroying people's livelihoods and taking lives all around the world. Climate scientists tell us it is only going to get worse unless and until we do something about carbon.

To do something about carbon means reducing our dependence on coal and oil, and here in Wyoming, even talking about it is heresy. But we must begin to talk about it before it is too late, and then we must act. What can we do? Jim Rogers, CEO of Duke Energy-Progress Energy, the largest electric utility in the United States, said this September: "I believe eventually there will be regulation of carbon in this country."

James Hansen, one of the world's leading climate scientists, agrees. In fact, everyone concerned about climate change believes a carbon tax has advantages over every other approach. Still, every single carbon-tax bill introduced in Congress has failed. I believe it is past time for all of us - and especially those of us who live in Wyoming, where so much carbon is produced - to face the hard truth. We don't have a choice: We have to face this crisis as if we were at war, because, unfortunately, that is the bitter truth. We are in a fight for our very survival - and for the survival of the whole planet.

Tom Bell is a contributor to Writers on the Range, a service of High Country News (hcn.org), which he founded in 1970, in Lander, Wyoming, along with the Wyoming Outdoor Council. He lives in Lander.

The Way We Live Now

By Rich Wandschneider

The trouble with dream houses - the dream homes on the dream streets of big-city real estate tours, or tucked among canyons near resort areas like Sun Valley, Idaho - is that dreams tend to change over time. Despite the notion that a dream is a private world that only the dreamer can know, dreams are to a large extent communally generated.

There was the post-war dream of a single-family house on a single lot in the tidy green suburbs, which produced the lookalike starter homes of the '40s and '50s. Fifty years later, there were the luxurious, big-box houses overlooking the Snake River in the Lewiston, Idaho, hills, and the mega-mansions on Red Mountain outside Aspen, Colo., the culmination of individual housing dreams that morphed into something bigger, and much more extravagant. I think about this when I hear that the housing market is beginning to rebound. My own notion, however, is that the housing market will never rebound to its most recent form, but instead will fumble along while builders, architects, developers, futurists and ordinary people living in the current economy figure out what the next housing dream should be. Or whether there should be one at all.

Though it is a long shot that may never gain wide acceptance, some are encouraging the idea that renting a house without the drag of an ownership represents freedom. This has gained in popularity because it offers families the chance to move quickly when family or job arrangements change. Just a few decades ago, in fact, renting a place was the norm for many working people. And what about those cute little mini-homes on wheels? Or how about living in an apartment and spending the time and money normally given to housekeeping on travel and recreation? Or living in a small condo instead of buying and maintaining an oversized house on the hill? Or how about creating a "small is beautiful," super-insulated, energy-efficient, just-the-right-size house on a previously vacant lot, or tearing down and replacing a thin-walled, urban, suburban or rural house that now leaks heat and chipboard pollutants into the atmosphere?

All of these are options that are being tried right here in rural Oregon. One piece of the housing dream that doesn't get much attention is asking just how much house a family really needs. Eric Sten, a former city commissioner in Portland who has housing as part of his portfolio, told me that if Portlanders today lived at the same density level as

they lived two or three generations ago, there would be no need to build any more houses for another couple of generations. Could we form small co-ops that would feature individual enclaves for privacy, but also offer communal kitchens and recreation areas for company and building efficiency? They're calling it co-housing and doing it all over the country.

What does this all mean for people living in my rural county of eastern Oregon, as well as for our larger economy? It means that many of the pricey dream houses of the past are for sale. These are the big houses used mainly for family gatherings during summer weekends or for just a couple of weeks, leaving the place empty for months with maybe a watchful caretaker employed or living in the cabin next door. Age and family configuration, the housing and lifestyle dreams subtly passed on to us by experts, or generated in blogs in which we might have participated, are changing what we dream.

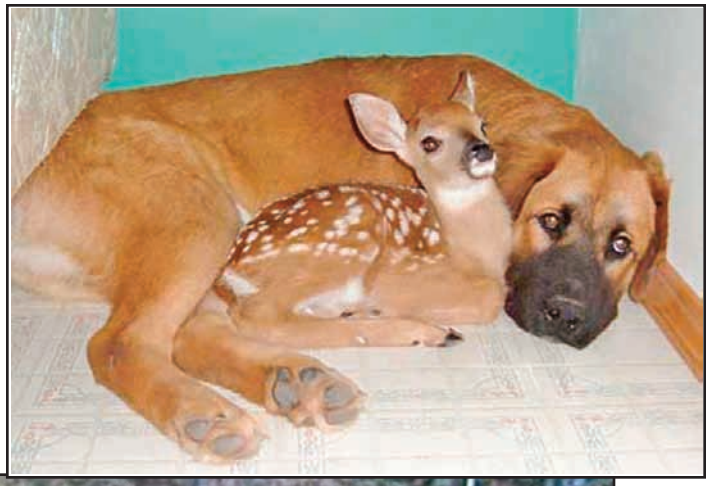
The consolation, it seems to me, is that some of us lucky people have chosen to live modestly in small towns that still have hardware and grocery stores, doctors, barbers and gas stations. It gives us a sense of self-sufficiency and completeness. We can take care of each other and ourselves with the jobs we do and the churches, hospitals, school support groups and community centers that we communally form. We can look at those people living in much larger and frequently remodeled houses in suburbia, or at the rows of townhouses on the fire-threatened outskirts of towns that necessitate a long, gas-guzzling commute, and gloat, even if only just a little.

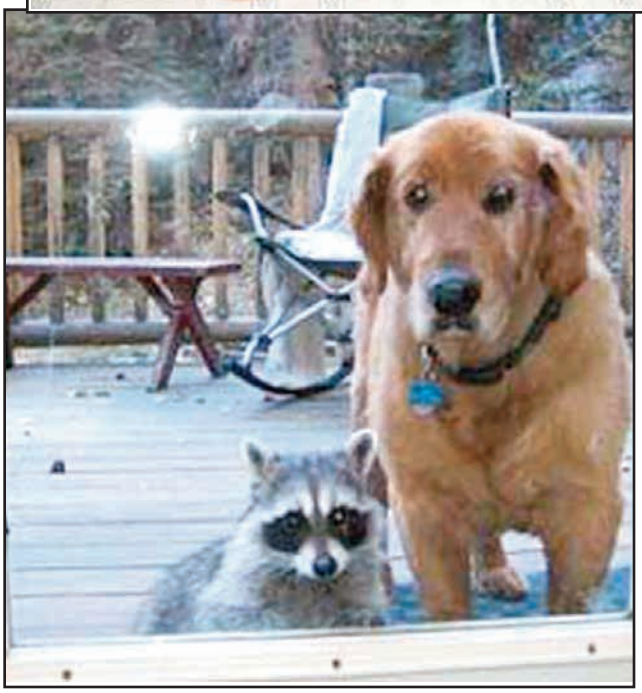
No matter which way the American dream turns next, I hope the values of small towns and dense urban cores will prevail. It doesn't matter if the next generation of housing is single-family, co-op, apartment or condo-style. What we have learned is that living in suburbia, with its boxlike castles built all too close to a flammable forest, or owning a third and fourth vacation home on the shores of a remote lake, are yesterday's dreams, yesterday's economy.

