

# SIERRA CLUB BULLETIN

February  
1954



*RAINBOW RECESS, YAMPA RIVER, DINOSAUR NATIONAL MONUMENT*

## Trouble in Dinosaur

The rainbow canyons of the Yampa and the Green, corridors through a primitive paradise unequalled anywhere, are a unique gem of the National Park System. They are now needlessly threatened. You can prevent their destruction. Men of vision saved this place for us. Now it's turnabout.

URGENT: Please read this issue now — and lend a hand.



# Sierra Club Bulletin

VOLUME 39

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NUMBER 2

## New Color Film on Dinosaur, Ready February 1

"Wilderness River Trail," 16mm color and sound; running time, 28 minutes

"WILDERNESS RIVER TRAIL" is a beautiful film, with plenty of action—and a warning. Already previewed in New York, Washington, and San Francisco, Charles Eggert's new film has been praised as the outstanding introduction to the wonders of Dinosaur National Monument. Eggert shot the film for the Sierra Club, contributing his professional services, on the first club Dinosaur river outing last summer, and has also drawn upon the work of two other well-known photographers, Nathan Clark and Martin Litton, of Los Angeles.

Dinosaur isn't an easy place to interpret pho-

tographically in black and white stills (much less in the halftones used in these pages). But motion pictures, in color and sound, are another matter. Professor Harold Bradley's 1952 color movies, more than anything else, excited the great interest in Dinosaur river travel that brought about the record-breaking Sierra Club trips last summer.

"Wilderness River Trail" catches the spirit of a kind of adventure new to the National Park System. It also catches the spirit of what the national parks are for, and makes clear what all the people stand to lose if they relax their vigilance.

"You can't see this film, and then stand idly by while they try to destroy Dinosaur." That is what we hope people will say after seeing it. That's the purpose of the film. To help the purpose, and the Save-the-Parks campaign, we enlist your help in scheduling showings as soon as possible. Copies of the film are available in many of the principal cities. The Sierra Club would appreciate contributions to its National Park Fund by those who see the film.

The film is available through:

BOSTON: Appalachian Mountain Club, 5 Joy St.  
NEW YORK: American Alpine Club, 113 E. 90th St., New York City.

Charles Eggert Productions, Barrytown.

WASHINGTON: The Wilderness Society or National Parks Association, 2144 P St.

CHICAGO: Izaak Walton League of America, 31 N. State St., Chicago 2.

DENVER: Izaak Walton League, 1030 15th St., Denver 2.

SALT LAKE CITY: Wasatch Mountain Club. Don Hatch, 1528 South 10th East.

SEATTLE: The Mountaineers, Inc., % 5715 30th Ave., N.E., Seattle 5.

PORTLAND: The Mazamas, Pacific Bldg., Portland 4.

SAN FRANCISCO: Sierra Club, 1050 Mills Tower. Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs.

LOS ANGELES: Sierra Club, 704 Auditorium Bldg.

*THE SIERRA CLUB*,\* founded in 1892, has devoted itself to the study and protection of national scenic resources, particularly those of mountain regions. Participation is invited in the program to enjoy and preserve wilderness, wildlife, forests, and streams.

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\*Reg. U.S. Pat. Off.



A PRECIOUS GEM NEEDS A SETTING. ECHO PARK HAS BOTH

## Two Wasteful Dams — —Or A Great National Park?

INTERIOR SECRETARY MCKAY is pressing for speedy authorization for Echo Park Dam, which would destroy the park value of the canyons of Dinosaur National Monument. He has asked for later construction of Split Mountain dam, which would compound the destruction. He describes the Upper Colorado Storage Project, of which these dams are presently a part, as a bold plan to fill an urgent need. Sparing Dinosaur, he has concluded, would be wasteful; the dams, he says, won't hurt the scenery much.

The project is bold, yes; it will take more than a billion dollars to start it.

But are these two dams urgently needed? Are they needed at all. *Absolutely not.*

Hetch Hetchy Valley—once had a setting. Now it has a drab reservoir, water for a city that could still get it elsewhere.

What will they do to the scenery? The Park Service report says, the effects upon "irreplaceable . . . values of national significance would be deplorable."

