

THE RIO GRANDE
Sierran

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This photograph of a clearcut was taken in the spruce forest of the Jemez Range not far from Chicoma Mountain. 'The National Forest Management Act of 1976' -- Congress' answer to the problems raised by the great Monongahela controversy -- has guidelines which will have a modest impact on clearcutting activity. See story on page 1.

Monongahela "Problem" Terminated
see page 1
Abiquiu Dam see pages 2 & 7
Some Outings see page 5

Monongahela "Problem" Terminated in Congress

As this paper goes to press Congress will be acting on some sort of forestry legislation with the hope of putting to bed forever the nagging headache known as the 'Monongahela controversy'.

This spring's darling of the environmental movement, the Randolph Bill (see April '76 Sierran), is deadlier than a door nail. That being the case, Sierra Club Washington lobbyist, Brock Evans, is hoping that Congress will choose as its vehicle the much-changed Humphrey Bill, Senate Bill 3091, which also has the name 'National Forest Management Act of 1976'. The Act actually takes the form of an elaborate series of amendments to the still newly-minted Resources Planning Act of 1974.

Writing about the Humphrey Bill in a favorable light is most confusing, I know. Only a few months ago the original Humphrey Bill was viewed as the "industry bill" and was anathema to environmentalists. But many of the points in the Randolph Bill have been poured into S. 3091 as the Senate sought to mold a piece of compromise legislation that the opposing factions could live with. Now it is the timber industry that disowns the Senate Bill.

"The Senate-passed bill does include a number of provisions vital to environmentalists' concerns, including codification of sustained yield policy and protection against excessive logging of marginal lands," said Evans. "For these reasons, the Senate Bill is a good step in the right direction of better management for the National Forests, and can be supported, even though it leaves out a number of crucial elements which we may have to work for next year."

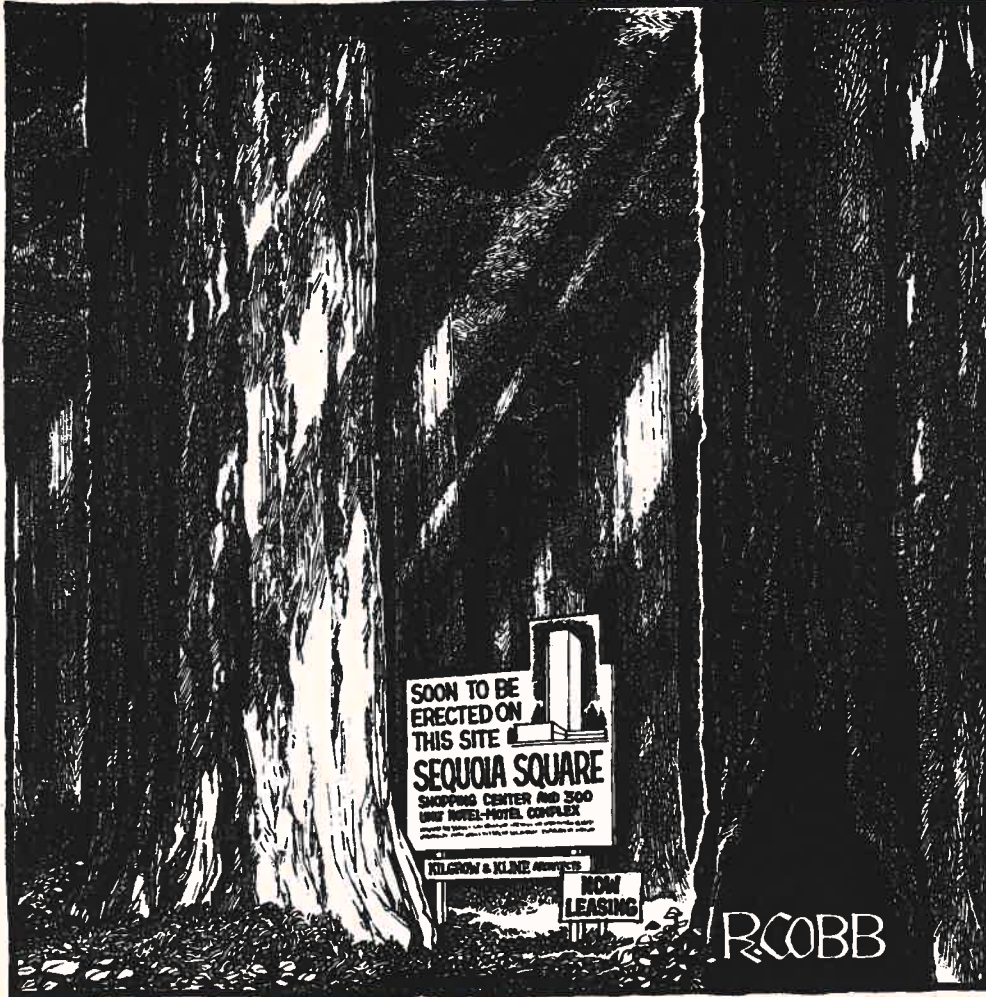
Not so with the House version (House Bill 15069) which emerged from the House Agricultural Committee. Although strong environmentalists on the Committee such as James Weaver (D-Oregon), John Krebs (D-Calif.) and George Brown (D-Calif.) fought to make the bill environmentally strong, the industry forces, led by John Melcher (D-Montana), prevailed and sent from the Committee a House version which is unacceptable to the environmental community, prompting Evans to say, "If it cannot be amended in a very strong fashion when it reaches the House floor, then it will be necessary to muster every effort to defeat it. We will fight with every resource at our command to stop any legislation which does not contain the crucial provisions necessary to prevent overcutting, codify sustained yield policy, and stop logging on marginal lands."

