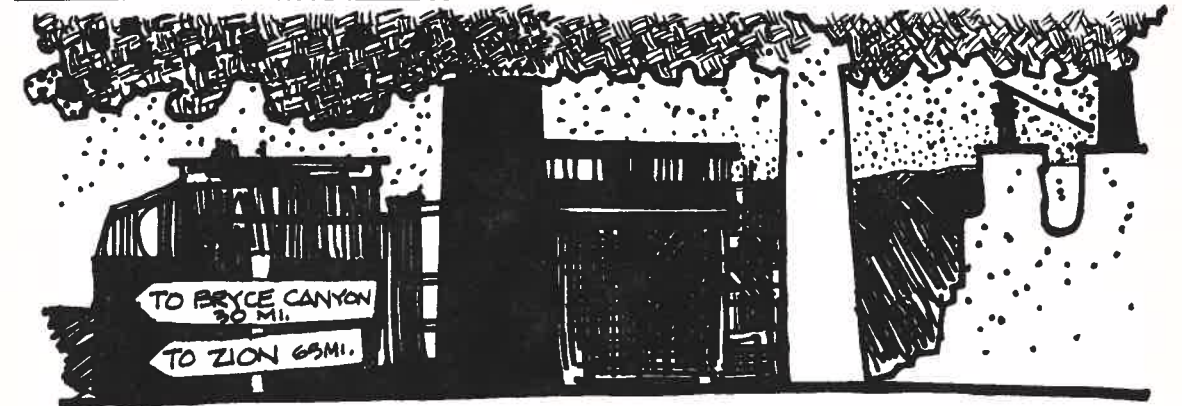




rio grande SIERRAN

Volume XII, Number 9

October 1975



Kaiparowits: Park or Industrial Park?

by Betsy Barnett

The Kaiparowits Power Project, potential polluter of a "Golden Circle" of national parks, monuments, recreation areas, forests and de facto wilderness, looms as an issue of significance comparable to the fight in the 60's over dams in the Grand Canyon. As such, it is a top priority of the Club's Southwest Regional Conservation Committee and is developing into a campaign of national proportions.

A draft environmental statement on the proposed 3000 megawatt Kaiparowits Power Generating Project

has been released by the Department of the Interior. This 2700-page EIS assesses potential environmental impacts associated with (1) the coal-fired electric generating station; (2) the four underground coal mines which would supply 12 million tons of coal per year to the plant; (3) the 1460 miles of extra high voltage transmission lines needed to bring the power to users in southern California and Arizona; (4) the limestone quarry used to produce 237,000 tons of limestone annually for dust abatement and

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pollution control equipment; (5) 67 miles of new paved highways and 800 miles of other permanent roads; (6) the additional 14,000 people and the new town the plant and mine will bring to southern Utah, and (7) other support facilities.

The proposed plant is to be located on the Kaiparowits plateau amidst the great concentration of national parks and other scenic and recreational areas found in southern Utah. It is the first of four large coal-fired plants with a total capacity of 8,500 megawatts planned for this region (see map). Kaiparowits will be owned by Southern California Edison, San Diego Gas & Electric, and Arizona Public Service. Power from the other plants will also go largely to Southern California.

Sometime in January or February of 1976, whoever becomes the new Secretary of the Interior will be faced with the decision of whether or not to allow the construction of Kaiparowits. Former Interior Secretary Morton rejected applications to build Kaiparowits in June of 1973 because it "would impose severe additional impacts upon this major recreation area." In making that decision Morton stated "the scenic beauty of its rugged Southwest landscape, coupled with the clarity of the air in the vicinity, are national assets of major importance, worthy of protection for the enjoyment of future generations of Americans." However, pressure from utilities and the State of Utah, combined with the fact that no environmental impact statement had been prepared prior to the earlier decision, forced the current reconsideration.