Rich Wandschneider is a contributor to Writers on the Range, a service of High Country News (www.hcn.org). He writes in Joseph, Oregon.

Top Left & Bottom Right: **aplacetolovedogs.com**

Top Right: Bo Gale does Yoga- thanks Kathy!





All the photos on this page were sent to me in an email with funny captions and all are from a website called **aplacetolovedogs.com**

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00 Spruce Canyon Dr.
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Best Pumpkin Pie Ever

The great thing about this recipe, besides its great taste and healthy benefits is that you can eat it for dessert or as a side dish vegetable. Too often pumpkin gets delegated to only the holidays when its nutritional benefits should make it a year-round staple *(cut sugar in half for side dish only).*

For one deep dish or two shallow regular pie pans. Coat the pie pan/s with a spray on (PAM) canola oil, since it does not have a piecrust. Preheat oven to 450 degrees.

Mix two whole eggs or 3/4 cup White's Only with one cup of sweetener *(can be organic granulated cane sugar, 1/2 cup honey or whatever you prefer to sweeten with.)*

Whip with just a whisk and add: One teaspoon each cinnamon, ginger, vanilla & one-half teaspoon nutmeg.

Add one can of PLAIN pumpkin to the eggs, spices and sugar until whisk moves easily. Organic pumpkin can be found (the 15 ounce, or if you want a thicker consistency you may use the larger can and cut back the liquid by half a cup).

Stir in 2 and a half or three cups of almond milk, (regular milk works well too but soy milk changes the consistency a bit.) Depending on whether you are using two pie pans or one deep dish, regulate your liquid accordingly. Any leftover pie mix -once the pie pan/s are almost full can be put into custard cups or a bowl that is ovenproof. Be sure to use the spray on oil for these too. Pour pie mixture into pie pan/s and carefully put into oven.

Bake at 450 degrees for 25 minutes and then lower the oven temperature to 350 until a knife comes out clean. Your baking time will be less for two shallow pie pans (and any leftover put into custard cups), but for a deep dish pie pan it is usually 45 to 50 minutes until a knife inserted into the center comes out clean. Let cool before cutting and cover to refrigerate.

A wonderful addition is a cup of chopped pecans as they rise to the top *(as pictured here)* and make a healthier pecan pie than the traditional sugary recipe. Pie can be served with whipped cream, warmed after being refrigerated or just as a side dish with a meal. Your kids will love eating pumpkin this way and it makes a great snack or breakfast and has half the calories of a regular piece of pie due to the lack of a crust.

Policy On Tribal Use Of Eagle Feathers

The Department of Justice announced recently a policy addressing the ability of members of federally recognized Indian tribes to possess or use eagle feathers, an issue of great cultural significance to many tribes and their members. Attorney General Eric Holder signed the new policy after extensive department consultation with tribal leaders and tribal groups. The policy covers all federally protected birds, bird feathers and bird parts.

Federal wildlife laws such as the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act generally criminalize the killing of eagles and other migratory birds and the possession or commercialization of the feathers and other parts of such birds. These important laws are enforced by the Department of Justice and the Department of the Interior and help ensure that eagle and other bird populations remain healthy and sustainable.

At the same time, the Department of Justice recognizes that eagles play a unique and important role in the religious and cultural life of many Indian tribes. Many Indian tribes and tribal members have historically used, and today continue to use federally protected birds, bird feathers or other bird parts for their tribal cultural and religious expression.

"This policy will help ensure a consistent and uniform approach across the nation to protecting and preserving eagles, and to honoring their cultural and spiritual significance to American Indians," said Attorney General Holder. "The Department of Justice is committed to striking the right balance in enforcing our nation's wildlife laws by respecting the cultural and religious practices of federally recognized Indian tribes with whom the United States shares a unique government-to-government relationship."

The department is issuing this policy to address the concerns of tribal members who are unsure of how they may be affected by federal wildlife law enforcement efforts, and because of a concern that this uncertainty may hinder or inhibit tribal religious and cultural practices. The department first announced it was considering formalizing a policy on eagle feathers in October 2011 and sought tribal input at that time. The department held formal consultations with tribal leaders in June, July and August 2012.

"From time immemorial, many Native Americans have viewed eagle feathers and other bird parts as sacred elements of their religious and cultural traditions," said Ignacia S. Moreno, Assistant Attorney General of the Justice Department's Environment and Natural Resources Division. "The Department of Justice has taken a major step forward by establishing a consistent and transparent policy to guide federal enforcement of the nation's wildlife laws in a manner that respects the cultural and religious practices of federally recognized Indian tribes and their members."

"The Justice Department's policy balances the needs of the federally recognized tribes and their members to be able to obtain, possess and use eagle feathers for their

religious and cultural practices with the need to protect and preserve these magnificent birds," said Donald E. "Del" Laverdure, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. "Its reasoned approach reflects a greater understanding and respect for cultural beliefs and spiritual practices of Indian people while also providing much-needed clarity for those responsible for enforcing federal migratory bird protection laws."

"This policy helps to clarify how federal law enforcement goes about protecting these special birds and also should reassure federally recognized tribal members that they do not have to fear prosecution for possessing or using eagle feathers for their religious and cultural purposes," said Brendan V. Johnson, U.S. Attorney for the District of South Dakota and the Chairman of the Native American Issues Subcommittee of the Attorney General's Advisory Committee.