The Monongahela Background

How did this terrific battle come to be?

Lawyers for the Isaac Walton League uncovered some language in the principal enabling legislation of the Forest Service--the Organic Act of 1897--which said that the agency must limit its timber sales to "dead, matured, or large growth of trees" literally interpreted, that means no clearcutting.

It actually all began in 1964 when the Forest Service decided to switch to "even-aged management" on the Monongahela National Forest. (Even-aged management embraces several techniques which allow a forester to eventually end up with a forest wherein large blocs (perhaps 500 acres each) consist of trees which are



With this issue the Sierran we are bringing you the first in a series of environmental cartoons by Ron Cobb. Ron grew up in Burbank, California. He worked for the Disney studios for a while before deciding he was happier making his comments on the social order as a cartoonist. I met Ron eleven years ago when he was just beginning to publish his work in some of the underground papers in the Los Angeles area, and I am pleased that he has given the Sierran permission to publish some of his work. -- Ed.

all the same age.) Clearcutting is one of the tools in even-aged management.

Local opposition to the onset of clearcutting on the Monongahela National Forest was very strong. Because of the heavy reliance of the local economy on tourism (and, therefore, the region's natural beauty), both of West Virginia's Senators, the West Virginia House of Delegates, the Chamber of Commerce, the entire State Senate and many others loudly opposed the change in forest management over a period of years. The Forest Service was unmoved.

As a last resort the Isaac Walton League went to court basing its opposition to the practice of clearcutting on the language it had uncovered in the 1897 Organic Act.

The forest industry panic began on November 6, 1973 (almost three years ago!) when Judge Robert Maxwell of the U.S. District Court of the Northern District of West Virginia decided in favor of the Isaac Walton League. The Forest Service appealed immediately and lost again when the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the lower Court's decision on August 21, 1975. Rather than chance a final loss in court by an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, the Forest Service turned its attention to the Congress in order to amend away the offending and "archaic" language in the Organic Act.

At any rate, the Appeals Court decision guaranteed that there would be a strong attempt to rewrite the Organic Act via new legislation and the question was whether the new legislation would favor the environmental view toward forestry practice or the interests of the timber industry.

The House/Senate Conference Committee and the Debate at the Eleventh Hour

At this moment in late September, the widely disparate Senate Bill 3091 and House Bill 15069 have been sent to a conference committee to be hammered into a single piece of legislation. As one might guess from Brock Evans' remarks, the Club is going to fight like hell for the provisions of the Senate Bill.

The conference committee met once on September 23rd and settled many of the less controversial differences. They also adopted, for the final version, the Senate language regarding clearcutting. They will meet again on Monday, September 27th to tackle two of the heavy issues -- 'marginal lands' and 'non-declining yield'. (More about them later.)

The Clearcutting Guidelines

Senate Bill 3091 certainly does not prohibit clearcutting (but neither did the Randolph Bill). The clearcutting controls are not as strong or as detailed as those that appeared in the Randolph Bill. They are a considerably weakened version of the guidelines arrived at by Senator Church's Senate Interior Subcommittee on Public Lands in 1972, prompting Senator Dale Bumpers (D-Arkansas) to comment: ". . . the guidelines may have been weakened during their translation into legislative language. In particular, the language of the bill calls for the use of clearcutting only where it is determined to be the 'optimum method' for meeting land management plans. By way of contrast, the Church guidelines provide that clearcutting shall be uti-

lized only where it is "silviculturally essential". This change sacrifices much of the clarity and, I believe, some of the original intent of these guidelines."

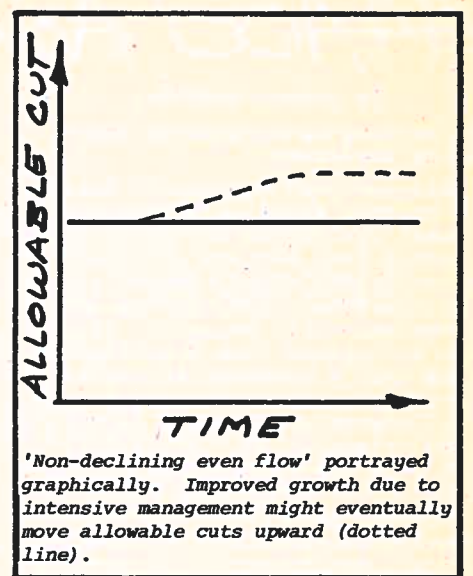
Agreed. "Optimum method" can easily accommodate an economic imperative, whereas the Church language calls for an exclusively silvicultural determination.

Paragraph (J)(4) requires the Forest Service to establish size limits for clearcuts depending on region and forest types. It does not suggest a usual upper limit of 25 acres as did the Randolph Bill. But the same paragraph allows for loopholes, one of which is large enough to accommodate the Jemez Mountains, to wit: "That such limits shall not apply to the size of areas harvested as a result of natural catastrophic conditions such as fire, insect attack, disease or windstorm."

The 'Non-declining Even Flow' Concept

'Sustained Yield' is perhaps the first and central thought that springs to mind at the mention of Forest Service timber management policy. At first glance the idea of an 'even flow' of timber from the public lands and -- to refine it further -- an even flow that does not decline in volume, would seem to be the most immediate and logical definition of 'sustained yield'. And the Forest Service has been interpreting 'sustained yield' in this fashion. However, for reasons of their own, the timber industry chooses not to interpret 'sustained yield' in this way -- at least not at this time.