The draft EIS is based on a proposed plant site known as "Fourmile Bench"

which is some 14 miles from the original "Nipple Bench" site turned down by Morton in 1973. However, most persons concerned with the project, including the utilities and Utah state officials, feel that the Fourmile Bench site is, if anything, worse. Additional information gathered in the draft EIS has only confirmed the wisdom of former Interior Secretary Morton's rejection of Kaiparowits in June, 1973, no matter what site is selected.

Perhaps the best summary of the Sierra Club's reasons for opposing the construction of this plant is contained in the draft EIS statement that "the people of the Kaiparowits area would be bothered by extensive industrial and urban development there." Just a few of the adverse impacts documented in the EIS are: "haze and sky discoloration from plant emissions would adversely affect the scenic resources of South-Central Utah and North-Central Arizona." "The 'back country' character of the Kaiparowits Plateau impact area would be lost." "The (transmission) system would... create a major intrusion into otherwise natural landscapes." "The populations of most game animals, large raptors, and numerous other species would be reduced over a 100 mile radius..." "A subsidence of 15-18 feet would likely occur over mined-out coal beds."

For additional information see the August/September 1975 issue of the Sierra Club Bulletin. Also copies of the complete 2700-page EIS, or a shorter summary, may be obtained by writing Paul Howard, State Director, Bureau of Land Management, 125 South State Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84111.

John McComb, Sierra Club
Southwest Representative

What YOU can Do...

Write to President Gerald R. Ford (The White House, Washington, D. C. 20500) and ask him to order that the Kaiparowits Power Project be rejected once again. If possible, send carbon copies of your letter to Interior Secretary-designate Thomas S. Kleppe, c/o U. S. Department of the Interior (20240) and our congressional delegation (Senate - 20510; House - 20515).

What the Sierra Club Is Doing

On September 13 - 14 representatives of the Club's Uinta Chapter, the Southwest Regional Conservation Committee and Southern California and Southwest staff representatives met to discuss progress of preparation of comments on the DEIS and potential strategies to defeat Kaiparowits. A brief description of major concerns about the DEIS follows:

Air Quality -- The project contemplates 99.5% particulate control and 90% SO₂ control. Even if these figures represented the actual operating efficiencies, 12 tons of fly ash and 53 tons of SO₂ would be emitted daily. State and federal standards for NO₂ are weak to begin with, and 250 tons of NO₂ would be emitted daily. The DEIS is lax in its discussion of ozone resulting from photochemical reactions of NO₂. It is felt that the DEIS also fails to deal adequately with radioactivity and mercury. Investigators with a National Science Foundation study anticipate 40% of the plant's mercury emissions will end up in Lake Powell; mercury levels in game fish in Lake Powell already approach FDA's recommended levels.

Water - Increased salinity of the Colorado, groundwater quality, over-appropriation of Colorado River water, and the likelihood that water which would otherwise be used for other purposes will be siphoned away by a large power project are the main concerns.

Solid Waste -- More than 60 million cubic yards of fly ash, sludge and other wastes will be buried to a depth of 90' over 450 acres during the 35-year plant life. The adequacy of measures to prevent leaching and erosion is questioned.

Flora and Fauna -- According to Utah biologists, the DEIS reveals little understanding of the effect on the biota of the area inasmuch as no complete inventory has been performed. The statement says that there are no endangered species in the area, a claim rejected, with documentation, by citizen experts.

Alternative Siting -- The impact statement looks only at 14 sites in the immediate vicinity of the Kaiparowits

The Rio Grande Sierran

Published monthly by the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club. Subscription rate for non-members is \$2 per year.

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Address changes for Sierra Club members should be sent to: Sierra Club, 1050 Mills Tower, San Francisco, Cal. 94104, ATTN: Membership Services.
Volume XII, No. 9

Plateau, and of these only two or three were seriously considered. It fails to give serious consideration to the possibility of utilizing Kaiparowits coal in already industrialized locations in Utah, Nevada and California. Discussion of meeting legitimate needs from other energy sources is limited to one sentence each on oil and gas, nuclear power, geothermal, and solar.