Would alternate damsites, which Mr. Mc-





This lad is six already. He floated down the Green to Jones Hole's shady shore, and has a date with a frog. You may not think so, but he thinks he's a pioneer. What's it worth to let a kid think so?

Kay knows exist, be wasteful? We don't know, and he doesn't know. He has been rushed into accepting a not-very-well-educated guess; his recommendation, based on that guess, may itself be a needless waste of nearly eighty million dollars of our money; his recommendation, enacted, would ruin forever one of the finest scenic and recreational assets in the National Park System, which he is charged by law with protecting.

This attack on the Park System comes at the head of Reclamation's agenda. Yet the entire bold Upper Colorado Project, according to the Bureau's own guess, will not be fully utilized for seventy-five years. And while the various dams sit there, awaiting their full utilization, they'll gather enough silt to cover the entire state of New Hampshire more than a foot deep (100,000 acre-feet per year—Bureau of Reclamation figure).

The Secretary of Agriculture worries about surpluses; the upper Colorado Basin is now exporting power; various alternate combinations will store the water and produce the power. Even if these things weren't true, there'd be no logical reason for the rush to ruin Dinosaur with an Echo Park dam as first rattle out of the box.

Then what is the hurry? *That*, as the man said, is a good question. This rush is the opposite of good conservation. Either we stop it, or we prepare to watch men of little vision whittle away the century's gains in conservation—and we turn our heads while Theodore Roosevelt turns in his grave.

CONSERVATIONISTS across the land—and Interior's National Park Service, before it was silenced—agree with the following stand:

1. Dinosaur National Monument is an outstanding part of the National Park System, which the people, through their Congress, have been diligent to protect since its creation, and should protect today.

2. The proposed Echo Park and Split Mountain dams would destroy the park value of Dinosaur; the unique would give way to the commonplace and would imperil the entire Park System.

3. The water and power needs of the Upper Basin states for the foreseeable future can be adequately accommodated without invading the National Park System.

Dinosaur belongs to the people—all of them, not just a few. The people—you, your neighbor, his neighbor—are thoroughly capable of saving it if they act promptly, concertedly, and wisely, letting their Congress know that they don't want it given away, even if the engineering reasons are plausible.

NOTE: *The current hearing by the House Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation may end by January 22, but letters should still be sent to Congressman William H. Harrison, chairman of the subcommittee, for the record. The President and your Congressmen should also know your wishes.*

### TODAY'S THOUGHT FOR THE FUTURE

The demand for Colorado River water will increase until it eventually exceeds the supply. When that day comes, the U.S. will have to stop letting that demand keep growing. We probably won't be here when that day comes (estimated year, 2025); Dinosaur will be, though, if we act now to stop exploiters before they cross the monument boundary.

Since the U.S. will have to limit its water demands some time, why not set the limit before Dinosaur is invaded, not after?

\* \* \* \*

"Money is a wonderful thing, but it is possible to pay too high a price for it."

—ALEXANDER BLOCH

## For the Defense of Dinosaur—An Outline

1. a) *The threat is real and immediate.* The enemy of conservation, in Dinosaur, is primarily lack of vision and an absence of appreciation of intangible values. Local people have so thoroughly convinced themselves that Echo Park dam is essential that great political pressure has been built up. Legislation calling for the dam was introduced last year; hearings started in the House January 18, to continue through the week of the 25th. Every effort is being made to rush the bills through before opposition to Echo Park dam builds up.

b) *Conservation organizations all over the country are aroused* and are acting in unison. Strong editorial support, cutting across party lines, has come from most parts of the country in response to an alerting call that came inevitably late, and includes the New York

*Times*, San Francisco *Chronicle*, Los Angeles *Times*, Coconino *Sun*, Washington *Post*, and the Knoxville *Journal*. Among the magazines scheduling Dinosaur stories are *Harper's*, *National Geographic*, *The Reporter*, *Sunset*, *Pacific Discovery*. President Eisenhower has stated that it is his intention to protect "national forests, parks, monuments, and other natural and historic sites . . . ."

2. *The one mission of all conservationists:* to keep Dinosaur National Monument unimpaired as an important part of a world-renowned National Park System. A secondary objective is to create a full-fledged national park in Dinosaur, giving it the increased prestige it unquestionably merits. Legislation to make it a park was introduced last year; no hearings are scheduled yet.