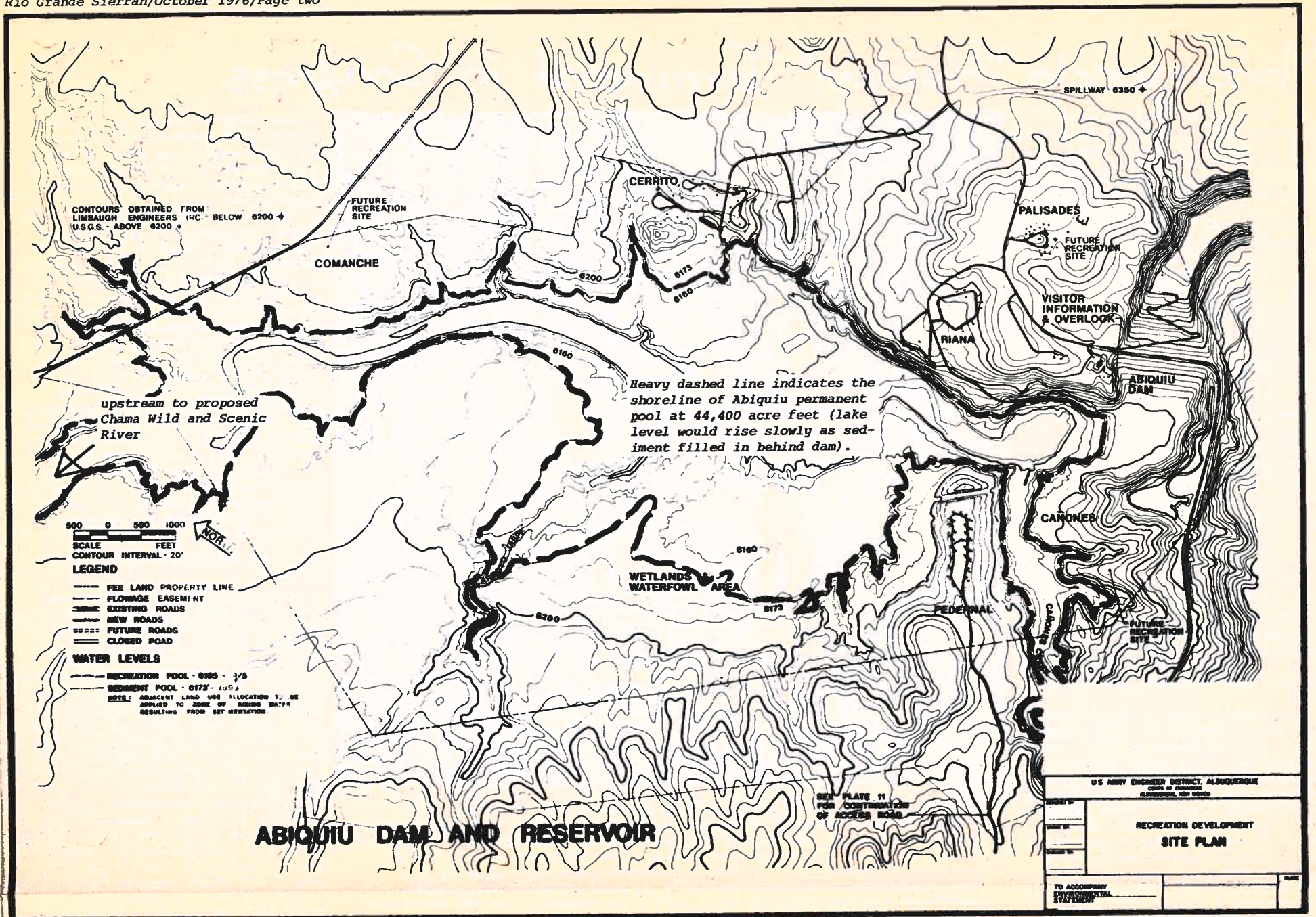
The ability to take liberties with the 'sustained yield' concept springs from the fact that there is a great deal of old-growth virgin sawtimber in the



Western states. As legitimate and as viable as these old-growth forests may seem to you or me, in the light of even-aged theory they are a waste and an offense. Old growth forests grow quality lumber but they do not grow anywhere near as much wood fiber per unit of time as a young ("thrifty") forest. And since the name of the game is to maximize the growth of wood fiber, even-aged theory requires the eventual conversion of the "stagnated" old-growth forests into a collection of even-aged stands with a much younger average age.

The Forest Service has been proceeding toward this eventual service-wide conversion at a fairly sedate pace. They have given this relatively slow pace a theoretical form in the concept of 'non-declining even flow'

(Continued on page 6)



44,400 Acre Feet of Excess Water

by Arturo Sandoval

(Reprinted by permission from Seers newspaper.)

Abiquiu Dam, originally built to control flooding on the Rio Chama, has become the focus of a growing feud between government agencies and local people in the Abiquiu area. The controversy, simmering until recently, threatens to explode into a confrontation over a proposal to create a permanent pool at Abiquiu Dam. The reservoir is slated to be used primarily for recreation, but will also include water habitats.

Several government agencies and New Mexico municipalities have a vested interest in the development of a permanent pool at Abiquiu. However, local people, charging that pertinent information has been withheld, are organizing themselves to learn how the lake's creation will affect them, and to seek ways of controlling the proposed expansion.

Among those who favor the permanent pool are the US Army Corps of Engineers, which originally built the dam, the cities of Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Los Alamos and Espanola, and the Rio Arriba County Commission. Questioning the proposed benefits to be derived are Chicanos who live in villages along the Rio Chama and its tributaries, as well as several environmental groups, notably the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club.