Need -- The DEIS fails to demonstrate a need for the power. With energy growth rates in load centers in a state of flux, there is substantial question that the Kaiparowits Project is needed at all. Environmental Defense Fund has testified before the California Energy Commission that if serious conservation measures are put into effect, California can do without new electricity sources for at least a year, during which time current consumption trends can be analysed and future demands more accurately determined.

Sierra Club members are commenting on these facets of the project at length, as well as on the relationship to other projects, the socio-economic impacts mentioned in the report on the hearing (below), transmission line corridors, archeology, net energy, and economics.

During the two-day meeting session, the affected Sierra Club entities discussed a variety of strategies, including areas for potential legal actions, media and publicity campaigns, and means of funding these efforts. Slide shows and additional printed information will be available soon.

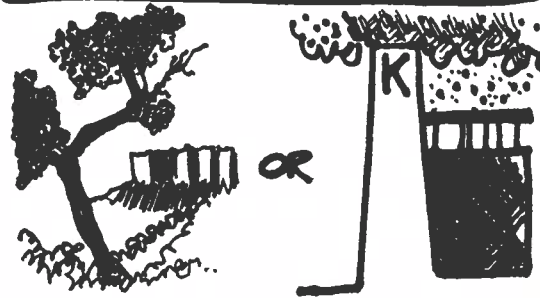
The decision on whether or not the Kaiparowits Project is ever carri-

ed out will be based more on political considerations than on merit. Protecting the quality of wildlands we all use and treasure will require alerting the public at large of the problems posed by Kaiparowits.

YOU can help with publicity

1. Reprints of the Sierra Club Bulletin article, KAIPAROWITS: Southern Utah at the Crossroads are available at the Sierra Club office, 982-4349. If you can think of outlets for this material, please give us a call.

2. As indicated above, a slide show and accompanying script are in preparation. If you know of groups to whom this program could be shown, please let us know at the above number. If you are interested in participating in a speakers' bureau for this issue, we need this kind of assistance too.



In recognition of the vast regional impact of the Kaiparowits proposal and the importance of these impacts on lands heavily used by New Mexico recreationists, the Rio Grande Chapter Executive Committee approved a \$500 contribution to the regional Kaiparowits fund at its September meeting, and it is anticipated that the other chapters in the region will do likewise.

More of what YOU can do - maybe?

Some of the activities described above can be implemented with monies already budgeted or donated for use in the Southwest. However, the more expensive strategies will be possible only if funds beyond those already in hand become available. If you would like to contribute to this effort, you may do so by sending a check:

1. Tax-deductible contributions for legal and educational purposes can

be made payable to the Frontera del Norte Fund of the Sierra Club Foundation, 338 E. deVargas, Santa Fe, NM 87501.

2. Non-deductible contributions for lobbying activities can be made to Sierra Club, 338 E. deVargas, Santa Fe, NM 87501.

Indicate on the check's memo line that the contribution is for Kaiparowits.

BLM Holds Hearings on Kaiparowits DEIS

Hearings on the Kaiparowits proposal were held the week of September 15-19, beginning in Salt Lake and continuing in Kanab, Las Vegas, Phoenix, San Bernardino and Riverside. Three members of Utah's congressional delegation and Governor Calvin Rampton appeared personally in Salt Lake to support the project. Official Utah addressed itself primarily to the following points:

1. Utah welcomes the development.
2. The environmental impact statement is adequate and the project should proceed immediately.
3. Construction of Kaiparowits should proceed without a regional environmental impact statement.