"Eagles and other native migratory bird species are a vital part of our nation's natural heritage, and we remain dedicated to providing every American with the opportunity to experience them in the wild," said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe. "This new policy honors the past while looking to the future, contributing to the preservation of these species and ensuring that tribal members can continue their religious and cultural practices for generations to come."

The policy provides that, consistent with the Department of Justice's traditional exercise of its discretion, a member of a federally recognized tribe engaged only in the following types of conduct will not be subject to prosecution: Possessing, using, wearing or carrying federally protected birds, bird feathers or other bird parts (federally protected bird parts); Traveling domestically with federally protected bird parts or, if tribal members obtain and comply with necessary permits, traveling internationally with such items; Picking up naturally molted or fallen feathers found in the wild, without molesting or disturbing federally protected birds or their nests; Giving or loaning federally protected bird parts to other members of federally recognized tribes, without compensation of any kind; Exchanging federally protected bird parts for federally protected bird parts with other members of federally recognized tribes, without compensation of any kind; Providing the feathers or other parts of federally protected birds to craftspersons who are members of federally recognized tribes to be fashioned into objects for eventual use in tribal religious or cultural activities.

The Department of Justice will continue to prosecute tribal members and non-members alike for violating federal laws that prohibit the killing of eagles and other migratory birds or the buying or selling of the feathers or other parts of such birds.

The policy expands upon longstanding Department of Justice practice and Department of the Interior policy. It was developed in close coordination with the Department of the Interior. The Department of Justice's Environment and Natural Resources Division (ENRD) and United States Attorneys' Offices work closely with the Department of the Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Indian Affairs on enforcement of federal laws protecting birds.

It's Still A Questionable Pipeline

By Allen Best

Besides repealing "Obamacare," Mitt Romney has said he would issue a permit for the Keystone XL pipeline on his very first day as president. That's an interesting statement from a candidate who, when it comes to other issues, portrays himself as a standard-bearer for states' rights. In this case, he seems to be saying that as soon as oil crosses an international border, local concerns go out the window. Of course, on other occasions - as when immigrants cross international borders - local concerns count for a whole lot more.

Keystone XL would originate in the Canadian province of Alberta, pumping the heavy, tar-like substance called bitumen, then picking up oil from the Bakken shale while slicing through Montana and South Dakota. It's when the pipeline crosses into Nebraska that it runs into political trouble. Protests were few when TransCanada, the pipeline company, laid the pipeline that was called Keystone I across Nebraska. But then, right after the route selection, there came the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, a giant spill of bitumen crude in Michigan's Kalamazoo River, and a ruptured pipe in the Yellowstone River. All raised questions about oil safety.

The Kalamazoo spill particularly sharpened concerns over whether bitumen, because of its corrosive and acidic qualities, poses special hazards in pipeline transport. Pipeline safety is a federal responsibility. Whether federal standards are up to snuff for bitumen is an open question, though. Congress has directed further study; a task delegated to the National Academy of Sciences, with a report due in 2013 - probably an after-the-fact event if Romney gets elected. Pipeline routing, by contrast, is normally a state responsibility. In this case, the U.S. State Department must approve the pipeline because it would cross the international border from Canada. Routing across the individual states is basically a state and local matter.

(Map from U.S. Department of State.)

In Nebraska, routing is subject to environmental review, now under way in a partnership between the State Department and the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality. Last fall, Republicans in Congress put President Barack Obama on the spot by demanding a decision. Sidestepping, he denied the permit in January but invited TransCanada to apply with a new route. In April,

TransCanada did just that. This new route gives a wider berth to the Sand Hills as they are defined by the Environmental Protection Agency. But it avoids neither sand nor high water tables.

In early May, while doing research for a story, I visited a ranch along the Niobrara River that would be crossed by this new proposed route of Keystone XL. It's in the Midwest, east of the 100th meridian, but the setting has a wilder, more untamed feel to it. On the ranch of Karl Connell, I dug into the ground and found it to be sandy and wet, like what you'd put in a bowl for a pet turtle. The water table was just a few feet below ground. In other words, at least a portion of this new route looks very much like the old route. Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman supports the pipeline, but Nebraskans remain divided.

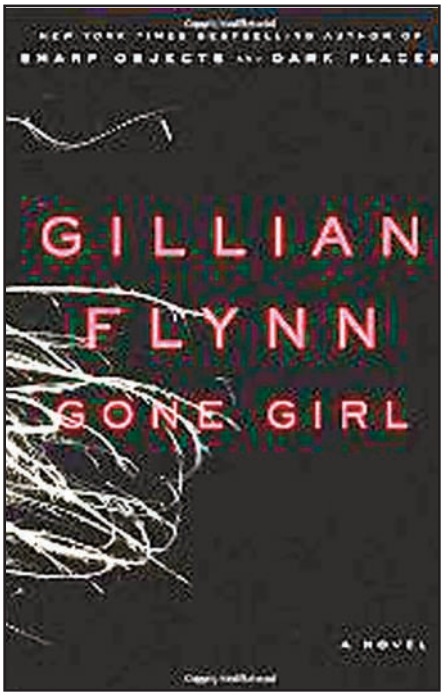
John K. Hansen, president of the Nebraska Farmers Union, one of the organizations fighting the pipeline, sees Romney's support for quickly building the pipeline as rife with hypocrisy. "Here is a guy who on one hand is railing against the excesses of the heavy-handed federal government," he said. "Yet they don't bat an eye when they're getting ready to ram an international pipeline down the throats of landowners and the state, without any regard for siting authority or the use of eminent domain."

The suggestion that the bitumen will make the United States more energy independent also seems fanciful. Some critics think it would end up as diesel and be exported to world markets. TransCanada's promise of 20,000 jobs has also been questioned; at any rate, after construction is completed, just a few dozen lasting jobs will remain. In Nebraska, the cattle ranchers I met took a long view. Many who have lived on the land for four generations say they want better assurances that hasty decisions won't imperil their land and water. "If you don't take care of your land, it won't take care of you," a rancher told me. "You don't take care of your water, you don't have anything." None of this, of course, can be boiled down into a 30-second campaign ad promising a quick fix.

Allen Best is a contributor to Writers on the Range. (hcn.org). He writes about natural resource issues from the Denver area.

Literally A Real Page-Turner!