The preliminary Master Plan for Abiquiu Dam, prepared in January, 1976, describes the proposal's two major steps:

--the creation of a "permanent pool" of about 44,000 acre feet (about 1500 surface acres) using imported water from the San Juan/Chama Diversion Project.

--the construction of recreation facilities costing over \$2 million that would include boat-launching ramps, picnic and camping sites, trails and other support facilities.

According to John Cunico, project manager for Abiquiu Dam at the Corps of Engineers, the Corps would build the recreational facilities on a cost-sharing basis with the City of Albuquerque, which would pay half the construction costs. Albuquerque, however, will pay for its share simply by providing the water for the pool. Since 1973, the State's largest city has paid about \$1.7 million for water from the San Juan/Chama Diversion Project, according to Jim Gill, water resources planner for Albuquerque. Gill says that this year alone Albuquerque will pay close to \$6 hundred thousand for the water. The Energy Resource and Development Administration (ERDA) owns the water system in Los Alamos, and it also wants to store San Juan Project waters it owns at Abiquiu Dam. Santa Fe and Espanola, not originally considered for San Juan Project waters, will apparently soon sign contracts to receive San Juan Project waters and they, too, hope for storage at Abiquiu Dam.

John Cunico at the Corps says that he will soon initiate a study, beginning with an October 6 meeting in Espanola (at 7 pm at the Lucero Community Center), to

develop a master plan for Abiquiu Dam which will deal with creating an even larger body of water than the 44,000 acre/feet now proposed.

Cunico says the Corps is initiating the study as a result of Congressional legislation originally introduced by Senator Pete Domenici.

According to the Cunico and Felix Corle, Chief of the Planning Branch for the Corps' Albuquerque District Office, Abiquiu is the only dam that could realistically be considered for storing the San Juan Diversion waters. Jemez Canyon Dam has also been considered, according to Corle, but seepage problems and resistance from Pueblo Indians to an increased permanent pool at Jemez (which is at least partially located on Indian lands) make that an unlikely alternative. Jim Gill points out that Abiquiu Dam is the only facility available to store Albuquerque's water. Gill says that Albuquerque doesn't need the water right now, but will lose water rights unless the water is put to a "beneficial use". Corle says that creating a lake at Abiquiu for recreational purposes meets the federal requirements for using the San Juan Diversion waters "beneficially".

Additionally, both Corle and Cunico argue that if Abiquiu isn't used to store the San Juan Diversion waters, Albuquerque, Los Alamos, Santa Fe and perhaps Espanola face the possibility of having to construct new dams. They say that building new facilities would be an expensive and environmentally damaging proposition.

Cunico adds that a new dam large enough to hold just Albuquerque's water would cost close to \$30 million, while present costs would soar to \$60 million if a dam similar to Abiquiu Dam were to be constructed.

The Corps of Engineers also points out that Abiquiu Dam has, presently, a storage capacity of over 1.2 million ac./ft. Even with the creation of the 44,000 ac./ft. Albuquerque pool, Abiquiu Dam will be able to handle other waters belonging to Los Alamos, Santa Fe and Espanola and still have room for flood waters and any future imported waters brought into the Rio Chama basin.

People in the Abiquiu area, and environmentalists, however, argue against the creation of a permanent pool for recreational purposes. Brant Calkin, director of the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club and recently elected National President of the Sierra Club, says, "Look what's happened in New Mexico whenever lakes are created. Look at Conchas, Cochiti, Elephant Butte. Every time you create a body of water, the developers move in with their subdivisions. Who pays for new roads, police protection and other services? Too often, it's the local people. It's a cause and effect pattern: If you build a dam, someone ends up selling land." In fact, the Corps of Engineers' preliminary Master Plan indicates that police protection will be provided by the county sheriff and the state police. Calkin also objects to the Corps contention that creation of the permanent pool will increase

(Continued on page three)

Excess Water

(From page two)

forage capacity and quality in the area around the lake. In a written response to the draft Environmental Impact Statement prepared by the Corps, Calkin says, "The discussion... indicates that forage quality will be improved in much of the area, and yet it is clear that recreational uses will be competitive in the (improved) area. Will the result be a net gain in forage or will livestock utilization be diminished?"

It is this economic impact on their small ranches and herds that also worries Chicanos in the Abiquiu area, according to "Ike" DeVargas, County Chairman of La Raza Unida Party (LRUP) in Rio Arriba. DeVargas says that land taxes will rise as "middle class people demand pavements, sewage outlets and services they're accustomed to in the city". DeVargas argues that Chicanos already living in the county will eventually be forced to sell their land as taxes rise, while the productivity level of the land remains constant. "People will pay more taxes, on their land, but they won't have increased production," he says.

Several of the small ranchers, and many of the villagers, are also afraid that the permanent pool will automatically create sprawling subdivisions. One Chicano rancher in Tierra Azul says, "If they create this lake, then this whole area will become a playground for outsiders. Our culture, our roots and our way-of-life will be lost." His sentiments were echoed repeatedly in villages such as Gallina, Coyote, Abiquiu and Canones. The people fear that the influx of outsiders who buy week-end houses will destroy the area culturally. "Let's face it," says DeVargas, "Most of those people will be middle-class Anglos."

Not everyone in Rio Arriba county is opposed to expansion at Abiquiu Dam. In fact, it was the County Commissioners who initiated the activity on behalf of a permanent pool as early as 1967. They approached Senator Joseph Montoya, who in turn requested the Corps of Engineers (through Congressional legislation) to prepare feasibility studies. Small businessmen in the area, especially in Espanola, are anxious to see the lake become a reality. Undoubtedly, having the lake in Abiquiu will help those businessmen who depend on the tourist and recreational industries.