It has been suggested that a regional impact statement is required in order to accurately assess the cumulative im-

pacts of the production of 14,000 mw of power planned for the Four Corners states and Nevada beyond the 14,000 mw already in existence or under construction in that region. Recently the Sierra Club won a law suit against the Interior Department in which the District of Columbia Circuit Court held that the attempts of the federal agencies to control development of coal resources in four Northern Great Plains states is subject to the impact statement requirement of the National Environmental Policy Act. Under this interpretation, extensive assessment of cumulative air impacts, water availability and quality, lease issuance, rights of way, use permits, etc., would be required. Because of the obvious parallels between the Northern Great Plains situation and that in the Four Corners region, a public debate has ensued.

Some Utah officials' response to the suggestion that Kaiparowits be delayed until regional impacts could be examined en toto was that a regional assessment was a good idea but... a great deal of lead time is required for a huge power
continued on page 8

Opinion — 'Tree Farms' in the Public Forests?

A law which has come to be known as the Resources Planning Act (RPA) was passed by Congress last year, and is beginning to have its effect on Forest Service policy and practice.

The RPA is a law the Forest Service wanted. The record shows that they were strongly supported by the timber industry (which, of course, piqued my interest). W.D. Hagenstein, vice-president of the Industrial Forestry Association, called the legislation a "long overdue redirection and remotivation of the U. S. Forest Service."

The RPA does not so much redirect the Forest Service as lend the respectability of law to the current drift of the agency -- toward programs which become increasingly difficult to distinguish from timber supply programs advanced by the timber industry.

The timber industry's enthusiasm for the RPA centered on their ebullient affirmation of the 'intensive management' techniques mandated in the law.

'Intensive management' is an innocent sounding phrase which peppers almost any Forest Service publication these days. One is tempted to let it slide by because the term suggests a high level of care or interest -- which one can hardly fault. Unfortunately, 'intensive management' has but one end in view -- to increase board foot yield. This little-understood term should be a red flag to the ecologically conservative because it is the signal for a heavy hand upon the forest environment. 'Intensive management' covers an arsenal of techniques ranging from relatively innocuous practices such as precommercial and commercial thinning to real ecological rough stuff such as "chemical destruction of competing vegetation", to the planting of "genetically improved" trees, to "stand conversion" (i.e., the removal of "stands of inferior species" to be replaced by com-

mercially valuable species), to accelerated use of pesticides and fertilizers -- in short, bringing to the National Forests the concept of the 'tree farm'.

The conservative understanding of the biologist or ecologist -- that the forests may do their thing best in a natural or near natural condition -- is hardly to be found in the language of the RPA. The emphasis is on manipulation and re-engineering of the forest to maximize growth of commercially valuable trees. The 'intensive management' bias is written into the law:

The Congress hereby sets the year 2000 as the target year when the renewable resources of the National Forest System shall be in an operating posture whereby all backlogs of needed treatment for their restoration shall be reduced to a current basis and the major portion of intensive management procedures shall be installed and operating on an environmentally sound basis.

The timber industry has been trying to push 'intensive management' on the public forests for years. The investment of time and money required by intensive management makes economic sense on some very productive timber growing sites in the Northwest -- as industry spokesmen are ever ready to demonstrate. Whether tree farm practices ever make sense within the context of 'multiple use' on public lands is an intensely debated question. Such procedures probably make no sense -- economic or otherwise -- in semi-arid, low site, Rocky Mtn. locations such as New Mexico.

Furthermore, 'intensive management' on private lands is financed by private capital, whereas the same activities on public lands amount to a huge subsidy of the timber industry. There is something in it for the Forest Service also. If 'intensive management' becomes firmly established as the modus operandi on the public forests it will mean larger budgets and more personnel. It is called empire building.

Also, making 'intensive management' the new darling of the public forests can be used as a rationalization to rapidly increase today's cutting rates in "old growth"

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ACTION on the Forest Services' RPA Program

The Resources Planning Act, for all its faults, has provided another valuable opportunity to comment on the general operation of the Forest Service. The Agency is soliciting comments from the public. The deadline is October 15th. Comments should be sent to:

Chief John McGuire
Forest Service, U.S.D.A.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Be sure that you state that you wish your comments to be considered in the evaluation of "The Forest Service Program for the Nation's Renewable Resources".