By Tracy Reseigh



Nick and Amy Dunne were young, successful, happily married and living in Manhattan. They both lost their jobs, and could no longer manage their Manhattan lifestyle. Nick was from Missouri, and he found out that his mother was ill. So, he packed up their Manhattan condo, and moved them to his boyhood town along the Missouri river.

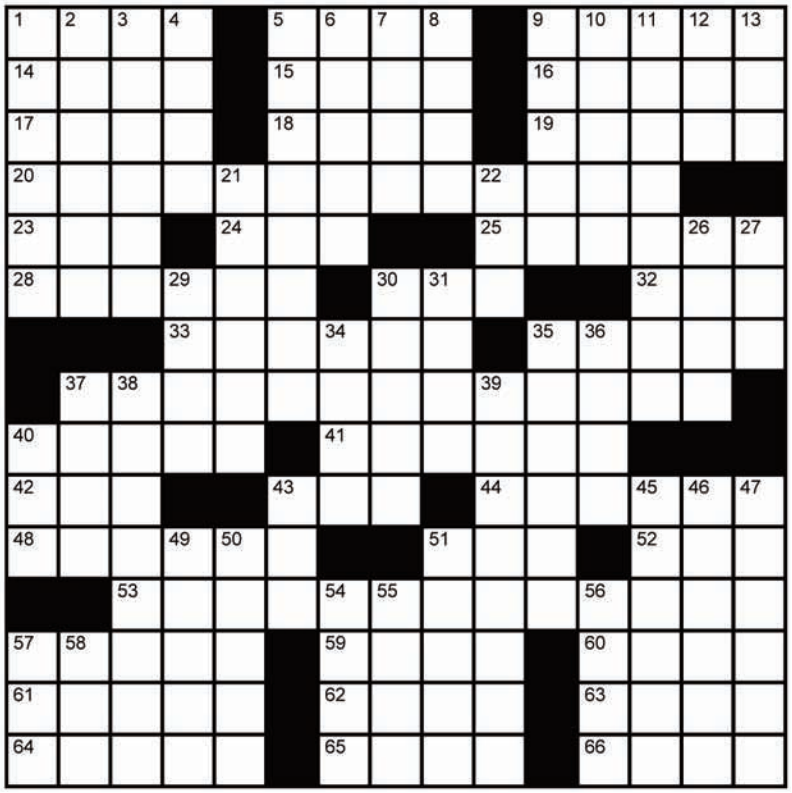
Once settled in Missouri, Nick bought a bar with his twin sister. He developed a routine and a life in Missouri that left Amy at home by herself for long periods of time with no friends and still no job. Amy was used to being busy with friends, her job and her famous author parents. In Missouri, she lived in the town's golden boy's shadow.

This story began 24 pages into the book. On the Dunne's fifth wedding anniversary, Nick got a call from a neighbor saying that his front door was wide open. He does not think much of it at the time, but he went home and discovered that Amy was gone. From there, the story unwinds as any sensational story seen on television today. There was the initial investigation by the small town cops, followed by the all-in community effort to find Amy. Next was the national media onslaught, followed by Nick hiring the high-profile criminal attorney.

Nick insisted that he was innocent from the beginning. However, his actions, his appearances and his reactions to the situation seemed to tell a different story. The local authorities lose faith in Nick's story. Add that to the national media turning an entire nation against Nick Dunne, and he soon realized that he needed to somehow take charge of the situation.

That is all I'm going to say. ***Gone Girl*** is a book for readers who enjoy psychological; he said - she said books with a modern day edge. Flynn's character development is sharp and fast. Her prose is smart, funny and scary. Her grip on the psychology of marriage, relationships, and how the world is obsessed with a good "missing person" story moves the story to the end. This is not the best book I have ever read. But, Flynn's writing style is so good and engrossing, that for me it was literally a page-turner (I read it in one sitting). Published by Crown Publishers, ***Gone Girl*** is available in hardback at Barnes & Noble for $25.00. You can also read an excerpt at www.barnesandnoble.com

I will be taking a short hiatus until 2013.
So, happy reading, happy holidays!



Across

1. 60s rock group, with Corner
5. Slight
9. Partition
14. Lion's beard?
15. Type of insurance for owners
16. Pointed arch
17. Nose out
18. Tapi endings
19. Rich tapestry
20. Place for pessimists
23. Virgo mo.
24. Cries at a circus
25. Keen
28. Swimmer's gear
30. Banned pesticide, for short
32. "Star-Spangled Banner" preposition
33. Tongue
35. Conundrum
37. Invest in a risky fashion
40. Witch
41. Bean
42. Greyhound, e.g.
43. Magazine revenue source
44. Come back again
48. Go up and down
51. Supporting
52. Grassy area
53. Investing term that came
57. Salad oil holder
59. Old audio system
60. Horse course
61. Where to get a fast buck?
62. Fall locale
63. Anatomical network
64. Experiments
65. Used to be
66. Four's inferior

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Down

1. Cells in the sea?
2. Improvised
3. Captivate
4. At no point in time, contraction
5. Native American people
6. Scottish water areas
7. Mosque V.I.P.
8. City in Arizona
9. Drenches
10. Wading bird
11. Great musicians
12. "Desperate Housewives" actress, first name
13. Court matter
21. A chemical salt
22. Deserter
26. Romeo or Juliet
27. Blunder
29. Distinctive flair
30. Beach sights
31. Angry outburst
34. Investor's alternative
35. Inquisitive people
36. Look at flirtatiously
37. Constant
38. Flower starts
39. Belladonna poison
40. ABC's rival
43. Amazement
45. Plant
46. Fertility goddess
47. American sharpshooter
49. Driving hazard
50. Common carriers
51. Flute player
54. Consider, with on
55. Cover up
56. Legal wrong
57. PC component, for short
58. Delicacy

Crossword Puzzle by Myles Mellor, he is one of the top crossword writers in the world. Enjoy over 1000 of his crosswords and other puzzles at his Website!

(Completed puzzle on page 40.)

Fire Scientists Fight Over How Forests Look

By Emily Guerin/High Country News

Mark Williams and Bill Baker stand amid ponderosa pines in the mountains west of Fort Collins, Colo., holding a copy of a 19th century land survey. They're looking for a small pile of rocks with three notches on the east side, indicating that a General Land Office surveyor stopped here to describe the forest. Surveyors noted many things, says Baker, a professor at the University of Wyoming; they even discovered a gallows where two men had been hung.