3. *To accomplish this mission, organiza-*

His sister is only four, alone with her family in the "dread" canyons of Dinosaur (at Harding's Hole), ready to dare the "hazardous" Yampa when her family heeds her hail. (The quotes are around the oft-heard scare words and don't relate to fact.)





tions with conservation programs and individuals with conservation ideals must immediately urge their Congressmen to protect the National Park System, and must rapidly become well enough informed about the Dinosaur details to meet head-on the allegations of the dam proponents.

4. Use all the methods of communication you can arrange for. Let your organizations know — *if* you have time to — what you're doing to help.

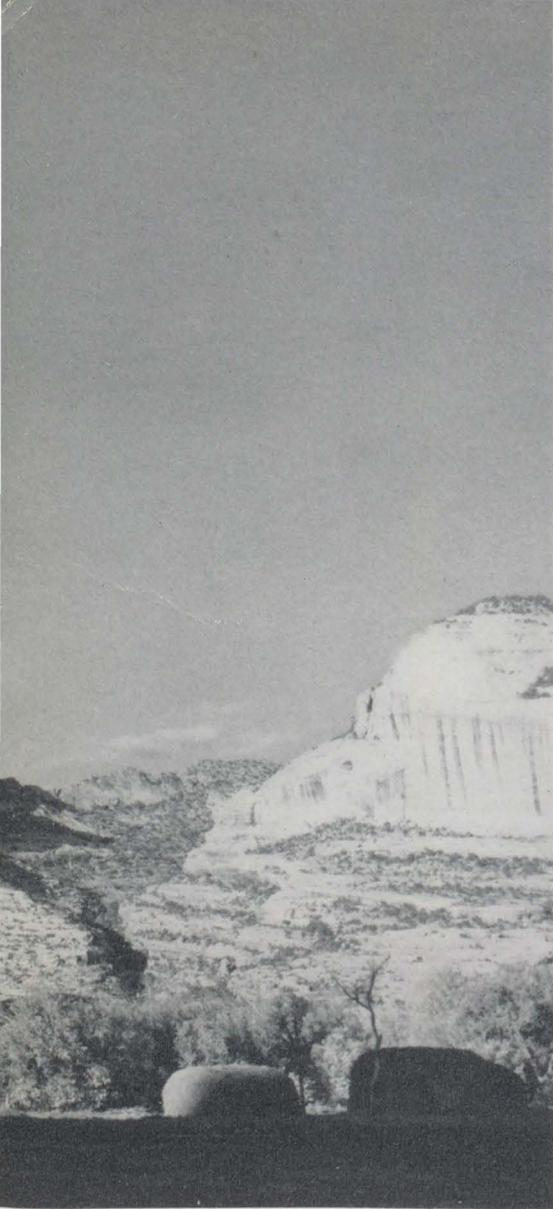
5. *You*, and the effort you make today as

an individual, are the key to the defense of Dinosaur—and to making it the full-fledged National Park it should be.

### Gist of the Claims— The Truth as We See It

CLAIM: Few people see the Dinosaur canyons; they're too inaccessible.

TRUTH: A modest appropriation would correct this and permit conservative im-



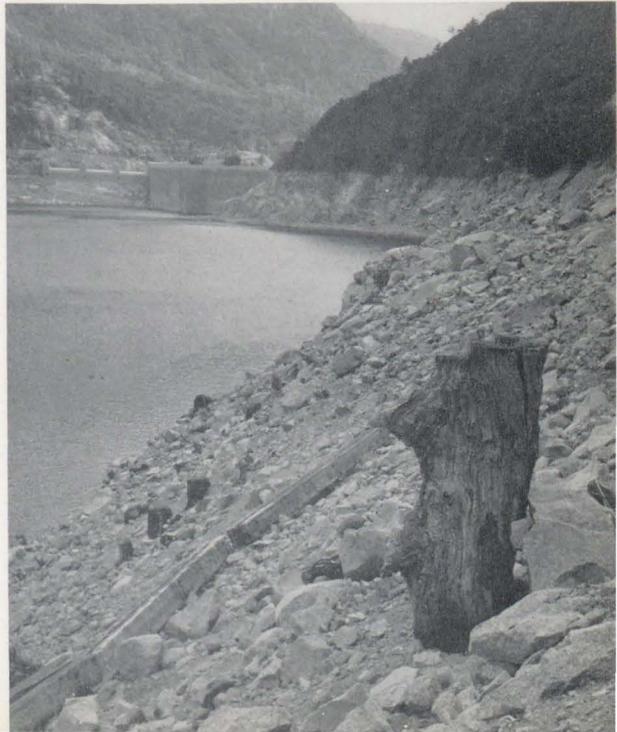
## Which Shall It Be?