The Corps of Engineers says that the proposed permanent pool would have "a potentially positive economic" effect on the area, but its Master Plan fails to indicate

how. In fact, the Corps of Engineers estimates that only three additional government jobs would be created if the permanent pool were to be established. "Ike" DeVargas responds to arguments about the lake creating more jobs by saying, "What jobs? More importantly, what kind of jobs? We're sick of working as waitresses or pumping gas. . . Only the businessmen make money, only they get rich."

Meanwhile, both sides continue their efforts. Jim Gill says that negotiations are continuing with four landowners near the dam whose lands would be inundated by the proposed lake. Gill says that he is only waiting for those negotiations to be successfully completed before asking the Rio Arriba County Commission to agree to operate and maintain the recreational facilities at the dam. The Corps of Engineers has already been funded to begin work on the recreational facilities in fiscal year 1977, which begins October 1, 1976.

At the dam itself, a permanent pool is already being created. For the past two years, Albuquerque has stored its San Juan Diversion waters at Abiquiu under a temporary agreement with the Corps of Engineers. The lake being created presently holds about 27,000 acre/feet. Visitation to the dam this year are expected to exceed 100,000 and, the Corps predicts, after creation of the permanent pool, visitations should exceed 152,000 per year, a figure the Corps says is conservative. Felix Corle, Chief Planner for the Corps, says, "There is only a slight chance of the pool not happening."

People in Rio Arriba County do not necessarily agree. They have already attempted to raise the issue before the County Commission, though the commissioners recently refused to discuss the project.

La Raza Unida Party has planned several meetings throughout the county to inform people about the proposed dam expansion. "Ike" DeVargas says it is only the beginning of a county-wide effort to find out what is going on.

There are several proposals that have been circulating among the villagers concerning the proposed lake.

One suggestion is to make certain the county zones all private land surrounding the dam so that subdivision development will be prohibited. DeVargas claims, however, that about 250 acres near the dam are already zoned for development and that more soon will be, unless the people of the villages force the county commissioners to act against rezoning.

For more on the Abiquiu Dam issue please see page seven.



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The Rio Grande SIERRAN

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Volume XIII, Number 8

Virgin Territory — Getting Ready For 1977

by Dave Foreman

1977 could be a very good year for wilderness enactment in Congress. Several factors will influence this. One is that we might have a President genuinely committed to wilderness (Jimmy Carter)—probably the first real conservationist since Teddy Roosevelt to have a serious chance at the Presidency. Secondly, the make-up of the Interior Committees (the committees that work on wilderness legislation in Congress) could be much improved, (for example, Morris Udall may be Chairman of the House Interior Committee). And third, frustration over the failure of Congress to act on the many wilderness recommendations ordered by the Wilderness Act could cause a greater outpouring of citizen support for wilderness bills next year. I hope that you will be a part of that outpouring.

To get ready for the battle next year, let's take a brief overview of what could be the major wilderness issues we will be involved with both nationally and in New Mexico/West Texas during the 1977-78 session of Congress. By the time you read this, we will have the results of this session of Congress and know whether we have new wilderness areas in Bandelier National Monument, the Sandia Mountains, and the Manzano Mountains to celebrate. But next year....

ENDANGERED AMERICAN WILDERNESS ACT:

As it became obvious that the Forest Service was not giving adequate consideration to many unprotected wilderness resource areas, conservation leaders in the Western states put together the Endangered American Wilderness Act. This bill selects several areas throughout the West that are threatened by lack of consideration from the Forest Service but which have a great deal of local support. Some areas would be instantly designated as wilderness, others would be designated as wilderness study areas and would be protected from development until Congress was able to act on Forest Service and conservationists' recommendations (the Forest Service recommendations have to be in to Congress within 5 years from the date of passage of the act). Morris Udall and Frank Church introduced the Endangered American Wilderness Act in the House and Senate late this year, but real action will come next year. In New Mexico, the 30,700 acre Sandia Mountain area was included as an "instant" area, but as we have seen, we may get a Sandia Wilderness this year in a separate action. (However, if we don't get the Sandias this year, we will have laid a good groundwork for next year.) Other areas in New Mexico that may be included in the bill are Chama Canyon (study) and Wheeler Peak Wilderness Additions (instant). We will need to work with the

New Mexico Congressional Delegation on this bill and try to get each of them to cosponsor it. The Endangered American Wilderness Act will be an important national conservation issue for next year, and support for it should be a top priority.

GRAND CANYON : the Park Service held public hearings in August on their draft wilderness proposal for the enlarged Grand Canyon National Park and the final recommendation will be submitted to Congress next session. The Park Service essentially recommended wilderness for everything in the Park that was not already developed, except they suggested that the Colorado River itself be made a "potential wilderness addition" until a decision could be made on whether or not to eliminate motorboat use. Conservation groups enthusiastically agree with the Park Service recommendations except we would like to see motor use on the Colorado River ended now and the river included in wilderness immediately. Because the Grand Canyon has such national prominence, we may make it a focal issue in Congress next year in order to better publicize the need for wilderness in the Parks. If this is the case, we will need a showing of support.



GILA/ALDO LEOPOLD : the Gila/Aldo Leopold Wilderness complex is the most significant wilderness resource in New Mexico (nearly one million acres total). For too many years, the wilderness proposals for these two magnificent areas have lain dormant in Congress. The Gila Wilderness Com-

mittee in southwestern New Mexico hopes that action can be taken next year in Congress on these two areas as one unit (they are separated only by a narrow gravel road which would remain as a non-wilderness corridor). If we are able to push the Gila Wilderness Additions and designations of the Aldo Leopold Wilderness (old Black Range Primitive Area) in Congress, it will be because of a massive outpouring of support from New Mexico—especially southern New Mexico—that has greased the skids.