But generally the reports focus on forest type and structure — less dramatic, perhaps, but more useful for modern researchers reconstructing historic Western forests and their fire patterns. Over the past five years, Williams and Baker compiled thousands of hand-written descriptions and combined them with tree-ring data from the lines the surveyors walked. What they found surprised them. In each of their study areas — mixed conifer and ponderosa forests in northern Arizona, Colorado's Front Range and eastern Oregon — dense thickets of spindly trees and severe crown fires were common even before European settlement. In fact, the two scientists argue that the severity of many recent megafires, like Arizona's 2002 Rodeo-Chediski fire, which burned 190,000 acres, is actually pretty normal. If that sounds counterintuitive, it is. Conventional wildfire wisdom is generally the opposite. Many scientists say that dry Western forests were once open and park-like, with large, widely spaced trees and little undergrowth. Now, however, due to fire suppression and logging practices, they've become overgrown with small trees and shrubs.

The result is that frequent low-severity fires have been replaced by a new era of megafires that are hotter and more severe than ever before. That's true in some parts of the West, say Baker and Williams, a recent Ph.D. student, but not everywhere; many dry forests throughout the region historically were more dense and prone to severe fires.

They also disagree with the idea that thinning and prescribed burns can prevent such fires. That kind of treatment, applied in the wrong places, is not only misguided, they say, but could do more harm than good. Naturally, those strong statements have met equally strong criticism from many pre-eminent fire ecologists. But Baker and Williams are not the first researchers to complicate fire ecology in the West. Unfortunately, the nuances in their and other scientists' perspectives are often oversimplified in the media and in policy-making, with damaging results.

"A set of laws, policies and initiatives that aim to uniformly reduce fuels and fire severity is likely to (have) adverse effects on biological diversity," wrote Baker and Williams in their recent paper in Global Ecology and Biogeography. "It's very important that we take a more regional geographic approach and not apply what we know from one system to another," says Rosemary Sherriff, an associate professor of geography at California's Humboldt State University, whose work corroborates some of the Wyoming researchers' findings. But "it's hard to get that across, because the idea of park-like ponderosa pine is widespread." One of the main researchers behind the traditional view is ecologist Wally Covington. When he began working at Northern Arizona University in 1975, many of the landscapes he encountered were choked with trees that had sprung up during decades of fire suppression.

Covington wondered how the forests looked before widespread settlement. His study results strengthened earlier

findings that, in the past, Southwest ponderosa pine forests were kept open by frequent surface fires. Subsequent recommendations to remove small trees and reintroduce surface fires became the basis for policies like the 2002 Healthy Forests Initiative, attracting the support of both lawmakers and environmentalists, since they would heal damaged ecosystems while reducing the risk of catastrophic fire. The "Southwest model" gained support from other fire ecologists and began to be used as an explanation for forest problems elsewhere in the West — even areas with vastly different historical fire regimes.

Foresters in places like eastern Oregon, Montana and California's Sierra Nevada began thinning to make forests more park-like and reduce the risk of severe fires — in the process jeopardizing wildlife such as black-backed woodpeckers and Kirtland's warblers, whose habitat is found in burn patches. Further research would reveal the situation's complexity; in reality, both surface and severe crown fires played an important role in many landscapes. For example, the Sierra Nevada's ponderosa pine and mixed conifer forests are open and park-like on dry, south-facing slopes, with densely packed trees in creek beds and on northern aspects. Despite this variety, Malcolm North, a scientist with the U.S. Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Research Station, found in 2008 that fuel management officers were applying the Southwest model to an extreme, thinning the landscape into an "asbestos forest," rows of evenly spaced trees with no understory.

The Southwest model has also been used to justify thinning and prescribed burns in dry Montana and Idaho forests. But further study by The Wilderness Society's scientists and Dick Hutto, a University of Montana biologist, showed that those forests had a history of less frequent, more severe fires than did Southwestern forests. Merrill Kaufmann, a retired Forest Service ecologist with the Rocky Mountain Research Station in Fort Collins, Colo., was one of the first to question the ideal of park-like, open forests. In the 1990s, while studying the Pike National Forest in south-central Colorado, he asked agency staffers where they got their forest-treatment information. "All they could come up with was the Southwest model," he says.

Kaufmann soon discovered that the area's old-growth ponderosa pine and Douglas fir forests didn't fit that model, though. Low-severity surface fires and open, park-like stands were not the dominant types over the past 500 years. Instead, the forest had many dense patches of trees that had grown up in areas burned by severe crown fires. Few fire ecologists — including those whose work supports the conventional wisdom — dispute the idea that fire regimes and forest structure vary around the West. Tom Swetnam, who directs the tree-ring research lab at the University of Arizona, writes in an email, "No one that I know is arguing that all forests and all management solutions to fire problems are the same everywhere. ... It is quite true that high severity, stand-replacing fires are not abnormal in some forest and shrub types."

Yet while scientists may be clear about which specific forests were park-like and subject to frequent, low-intensity fires, the complexities are often lost on politicians and the mainstream media, who prefer straightforward explanations. Many news stories about Western wildfires perpetuate the Southwest model. "Historically, natural, smoldering fires thinned the forest *(Continued on next page.)*

floor every 15 to 20 years," a July 19 CBS News story asserts about all Western forests. A July 2 story in New Scientist makes a similar claim. The 2002 Healthy Forests Initiative also assumes that all Western forests are more overgrown now than they were historically. "Today, the forests and rangelands of the West have become unnaturally dense. ... When coupled with seasonal droughts, these unhealthy forests, overloaded with fuels, are vulnerable to unnaturally severe wildfires."

The 2009 FLAME Act makes similar assumptions. Covington himself may have inadvertently contributed to the problem: Scientific papers with titles like "Helping western forests heal: the prognosis is poor for U.S. forest ecosystems" suggest his research has broad applications for all Western forests. And he says, "There is no 'Southwestern' model. That is horseshit. Everywhere you go, you find ponderosa pine that is open and park-like." Baker and Williams are not the only researchers who say ponderosa and mixed conifer forests are not all prone to frequent, low-severity fires. Still, other fire ecologists have questioned their methods and data interpretation.