Steamboat Rock, in Echo Park, can remain one of the world's wonders, together with the great, unequalled canyons above and below it . . . . Or it can be flooded to the tip, all its living space drowned in a fluctuating reservoir such as the one that killed the Yosemite-like beauty that was Hetch Hetchy's.

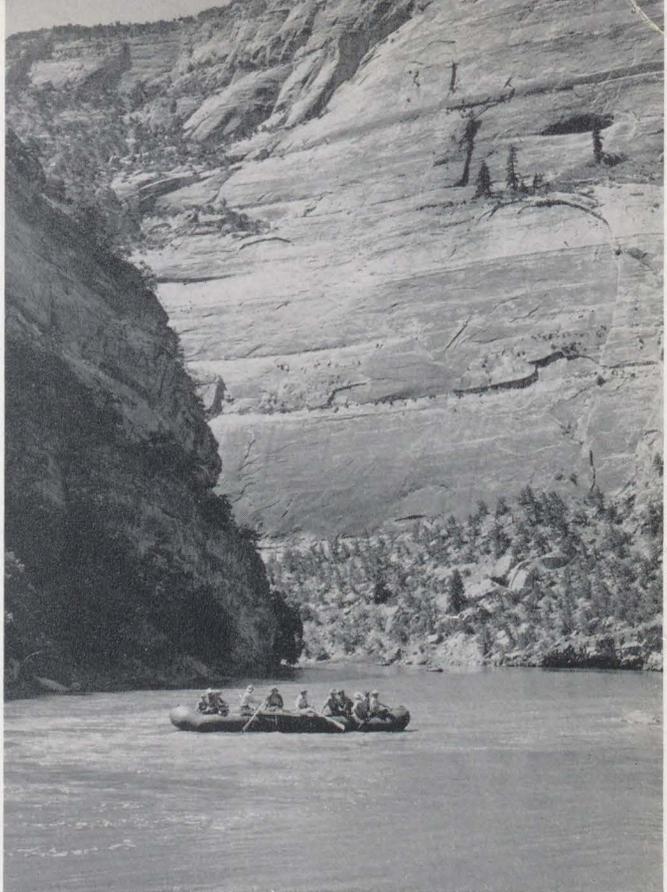
CLAIM: The dams won't destroy Dinosaur, and won't drown the Dinosaur quarry.

TRUTH: 99% wrong and 1% correct. The quarry is worthwhile and safe; but compared to the canyons, it is scenically insignificant. The dams would devastate the park value of the canyons; he who would claim otherwise just doesn't understand what a national park is all about. In the words of the National Park Report, the effect of the dam on irreplaceable park values would be deplorable. The Echo Park project entails: a dam 525 feet high, 107 miles of reservoir inundating more than 300 square miles with six million plus acre feet of water, construction roads in the canyons, tunnels, power installation and transmission lines, constant build-up of silt, and periodic drawdowns of the reservoir. "Deplorable" is a mild word