GUADALUPE ESCARPMENT : as with the Gila/Aldo, the wilderness proposals for Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks have languished in Congress for years. Next year may be the time to try to get action on these two outstanding areas. A major effort will be required both in New Mexico and Texas.

RIO GRANDE WILD & SCENIC RIVER : one of the most superb natural rivers in the nation is the Rio Grande in the Big Bend country of Texas. This river was included as a study river in the 1968 Wild Rivers Act; the study is now complete and recommends 191 miles to be included in the National Wild & Scenic Rivers System. A major struggle will ensue next Congress over protecting this remote area.

So there you have it. The above are the areas we will be fighting for during the next session of Congress—the areas you will be hearing about. And you, the reader of the *Sierran*, are the individual more capable than any other of doing something about protecting these areas. It is your letter to your Congressman or Senator that is going to convince him to support these proposals. It is the 2 minutes and 9¢ that you spend to send a postcard that will be the determining factor in saving these priceless areas. Will you do anything about it?

For more information on any of these issues or areas (including information about where to hike to get familiar with them) or for information on how you, with your limited time, can help wilderness preservation, contact:
Dave Foreman, Chairman
N.M. Wilderness Study Committee
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Glenwood, New Mexico 88039
(505) 539-2645

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The address for Congressmen is: House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515.

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The inexpensive way to make contact is to call the local offices. Your message will be relayed to Washington.

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El Paso Group Outings -

October						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Apache Kid Roadless Area Knapsack

October 16 - 17, 1976

Class 2.5 (moderately difficult)

Leader: John Colburn ((915) 772-4994)

A short, relatively strenuous hike will put us into the high country of the San Mateo Mountains northwest of Truth or Consequences. We will camp near an abandoned cabin in the saddle between Vick's Peak and San Mateo Mountain and then hike out via Shipman Canyon for a car shuttle back to Springtime Campground.

Water will have to be carried from a spring about a half-mile from the campsite.

Call John for details.

Chiricahua Wilderness Knapsack

October 23 - 24, 1976

Class 2 (easy)

Leader: Wes Leonard ((915) 584-7730)

The trail will be easy and the fall colors spectacular in this high mountain wilderness in Southeastern Arizona. The exact route has not been selected, but all of the Chiricahua Wilderness is well worth visiting.

The Rio Grande Chapter Outings Policy limits the size of groups going into wilderness areas to twelve persons. To insure that our outings do not exceed this limit, interested persons are asked to call the trip leader to make reservations and receive specific instructions. In the event more than twelve persons apply for a trip, the leader will arrange a lottery to select those who will go.

Abiquiu -

(From page seven)

about the next 25 years. To exceed the 'sediment reserve' would require an action by Congress.

The Corps is already studying possible changes at Abiquiu, responding to a Senate Resolution moved through the Senate by Sen. Pete Domenici. Among other things the Corps will be studying the possibility and feasibility of extending the permanent pool beyond the sediment reserve limitation by Congressional action at some future date.

Whether or not the sediment reserve limitation is ever exceeded, the lake level will slowly rise as the sediment load behind the dam increases.

Syn-Fuel Subsidy Smitten

From the Sierra Club National News Report

The fitful history of the bill that would have provided massive federal subsidies for the commercial production of synthetic fuels from coal and oil shale ended last Thursday (Sept. 16) in a cliff-hanging vote. By 192 to 193, the House decided not to consider the bill, thereby defeating the program for the second time. The vote is widely perceived as a substantial defeat for the Ford Administration's energy development program. Intense lobbying by environmental groups cemented a coalition of votes from both extremes of the political spectrum to produce the razor-thin defeat.

Sierran

**State Candidate Forums
Cosponsored by Common Cause &
the League of Women Voters**

- October 4 Senate District (SD) 15, House District (HD) 22, 23, 25
- October 6 SD 16, 17; HD 18, 19
- October 8 SD 18; HD 21, 30
- October 11 SD 19; HD 20, 28
- October 13 SD 20, 21; HD 24, 26
- October 15 SD 22; HD 27, 31

All sessions are at 7:30 p.m. Places will be announced later. Call 255-7676 for locations. All questions will come from the audience.

**'Resources for the Future' Forum on the
Impact of Energy Development on
Western Water, Fish and Wildlife**

October 13 through 15 at the Hilton Inn in Albuquerque. Contact the University of New Mexico Economics Department for further information.

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Environmental
Forum**

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Our readership is varied, drawing from a wide spectrum of professionals, students, business people and outdoors people. In general, our readers are active hikers, climbers, skiers and backpackers.

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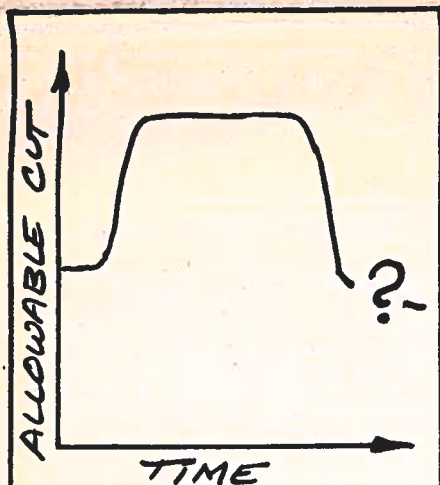
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Monongahela Wrap-Up

(From page 1)

On the other hand, the industry (just tryin' to be helpful) has been saying loudly in the halls of Congress and elsewhere that the conversion to full even-aged management should take place in a very short time. If the pace of conversion were greatly speeded up, huge volumes of old-growth timber would become available in the near future. Of course, when the conversion period was over there would be a drastic drop in available timber. If we were looking for a shorthand expression for this theory, we might call it: 'Sustained Yield--Tomorrow'.