The RPA resulted in the publication of massive documents -- 1100 pages plus in three volumes. The summary document -- "A Summary of the Program and Assessment for the Nation's Renewable Resources" is the most widely distributed, backed up by the more detailed "Assessment" and "Program". Copies of these documents are available at Forest Supervisor's offices.

If you cannot get to the RPA documents, COMMENT ANYWAY! The Forest Service is offering for discussion a wide range of choices on wilderness goals:

Goal A: 17.3 million acres on NF land.
Goal B: 28.5 million acres on NF land.
Goal C: 41.0 million acres on NF land.

The Sierra Club and Wilderness Society are supporting goal C as a minimum.

In the area of timber management, you might want to support conservative timber harvesting practices (as put forth by Sierra Club Forester, Gordon Robinson) as the only kind of harvesting that is acceptable within the constraints of "multiple use" and "sustained yield".

Whether or not you can get to the RPA publications, write down YOUR THOUGHTS ON HOW YOU WANT YOUR FORESTS MANAGED. You might want to send copies of your letter to your Senators and Congressman.

timber. The 'intensive management' game plan calls for a "conversion" of timber growing sites from the present unkempt and unruly "all aged" stands (i.e., the natural forest which has proved its viability over 50 million years) to forests of new growth made up, in many instances, of blocks of trees which are all the same age (even-aged management). The conversion process requires, in essence, that the natural forest be dispatched to the mill to make room for the new regulated Superforest. The scheme justifies a lot of cutting. Whether the anticipated Superforest will grow as planned remains to be seen. Meanwhile the non-existent, anticipated Superforest is being used to justify high levels of cutting on the National Forests today. I wonder if an insurance company would guarantee the growth of the expected Superforest? I doubt it.

Don Campbell

THE PHREATOPHYTE ISSUE ---

The Bureau of Reclamation will hold Hearings on its programs affecting the Rio Grande -- including the controversial phreatophyte projects. Oct. 15, 2 pm, at the T or C Convention Ctr. and Oct. 16, 2 pm at the Albuquerque Convention Ctr. Call 766-3381 for more information.



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White Mountain Wilderness Outing

Two groups will cross the wilderness area, one from the west side, one from the east side, exchanging car keys at the crest. It is an interesting way to see the varied eco-system without retracing a trail or making a long car shuttle.

Total mileage: 12 U.S.F.S. miles
Elevation gain: approx. 5000 feet
Limit: 12 persons in each party
LEADER APPROVAL REQUIRED!

Call John Colburn at 915-598-7988 before Oct 5, if possible, for a reservation.

Excom
Nominations —

The date for election of chapter Executive Committee members is rapidly approaching, and the Nominating Committee needs input from the chapter membership to present a good, strong, representative slate of candidates. An Executive Committee member should be a Sierra Club member for at least one year, be willing to spend time effectively on Club matters, be able to work with others, and be will-

ing to travel to meetings throughout the state. If you know such a person, and would like to have him considered for nomination, contact Ken Adam, Nominating Committee Chairman, 416 Apodaca Hill, Santa Fe, N.M. 87501 (phone 983-1949), before October 25, 1975.

Kaiparowits —

continued from page 5

project, the power is needed, and since this project has been studied, it should go ahead without delay. Governor Rampton took a harder line, stating that proposals for plants beyond Kaiparowits were "only ideas in the air."

The Governor and congressional delegation were followed by Kane and Garfield County representatives. Their major concerns were location of the project and town site to their own best advantage. A few Utah individuals who spoke expressed such ideas as, "We would rather export our energy than our sons;" "I'm sick of being compared to Rock Springs" (Wyoming boomtown); "We need to compensate for our limited tax base," and "Sierra, go home."