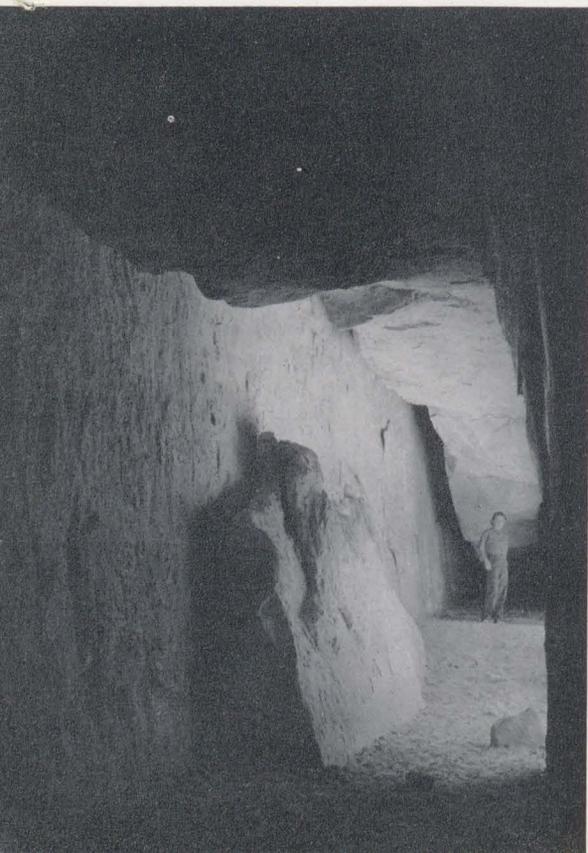
provement of existing roads. So far Dinosaur has been appropriation-starved. Mr. McKay has asked for \$21 million for study and development of what remains of the Monument after destruction by damming. A small fraction of this would be more than adequate for access and facilities if Dinosaur is saved. Moreover, people have only just begun to learn how easy, safe, thrilling, unique, and inexpensive it is to travel Dinosaur's wilderness river trails—the Yampa and the Green—by boat.



Douglas firs cling to the colorful sandstone cliffs where the Yampa meanders through the Uintas.



Whispering Cave, Pool Creek Canyon, near Echo Park, is strangely refrigerated on the warmest days.



to describe what this would do to any national monument, and to these canyons in particular.

CLAIM: More people can see the canyons by boating in the reservoirs.

TRUTH: "Yes, you can look at part of the setting—after we've lost the priceless gem." It's a little like that. These canyons and rivers are unique, irreplaceable; reservoirs are neither, they are fine enough in their place. Utah and Colorado can have both—their reservoirs and an unspoiled Dinosaur for the world.

CLAIM: We'd rather not dam Dinosaur, but alternates are "wasteful."

TRUTH: Maybe yes, maybe no. Secretary McKay's own Advisory Committee on Conservation has twice asked for a full investigation of the alternates, and a "White Paper" on the results for education of the public,



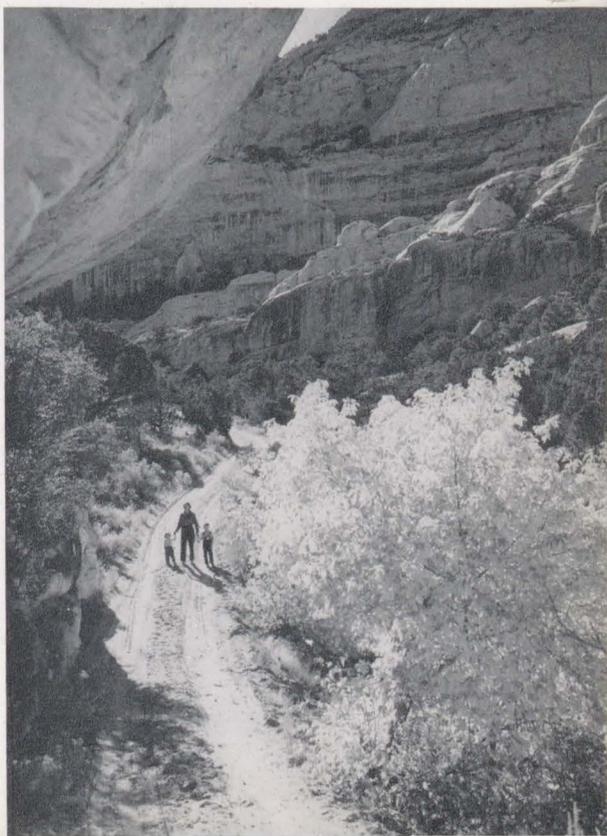
Grand Overhang, Yampa River, one of the world's most awesome spectacles. A stone dropped from the top lands on the *opposite* bank.

In fantastically sculptured Sand Canyon, near Echo.

but the Secretary has instead chosen to advocate Echo dam as urgent.