North and Kaufmann both criticized their reliance on and interpretation of the General Land Office surveys. "It's a very scant data set," North says. "The methods used in those papers are not at all appropriate for making the kinds of extrapolations" the team made. And both Swetnam and Peter Brown, who runs the nonprofit Rocky Mountain Tree-Ring Research lab, questioned how ponderosa pines could regenerate if Baker and Williams are correct about severe fires having scarred Western landscapes for generations. Lodgepole pine seeds need heat to be released from their cones, but ponderosa seeds are destroyed by fire.

Baker acknowledges their concerns, calling the regeneration question "a problem area" in fire ecology. Normally, such critiques play out in scientific journals, but this has been a particularly public controversy, with researchers lashing out at Baker in newspapers. Swetnam told the Associated Press the paper was "deeply flawed in multiple ways, and I have yet to hear any knowledgeable forest or fire ecologist or forest manager say they are convinced by (its) main interpretations." The passionate reaction is driven by fear that Baker's studies could undermine support for restoration work, according to Greg Aplet, a senior forest scientist at The Wilderness Society.

Many researchers and fire managers think immediate action is needed to reduce fuels, and that not nearly enough thinning has been done, especially around communities, where reducing the risk of fire is as much of a priority as restoration. "We gotta get in there and we gotta restore these stands," Brown said, "and to my mind, Baker is just an anchor dragging us backwards." But so far, Forest Service budget cuts have impacted restoration efforts more than studies, including Baker and Williams', that question the effectiveness of fuel treatments. More and more, the treatments that do occur are based on localized research rather than a blanket application of the Southwest model. A three-year old Forest Service initiative; Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Prog., is working on localized studies to influence forest management. It's important to tailor treatment work to local conditions, says Hutto, the Montana biologist, because the federal government is spending money thinning forests that actually have a long history of dense stands and severe fires. "If they knew severe is natural, there's less justification for that kind of behavior," he says. "I think it's very important to taxpayers to be worried about whether we're going about things in a way that's kind of a waste."

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

Blueways~Overpopulation

Dear EarthTalk: The federal government recently designated the Connecticut River watershed as the nation's first "National Blueway." What is a National Blueway and does such a designation come with any funding for conservation or other purposes?

- Jackie Minor, via e-mail

In May 2012 the Obama administration did indeed designate the Connecticut River and its 7.2 million-acre watershed as the first segment of a new National Blueways System, created to help conserve natural amenities and wildlife habitat and to preserve or enhance healthy recreational opportunities within significant river systems across the country.

The National Blueways program is part of the larger America's Great Outdoors Initiative created by the White House to establish a community-driven conservation and recreation agenda for the 21st century. Large blueways such as the Connecticut River watershed are extremely important not only as nurseries for biodiversity and filtration systems for fresh water supplies, but also as outdoor recreational outlets for millions of all-too-cooped-up Americans.

The Connecticut River watershed is a fitting first addition to the National Blueways program given its ecological, cultural and recreational importance to millions of Americans along its 410-mile run from the peaks of Vermont along the Canadian border through New Hampshire and Massachusetts to Connecticut, where it empties into the Atlantic Ocean. Some 2.4 million people across almost 400 communities live within the Connecticut River's watershed. The non-profit Trust for Public Land estimates that 1.4 million of those residents enjoy the watershed's natural beauty and wildlife and contribute upwards of $1 billion dollars to local economies accordingly each year.

"The Connecticut River Watershed is a model for how communities can integrate their land and water stewardship efforts with an emphasis on 'source-to-sea' watershed conservation," said Secretary of the Interior Kenneth Salazar upon announcing the new designation.

According to the U.S. Department of Interior, the National Blueway designation "differs from existing federal designations for rivers (e.g., Wild and Scenic), which generally cover only a segment of a river and a narrow band of the riparian corridor." In contrast, a National Blueway includes the entire river from "source to sea" as well as the river's watershed.

A National Blueway designation doesn't establish any new protections for the watersheds in question, but it does open the door to some federal support for existing and/or new local and regional conservation, recreation and restoration projects. In the case of *(Continued on next page.)*

the Connecticut River, the new designation will help by improving coordination between local/regional planning entities and federal agencies such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The designation should also mean more funding for trail building and forest restoration projects.

It's unclear yet when other U.S. watersheds will be designated under the Blueways program, but there are certainly dozens if not hundreds across the country that could benefit from inclusion.

America's Great Outdoors Initiative, www.americasgreatoutdoors.gov.

Dear EarthTalk: The world added its seven-billionth person in 2011, but the news came and went quickly while Charlie Sheen news kept on and on. But isn't population growth the "elephant in the room" that needs serious attention? Can you outline the major impacts of unchecked population growth and what if anything is being done to try to arrest it? - Aaron Rodriguez, Tucson, AZ

Unchecked human population growth could be a recipe for doom for the planet and its inhabitants. And it has reached staggering levels in recent years-the number of people on the planet has doubled from 3.5 billion to seven billion in just a half century. While we've made great strides in educating people around the world about family planning and birth control, the global fertility rate still hovers around 2.5 children per woman. At that rate, population will grow to 11 billion by 2050 and nearly 27 billion by 2100.

While such a scenario is unlikely given that fertility rates tend to decline as countries develop and modernize, the prospect of a planet with tens of billions of people on it is scary indeed. The first widely published pundit on the potential impacts of too much human population growth was Englishman Thomas Malthus, whose 1798 ***An Essay***

on the Principle of Human Population warned that violence, genocide, nasty weather, disease epidemics and pestilence would be precursors to widespread famine in a world with too many humans. "The power of population is so superior to the power of the earth to produce subsistence for man, that premature death must in some shape or other visit the human race," he wrote.

History views Malthus as an extremist and many would argue that, despite population having swelled some seven times since his day, we have so far managed to avert a planet-wide "Malthusian catastrophe" whereby population has simply outpaced our ability to feed ourselves. Nonetheless, a 2007 UNICEF report indicated that 10.9 million children under five-years-old die each year around the world, with malnutrition and other hunger-related diseases responsible for 60 percent of the tragedy. And a 2009 World Health Organization and UNICEF study found that some 24,000 children in developing countries were dying each day from preventable causes like diarrhea resulting from lack of access to clean water for drinking and sanitation.

The most obvious issue with seven billion of us here is our profligate consumption of dwindling natural resources and the waste and pollution generated in the process. A recent joint study by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the Worldwatch Institute found that humans now use 20 percent more renewable resources than can be replaced each year. And while many would say that climate change has eclipsed overpopulation as the major issue of the day, others counter that atmospheric temperatures wouldn't be growing nearly as much if there weren't so darn many of us burning so many fossil fuels.