Without a 'non-declining even flow' policy, rapid conversion to 'even-aged management' could lead to rapid liquidation of old-growth timber in the West followed by a drastic drop in the allowable cut at the end of the conversion period.

Language that supports the 'non-declining even flow' concept is a "must" for the final bill, according to Brock Evans. The timber industry will do all in their power to dump it. The Forest Service is with us on this point. Senate Bill 3091 has the appropriate language; the House Bill which went into the conference committee did not.

The language in the Senate Bill is as follows: *The Secretary of Agriculture shall limit the sale of timber from each national forest to a quantity equal to or less than a quantity which can be removed from such forest annually in perpetuity on a sustained-yield basis. However, the Secretary may exceed the quantity sales limitation from time to time in the case of any forest so long as the average sales of timber from such forest over any ten-year period do not exceed such quantity limitation. In those cases where a forest has less than two hundred thousand acres of commercial forest land, the Secretary may use two or more forests for purposes of determining the sustained-yield.*

Then there follows one of those loopholes: *Nothing in subsection (a) [above] . . . shall prohibit the Secretary from salvaging timber stands which are substantially damaged by fire, windthrow, or other catastrophe.*

The Forest Service defends its non-declining even flow policy with a five point rationale. The policy: --provides a stable supply of old-growth timber to communities whose economics are dependent on national forest timber;

--keeps available options which would be foreclosed if accelerated cutting of old-growth timber were to occur; --is less adverse in its environmental impacts than accelerated cutting of old-growth; --maintains a stock of readily available timber for use in a time of national emergency; and --extends the availability of timber having old-growth properties.

It is interesting to note that in the five points above the Forest Service does not use an argument the Sierra Club would use, namely: that the non-declining even flow policy is more in keeping with the philosophy of 'multiple use' than the rapid dispatch of the old-growth forests would be. (The Club goes farther to say that a greater reliance on 'uneven aged management' would be even more consistent with the guiding philosophy of multiple use.)

The 'Marginal Lands' Question

The Sierra Club is also going to fight hard to keep the clause in the Senate Bill which would prohibit timber production from becoming a goal on lands where timber can't pay its own way. Within two years of the passage of the Act, the Secretary of Agriculture is required to come up with regulations to: "identify the relative productivity of land for timber production and assure that timber production is not a management goal on lands where the estimated cost of production will exceed estimated economic return: Provided, That the estimated cost of production will include only direct timber production costs and not access, protection, revegetation and administration costs for multiple use purposes"

It has been long recognized by the Forest Service that roughly half of the 187,000,000 acres they administer cannot reasonably be classified as 'commercial timber land'. Sometimes it is due to steep slopes or very fragile soils, but as often as not it is simply due to the fact that the 'low site' in question does not grow enough timber fast enough to justify commercial operations. To these long-standing concepts of environmentally marginal lands the Senate Bill is adding the concept of economically marginal lands. The Senate Bill clause would result in additional environmental protection and less public subsidy of timber operations.

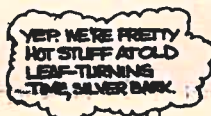
Originally environmentalists had hoped for a clause that would include more management costs in the accounting (regeneration costs, for example), but the language in the Senate Bill is a product of compromise.

The marginal lands clause would have particular relevance in the Southwest and in the Rocky Mountain west generally because the national forests in these areas have a high proportion of rocky, nasty, dry, inhospitable acres where trees grow only under duress.

Other Stuff

Although it has not been one of the controversial provisions--one of the most important clauses in the Bill is one that ties any increases in the 'allowable cut' to on-the-ground proven results, and does not allow an increase in the cut based on anticipated improvements in growth rates. The Senate Bill states: ". that increases in allowable harvests based on intensified management practices such as reforestation, thinnings, or tree improvement, shall be made only upon demonstration that such practices justify increased allowable harvests, and that the outputs projected are being secured."

County governments in general are going to love Senate Bill 3091 because it establishes a new formula for computing the 25% of the timber receipts which have been traditionally handed over to the counties. The new formula favors the counties. According to one estimate, counties with national forest acreage will be dividing up an extra 52.5 million dollars depending on the size of the timber operations in the particular county. Lucky Rio Arriba! There is an interesting clause in the Bill that directs the Secretary of Agriculture to appoint a "committee of scientists" who have no connection with the FS and who shall advise the Secretary during the two years he has to put forth all of the regulations called for in the Act. No doubt the Club will carefully monitor the selection of committee members.



And finally both the Senate and House versions take away from us forever the language in the Organic Act of 1897 which caused all the excitement in the first place. The so-called "archaic" language that limited the sale of timber to "dead, matured, or large growth of trees" has been placed to rest in history where all archaic things belong, and has been replaced with language that says that the Secretary of Agriculture may sell (at not less than appraised value) "tree portions of trees, or forest products located on National Forest System lands."

--Don Campbell

Final note: After the House/Senate Conference Committee finished its work Brock Evans, Washington Representative of the Sierra Club, called to say that the Senate Bill would have given us 30 to 40% of the Randolph Bill; the conference committee gave us about 25%

The conference committee retained the 'marginal lands' and 'non-declining even flow' provisions but in a watered-down form. The clearcutting provisions were retained.