*General U. S. Grant, III, an expert engineer, has suggested various alternative combinations of dams, using Bureau of Reclamation figures, which would spare Dinosaur. General Grant's counterproposal to Mr. McKay's recommendation (see table, page 11) would store 6% more water, produce 5% less hydropower (fossil fuels can handily make up the difference), cost 10% less (\$54 million based on 1950 BuRec estimate), and evaporate a few acre feet less per year, considering the extra storage.*

Where, indeed, is the waste? Could it be implicit in the urging of a bold project, well in advance of need, for dividing up more water than may be available, for which the taxpayers who are losing an important part of the National Park System must pick up the check?



# The Dry Swim

It's no fun combing through the hundreds of pages of text, tables, charts, illustrations, and contradictions of the various government reports bearing on Dinosaur; it's a dry business, yet your head swims. You read all about the basis for the project, the Interstate Compact, the elaborate method of arriving at the average flow of the Colorado, and how to fix it so that half the flow goes past Lee Ferry every decade for the Lower Basin States, and how it will all pay off some time if a certain amount is charged off to flood control, part of it is considered interest-free, hydropower repays some of the cost, and part is paid by more income taxes growing on newly irrigated land.

Is your head swimming yet? Stay under a few more seconds.

Then you read that the Colorado doesn't have all that water after all, and that Mexico gets part of it by treaty; that new research is developing methods of producing power from oil shale; and that old-fashioned coal,

to fuel steam plants which can produce power quickly, economically, and with private capital, is in long supply; that President Eisenhower has said that atomic power for peacetime use is here, now.

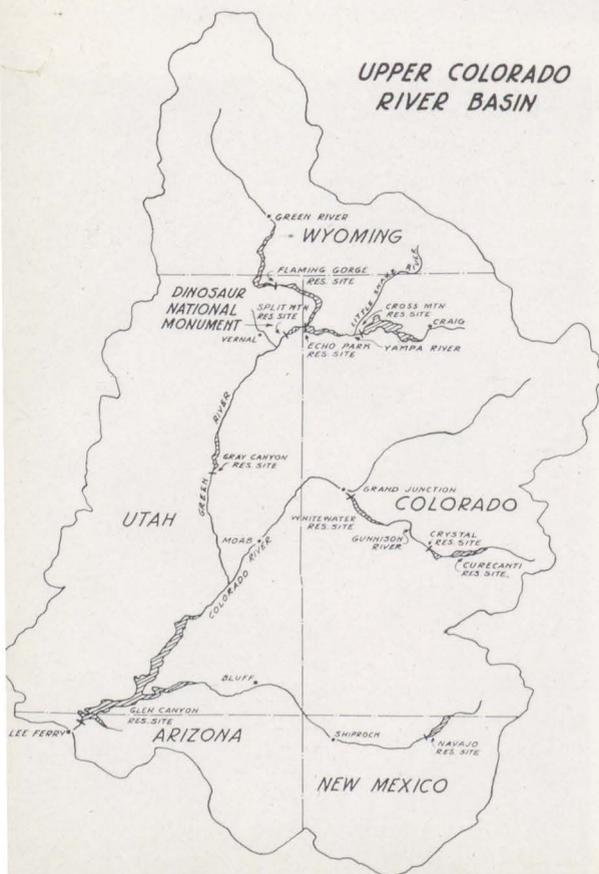
*For all this contradiction, the whole bold project goes serenely on, substantially unchanged, too urgent for that White Paper to clear up a controversy that poses the gravest threat to the National Park System since its creation.*

\* \* \*

An evaporation loss of 350,000 acre-feet has been claimed for alternate sites (but see facing page).

Even 350,000 acre-feet is but a small fraction of the total evaporation from the entire Colorado storage project—and but a fraction of what is lost by wasteful irrigation methods.

(And out of curiosity, we'd still like to know what happens to what evaporates. We know it recirculates—it doesn't leave the earth. We suspect that the Rocky Mountains are a wringer that will squeeze a great part of it right back into the Colorado Basin. We also suspect that evaporation is an investment in silt control.)



The Upper Basin of the Colorado abounds in reservoir sites, all of which may be needed centuries from now for storage, power, and siltation control. Few are needed now. The Department of the Interior has recommended postponing some for further study, some indefinitely. A 1946 Interior Department report lists 142 potential reservoir sites.