Human population numbers are predicted to trend downward around the world within a few generations. This so-called "demographic transition" is already underway in the U.S. and other developed countries where fertility rates have dropped due to lower infant mortality, increased urbanization and wider access to contraceptives. Given that fertility rates drop as countries develop, and that lesser developed countries have begun to leapfrog ahead in their urbanization and adoption of technology, the United Nations Population Fund predicts that population may peak in the late 21st century and then begin to shrink. *United Nations Population Fund, www.unfpa.org.*

earthtalk@emagazine.com.

Editor's Note: As a quick test to see if you're up on this issue: What is the major source of pollution in the world today? ANY answer other than PEOPLE and you failed.

Watching Land Swaps In The West

By Neil LaRubbio/High Country News

For Western Pacific Timber and its then-President and CEO Tim Blixseth, the spring of 2006 promised big business. The company had recently purchased 39,371 acres in the Clearwater National Forest in the Upper Lochsa, on the Idaho-Montana border. The Lewis and Clark trail winds through here, and the rivers and woods are home to threatened steelhead, bull trout and Canada lynx. Foresters and conservationists had wanted to consolidate ownership of the checker-boarded territory for years, and Blixseth knew it. So he gathered a handful of Forest Service managers in a corner office of Western Pacific's Boise high-rise and offered to exchange the Upper Lochsa for part of the Payette National Forest around McCall, a popular Idaho ski town.

Blixseth had reason to be optimistic. In the early 1990s, he and his partners threatened development and ultimately traded 101,000 private acres north of Yellowstone National Park for $25 million and 47,000 public acres of prime Montana timberland. Blixseth made tens of millions of dollars from subsequent timber and land sales and used a portion to build the Yellowstone Club, an exclusive resort that he later lost in a divorce. But the climate for such swaps has changed since the early days. In the '80s and '90s, the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management lost money and crucial habitat in major land exchanges that favored private parties. Agencies are required to ensure that transactions 'serve the public interest,' with the new land's value at least equal to that of the land exchanged. But the statutes are ambiguous, and speculators can make huge profits from swaps; Tom Chapman, a notorious Colorado developer, made millions this way. Increased scrutiny from both the government and the public over the last decade has forced the feds to get better at vetting deals, and it's pushed those who initiate them to come up with more favorable proposals. Now, six years later, Western Pacific is still slogging through the federal review process. Payette managers rejected its initial proposal, saying it didn't serve the public interest, and the company's had a hard time convincing people that it's a good idea to trade locally cherished hunting and fishing grounds for land elsewhere in the state. A final decision is expected in November but will probably be delayed. The era of easy land exchanges appears to be over.

'There's concern about giving up public lands because they're so important,' says Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell. 'The public doesn't want to give up any part of the national forest even if there's strong acreage to gain.' Large businesses or private landowners initiate most swaps to improve access, acquire property leased from the government, or simply consolidate holdings. Exchanges can be conducted through the local office of the relevant federal land agency, or through legislation. Administrative swaps are subject to the National Environmental Policy Act, which requires officials to review environmental impacts and allow public input. The legislative route rarely circumvents those hoops and doesn't necessarily speed up deals. Proponents draft a bill, find a congressional sponsor and hope for a favorable vote in D.C. But exchanges can be controversial, and politicians are often reluctant to sign on. Swaps started getting stickier in 2000, when the Government Accountability Office

(GAO), Congress' nonpartisan research arm, released a fiercely critical report. It discovered that although the Forest Service was getting more acres than it gave away, those acres were worth about half as much as the land exchanged. The BLM also traded for less valuable private parcels, and sometimes ignored the findings of its chief appraiser.

In three 1998 exchanges, the agency acquired land in Nevada that was overvalued by $8.8 million. The GAO even found one private party who acquired federal lands and quickly sold them for two and six times more than their government-assessed value. The GAO concluded sternly, 'Congress may wish to consider directing both agencies to discontinue their land exchange programs.' 'For the most part, I think people were less aware that these deals were happening,' says Janine Blaeloch, founder and director of the Western Lands Project, a nonprofit that watchdogs land exchanges. The agencies 'treated these as real estate transactions, and even though they were supposed to follow NEPA, (private parties) were able to take advantage because nobody really paid attention to them.'

A chastened BLM moved its appraisers from district offices to the national office to encourage more objective decisions. The Forest Service, meanwhile, gave its national office more opportunities to scrutinize exchanges, and revised its handbooks to better guide managers through the complicated process. By 2009, the GAO reported that land-swap management had improved significantly in terms of guaranteeing public benefit. Extenuating circumstances contributed, as budget cuts forced agencies to be more selective. During the '90s, for example, the Forest Service alone averaged 115 exchanges a year, while from 2004 to 2008, the GAO noted just 250 'completed, pending, or terminated land exchanges' handled by both that agency and the BLM.

'Land exchanges are discretionary, so just because someone walks into their offices with a great idea doesn't mean they're obligated to do anything,' says Adam Poe, president of the Western Land Group, who has facilitated swaps for the last 30 years. 'Getting their attention is tough.' Lawsuits and court rulings have added more oversight. In 2010, for example, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, which has jurisdiction over half the West, halted a deal in Arizona, in which the BLM had accepted 7,300 acres of private land from Asarco in exchange for 10,000 federal acres that contained valuable wildlife habitat. The BLM had decided that the mining company would have gained the mineral rights to the land anyway — reasoning the court dismissed, since mining on public land is not guaranteed, especially when environmental impacts are involved. After 18 years, the swap is still hobbling along. The BLM is amending its environmental study of the deal in another attempt to get it through.

Underscoring this deeper bureaucratic and judicial scrutiny is citizen involvement, says Vicky Wessling, national land-adjustment program manager for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. 'I have seen a significant change in public interest and response to federal actions due to mass media.' Comment periods for NEPA have not changed, for example, but the number of comments has increased with a more informed local public, says Wessling. Recent exchanges do show signs of providing greater public benefit. The Nature Conservancy is trying to consolidate checker-boarded grassland and protect black-footed ferret habitat in South Dakota through a swap with the Forest Service. In California, Poe's group is orchestrating a deal in which the Forest Service will receive about 1,550 acres of intact forest for giving 20 acres of national forest to a ski resort that's leased it since 1954.