Since action on the floor of the House and Senate is virtually assured in Congress' final week, the next important step to be monitored will be the process whereby the Secretary of Agriculture creates the regulations called for in the Act. If the next administration is more environmentally oriented than the present one, the process of creating the regulations could add environmental strength to this Congressional action.

Brock feels that the legislation does provide quite a bit for Sierra Club lawyers to latch on to, and that the legislation will work to protect some additional roadless acreage, although not as much as the Club had hoped for.

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Manzano/Sandias Dropped

The New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee versions of the North and South Sandia Wilderness proposals and the Manzano Wilderness proposal almost became 'wilderness study areas' via an omnibus wilderness bill which contained wilderness and wilderness study proposals for units of land under National Forest and Fish and Wildlife jurisdiction.

The North and South Sandia and Manzano proposals were dropped from the omnibus bill due to failure from the Senate side of the New Mexico Congressional delegation.

Congressman Manuel Lujan worked diligently on the House side, originally introducing the wilderness proposals in two separate bills of his own -- House Bill 2906 and House Bill 2905. The proposals in these bills, which reflected the work and boundaries of the New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee and the Sierra

Club, later found their way into the omnibus bill, H.R. 15446.

But Senators Domenici and Montoya were not as active on the Senate side, and they failed to initiate equivalent legislation.

Due to the press of time at the last minute, and in the interest of giving the Senate an omnibus bill which would not stir the slightest controversy in that body, the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs passed an amendment dropping four areas from the proposed legislation -- including the Manzanos and North and South Sandia. Had there been matching legislation on the Senate side the Committee would not have seen the necessity of such an action. Congressman Lujan objected to the Committee's action, and, according to Washington experts, "did himself proud for the conservation community", but his objection was over-ridden by acting chairman, 'Biz' Johnson (D-Calif.).

Bandelier: Almost Official

The House passed House Bill 13160, the Omnibus National Park Wilderness Bill, on September 22 designating national park wilderness areas in Bandelier, Black Canyon of the Gunnison, Chiricahua, Great Sand Dunes, Joshua Tree, Pinnacles and Saguaro National Monuments, and Haleakala, Isle Royal and Mesa Verde National Parks.

The Senate Interior Committee then reported the House Bill after adding Shenandoah National Park, Badlands National Monument and Point Reyes National Seashore (which the House Committee had reported in a separate bill) and struck all management language objectionable to conservationists.

The above information is the latest from the Sierra Club National News Report of Sept. 24, but conversations with Wilderness Society representatives indicate that there is no reason not to expect smooth

sailing right through the President's signature. Therefore it is safe to assume that the Bandelier Wilderness will be the next official wilderness unit in the State of New Mexico.

You will recall the long term controversy about the 'donut hole' of 500 plus acres -- a wilderness exclusion in the center of the proposed wilderness which the National Park Service claimed they needed in order that they might carry out necessary archeological work and stabilization. Conservationists claimed that the language of the Wilderness Act allowed sufficient leeway for the necessary work to be done within the wilderness zone. Apparently conservationists' arguments carried the day with the Congress as the 'donut hole' was dropped.

The size of the new Bandelier Wilderness will be 22,030 acres, or 74% of the Monument.

Abiquiu Reservoir/Rio Chama Relationship

It is interesting to note the relationship between the several Abiquiu lake proposals and the Chama Wild and Scenic River Proposal.

The Wild and Scenic River proposal begins a few miles above Abiquiu Dam, so it is logical to ask the question as to whether the waters will back up into that magnificent canyon.

The river elevation at the Adobe Ruins (which, for all practical purposes, is the down-river end of the Scenic River proposal) is about 6235 feet above sea level.

At 400,000 acre feet the lake level would be at 6260' and the upper end of the lake would extend about three-quarters of a mile above the Adobe Ruins take-out point and some of the finest rapids on the river run would be covered with slack water.

Of course Abiquiu Dam is still a flood control dam and the threat of a large back-up behind the dam exists even at present should we have a very wet spring. If the dam should ever fill (which is an extremely unlikely occurrence given the considerable over-capacity built into the dam) water would back up into the Wild and Scenic River proposal for several miles even without a permanent pool. The presence of a permanent pool would just increase the probability that a very high run-off would back up into the Wild and Scenic River proposal -- especially if the permanent pool reached 200,000 acre feet or more. With the 44,400 acre foot permanent pool there would still be considerable capacity for flood waters before the lake would back up as far as the lower end of the Chama Wild and Scenic River proposal.



The 'Sediment Reserve'

Another factor affects the elevation of the lake level over a long period of time, and that is the gradually increasing load of sediment that accumulates in the reservoir.

Originally Abiquiu Dam was designed to control sediment as well as flood waters, and in planning such a project the Corps plans for a 'sediment reserve'. According to Cunico, when Abiquiu Dam was resurveyed in 1973 it was noted that about 11,000 acre feet of the dam's capacity had already been taken up by accumulated sediment, leaving 67,000 acre feet of the 'sediment reserve' left. Cunico says that in a project such as Abiquiu a permanent pool must be accommodated within the planned 'sediment reserve'. Cunico projects that a 44,000 acre foot permanent pool can be accommodated within Abiquiu's 'sediment reserve' for

(Continued on page five)

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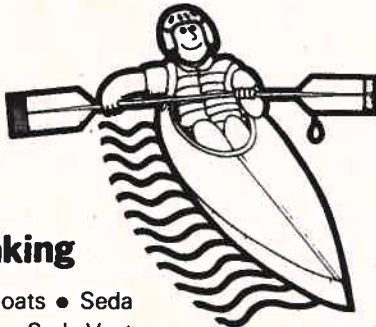
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