*Why the rush to destroy Dinosaur?*

## Some Alternates

*Note:* It is not up to the conservationist to devise specific alternates and compute data concerning them; he can, however, expect the Department of the Interior, which is charged with protecting the Park System, to evolve its plans on the assumption that units of the System are *not available* for reclamation development—until we've scraped the bottom of the barrel elsewhere and must resort to scrounging.

\* \* \*

General U. S. Grant, III, helped hoist a previous Reclamation proposal by its own petard—he showed with their figures how to get more water and power for less money without touching Dinosaur. The Bureau countered that Grant's alternate plan would "waste" 350,000 acre-feet of water per year through evaporation. The Bureau figure is now reduced to "100,000 to 200,000 acre-feet" by Undersecretary Tudor. This disparity argues an urgent need for thorough hy-

drologic study before we rush into a billion-plus project.

Now General Grant, following Mr. McKay's December 10 recommendation, has done it again, once more using Reclamation's own figures for their own alternate sites. The table omits participating projects estimated at another \$542,340,000 as of January 1953—by which time the combined estimate rose another \$68,000,000.

*Tireless statistician.* The bold Upper Colorado Storage Project (1950 model), complete, would pile up 3,900 vertical feet of dams and back up 713 miles of reservoirs. The total storage would be 48.5 million acre-feet, of which 23 million would sustain the agreed flow below Lee Ferry and 19.5 million would fill with silt in 200 years. This leaves 6 million (about the size of Echo reservoir) apparently not needed until the year 2150. And many other important damsites would still be left!

### *Counterproposal to Save a Park and Money*

Project	Storage (acre-feet)	Installed power (kw)	Estimated cost (1950 est.)	Evaporation (acre-feet/year)
Reclamation's proposal:				
Glen Canyon . . . . .	26,000,000	800,000	\$363,928,000	526,000
Echo Park . . . . .	6,460,000	200,000	165,356,000	87,000
Navajo . . . . .	1,200,000	30,000	63,019,000	16,000
Total . . . . .	33,660,000	1,030,000	\$592,303,000	629,000
Grant's counterproposal:				
Flaming Gorge . . . . .	3,940,000	72,000	\$ 82,667,000	56,000
Cross Mountain . . . . .	5,200,000	60,000	50,991,000	70,000
Whitewater . . . . .	880,000	48,000	40,076,000	21,000
Glen Canyon . . . . .	26,000,000	800,000	363,928,000	526,000
Total . . . . .	36,020,000	980,000	\$537,662,000	673,000
Counterproposal results:				
	2,360,000 more	50,000 less	\$ 54,641,000 less	44,000* more

\*Evaporation note: The added storage, times average evaporation rate, more than offsets the difference. Even without this gain, the saving in total cost per acre-foot lost is \$1,240.

## This Is the Issue

Echo Park and Split Mountain dams are not necessary now, and will probably never be necessary. Alternate sites exist. The Yampa and Green River canyons, unimpaired, are necessary now and will undoubtedly become increasingly necessary for what they can do to thrill, inspire, and renew mankind.

It is bad enough to take from people today that which is scarce. We should never tolerate an attempt to destroy for all people that which is unique. Never should so few seek so much from so many.

\* \* \* \*

Suppose General Grant, and the Bureau of Reclamation's figures, or both, are wrong and there really happens to be some "waste" in keeping the Park System intact. *What of it?*

Before we sell out our parks, shouldn't we attack real waste first? Wasteful irrigation methods, for one thing. Wasteful pollution

for another. Wasteful soil erosion due to small-watershed mismanagement. The list of wasteful things we do is nothing to be proud of.

When we've whittled that list down, then—and not until then—let's see where else to pare. When the pinch comes, then see if we must sacrifice the delights we have clung to, in our civilization, for the good of our soul, even if those delights don't affect the Dow-Jones average, and produce nothing but a little relief from tension, maybe.

In that dark day, if our children should find that religion and symphony, gardens and parks, trout streams and golf courses, don't pay off at the cash register, and if cash is all we've taught them to think about, then let's leave to them the choice of selling their birthright.

They won't even have a chance to choose unless we leave them that birthright, unless we bring about an enlightened approach to the parks in this, their darkest hour.