Residents of Colorado's Garfield and Pitkin counties, meanwhile, are circulating a petition on SignOn.org to stop the trading of public land that isn't already listed for disposal. These days, says Blaeloch, 'the Lochsa trade is sort of an anomaly. It's very reminiscent of the trades we were looking at in the beginning.' Objections to the Lochsa deal are numerous; 83% of Idaho County, which contains Western Pacific's land, is public *(Continued on next page.)*

land already, so losing more private land angers local politicians and their anti-government constituents. An option to trade land from the Clearwater's Palouse District, 200 miles west of the Lochsa, has drawn protest from a group of retired rangers, who resent giving a timber company land they once managed for wildlife habitat. 'We've got cougars, turkeys, quail, you name it — this district should be a shining example to educate people of what the Forest Service is capable of doing. That's why we got into it. We love this land,' says retired forester John Krebs.

Swap critics have been quick to take advantage of technology. Ray Payton of Riggins, Idaho, who is fighting to keep nearby woods from the bartering table, funds a website for documents obtained through Freedom of Information Act requests. He also provides instructions for submitting comments to state legislators, county commissioners and the Forest Service. Such efforts have borne fruit. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation withdrew support from the Lochsa exchange last December after protest from its Idaho members over the loss of prime elk habitat. And Western Pacific has had to make concessions. After its Payette proposal was rejected, it approached the Idaho Panhandle National Forest about land around Lake Pend Oreille and was again spurned for the sake of the 'public's interest.'

The Clearwater National Forest, however, still favored some kind of deal and began to consider other options. 'We had the opportunity to acquire some very high-value public lands,' says then-Supervisor Tom Reilly. Finally, the Clearwater came up with five alternatives. Its preferred one would trade around 14,000 acres of the Clearwater, Nez Perce and Idaho Panhandle forests, accompanied by a cash payment to Western Pacific from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. But that still upsets Idaho County, so officials floated a sixth option that would trade Western Pacific an equal amount of land within Idaho County.

Meanwhile, the company offered to give up development rights on the land it would receive to appease Payton and other locals. 'If people have this fear of Western Pacific Timber for whatever reason, we like to roll up our sleeves and address it,' says General Counsel Andy Hawes. 'We've got kind of a plan B, but we just want to be in the timber business in Idaho.' The deal continues to unfold in its unpredictable, tragicomic way. If current Clearwater Supervisor Rick Brazell selects the Idaho County option, it will further delay the process. The private land involved in the acre-for-acre exchange is far less valuable than the timber-rich national forest land it would be swapped for, making it illegal to process administratively; only Congress would have the power to give it final approval. If it gets that far and still doesn't work out, says Hawes, 'then we can honestly say we gave it our best shot.'

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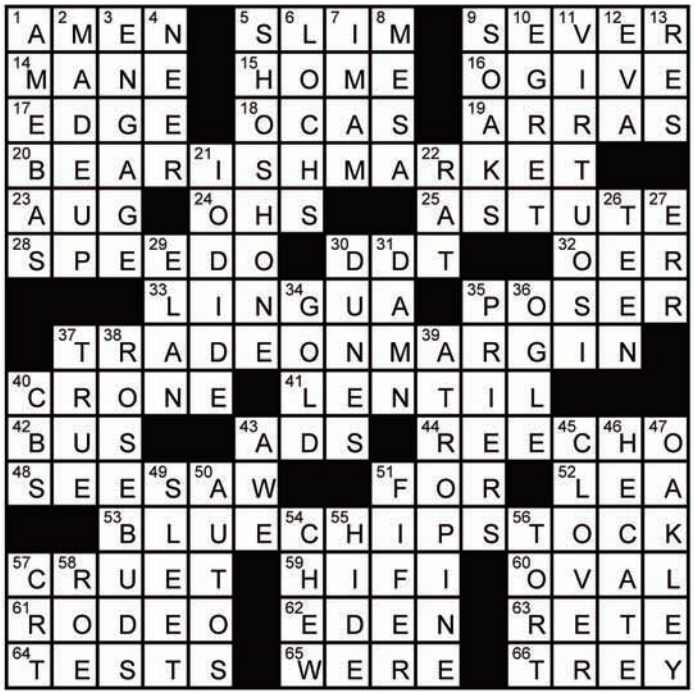

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Sandy Curfman-Coldwell Banker pg 7 303.413.2352
Front Range Mtn Properties- pg 25 303.642.8800
Gail Kirby - Keller Williams pg 12 303.475.9370
Mary Teter-HomeSmart pg 11 303.229.4630
Mock Realty-Kathy Keating -Back cov 303.642.1133
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NOVEMBER
2012

POWER UPDATE

OPERATION UP ROUND

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.

UNITED POWER
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Free Trip to D.C.

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

Apply now for United Power's 2013 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.

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!

11-4 Turn Clocks Back! 11-6 Vote! 11-22 Give Thanks & Eat!

11536 Coal Creek Heights
Amazing 300 Degree Views!
3 BD/ 3 BA. **$524,900**

33867 Ave de Pines Lane
Retro Charm - Amazing Views!
1 BD/ 1 BA **$169,000**

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

99 Rocky Ridge Road
Stunning Mtn. Top Retreat!
3 BD/ 4 BA **$324,000**

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

267 N. Beaver
Gorgeous, loaded, custom!
3 BD/ 3 BA 10 Acres. **$479,900**

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

11833 Hillcrest Road
Comfy, cozy A-Frame
1 BD/ 1 BA **$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
Dory Lakes, Move-In Ready!
3 BD/ 2 BA **$319,000**

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

175 Rudi Lane
Carefree - Luxury Retreat!
3 BD/ 3 BA **$449,500**

3072 Coal Creek Canyon
Top to Bottom Remodel!
3 BD/ 1 BA **$169,900**

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

426 Indian Peak Road
2.03 Ac Nicely Wooded Lot
3 BD/ 2 BA **$209,000**

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**

6 Rudi Lane West
Remarkably Retro-Cool!
2 BD/ 2 BA **$239,000**

11777 Brook Road
Beautifully maintained home!
4 BD/ 4 BA **$399,999**

Please Call Kathy for Information on Vacant Land

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

MOCK REALTY

For additional information and photos:
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303.642.1133