



Washington Joins Suit Against Secretary Watt

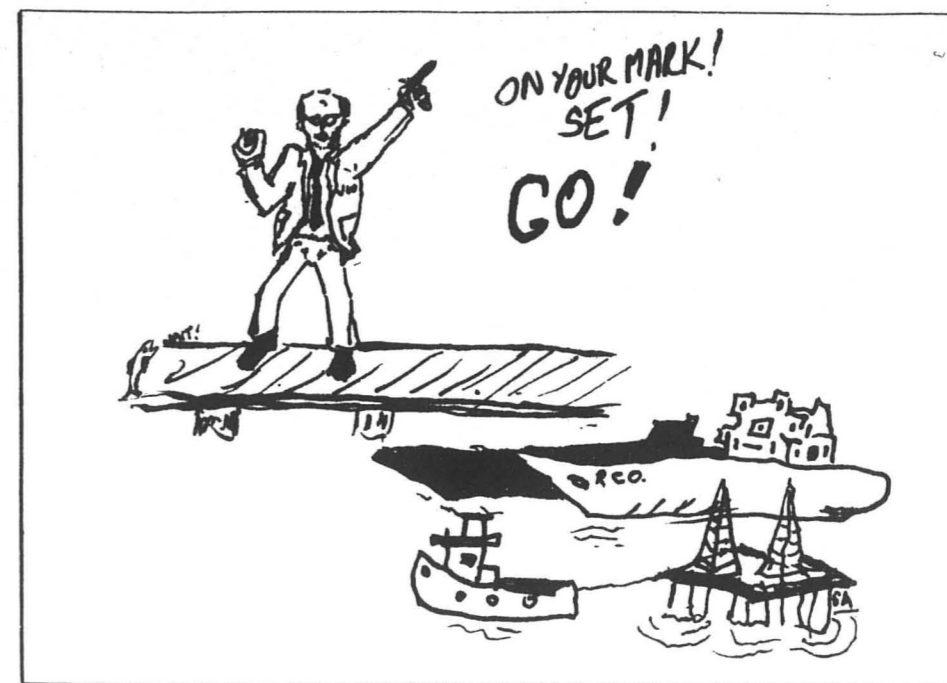
by Dan Gorham

Washington State joined Alaska, California, and numerous environmental groups last month in a legal suit against the Department of Interior. The suit challenges Interior Secretary James Watt's plan to lease one billion acres of off-shore area for oil and gas exploration and development.

Currently, Washington and Oregon shorelines are not included in the plan, however, state officials argue that such a proposal would set irresponsible precedent in coastal shoreline management. State officials cite that Washington's marine resources will be adversely affected under the current plan. The fish, mammals, and birds which inhabit Washington's coast, are for the majority migrating species whose migratory routes will be directly affected.

Under the current plan, enormous parcels of off-shore areas will be grouped together as planning areas and a single Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be completed for each area. Although not included in the current plan, the coastlines of Washington and Oregon are grouped together as a potential planning unit. Brian Walsh, Outer-Shelf Coordinator for the Department of Ecology said: "We don't think leasing a sale of 20 to 25 million acres in size is a responsible approach."

Washington's marine resources provide a vital element in the state's economy. A 1976 survey shows that there are 450 licensed commercial wholesale dealers in the state which process salmon and shellfish. Estimates indicate that approximately



150 million salmon, shellfish, and bottom-fish are harvested annually at a value of \$72 million to fishermen and a wholesale value of \$150 million.

More than half of the 993 million acres included in the new lease plan are in Alaskan waters. State officials here are justly concerned as heavy industrial disturbances along the Alaskan coast could have significant effects on Washington's salmon industry.

Washington State has argued in their law suit that Secretary Watt and the Interior Department ignored their legal mandate to balance environmental and economic considerations in their leasing program. Revenues from off-shore oil leases are second only to the Internal Revenue Service for generating federal

funds. Gov. John Spellman told the *Seattle Times* last month: "Simply stated, the Department of Interior's proposed program offers too much too soon."

In addition to proposing the most aggressive off-shore program to date, the Reagan Administration has cut back funds to regulate coastal zone programs. The Coastal Zone Management Program funneled \$2.7 million to agencies in Washington State in 1980 for the administration and research of shoreline areas. Coastal states are now faced with a pending petroleum boom and inadequate funds to administer the projects.

Although the safety record of off-shore oil rigs is fairly good, state officials still anticipate problems. One particular hazard involved in drilling in Pacific Northwest waters is the inclement weather. An oil spill on rough water would be virtually impossible to clean up with the traditional skimmer technique. In a *Seattle Times* article regarding the recent oil spill in the Straits of Juan de Fuca, United States Coast Guard spokesman Dale Miller said:

"After all these years of research we still cannot contain oil on open sea."

The leasing plan was formally approved by Watt three months ago. Its policies are significantly different than those implemented by his predecessor, Cecil Andrus. Under the current plan there are no longer stipulations which require that development procedures be consistent with the state's shoreline program. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be completed for an entire planning unit, and then petroleum interests will nominate specific tracts for lease. Public opinion will be solicited but the ultimate decision is up to Watt.

In the case of California, Secretary Watt returned his decision one day after lengthy public comment was submitted. The State of California is currently suing the Department of Interior over this very point. They have charged that Watt did not sufficiently address the areas of public concern and that the entire plan is inconsistent with their shoreline management plans.

In contrast, during Cecil Andrus's tenure as Secretary of Interior under the Carter Administration, a balance between industry and the environment was sought. Andrus implemented the "tentative tract selection" process, in which the petroleum interests would specify individual tracts for consideration. An EIS would then be done on that tract area and consideration given to the adjacent communities and state government.

"The states now have less power to avoid areas of environmental concern," said Brian Walsh of the Department of Ecology.

Watt's 5-year plan calls for leasing off-shore tracts in northern and central California in 1983. The continental shelf off southeast Alaska would be leased in 1984, the Kodiak Island area in 1986 and the Alaskan Peninsula in 1987. One billion acres is roughly the size of 13 large Western states.

ARCO Explores Puget Sound

by Dan Gorham

The Commander, a seismic exploration vessel contracted by Atlantic Richfield, is now cruising the waters of Puget Sound in search of geological formations which may hold gas and oil reserves.

Arco Gas and Oil of Dallas, Texas, a subsidiary of Atlantic Richfield, originally proposed to explore as much of the Sound as possible. However, since those preliminary requests were made this summer, Arco has decided to concentrate in the northern waters from the Straits of Juan de Fuca south to Seattle.

The exploration process is conducted by firing an air gun under water. The 66-meter vessel tows a 1,100-meter cable equipped with sensing devices which record vibration signals. These vibrations provide a clue to geologists as to the composition of the underlying rock strata.

Although it may all seem like a Jules Verne fantasy at this point, the data collected by the Commander could be used to locate potential oil and gas reserves both beneath the Sound and in the surrounding Olympic Peninsula and Western Cascade Slope.

Under the current charter of the state's Shoreline Management Act, actual drilling on the Sound is forbidden. However, it is possible to tap underwater reserves by slant drilling from shore. Through the slant drilling process, a deep dome formation could be tapped from within two

miles of the shoreline. State law stipulates that an actual drilling rig can be established no closer than 1,000 feet from the shoreline.

Although slant drilling remains a possibility, Arco's primary interest is more likely the surrounding land formations. An Arco geologist aboard the boat said: "Our principle intent is to obtain a regional picture of the Northwest."

Seismic exploration by boat is a relatively inexpensive means of collecting preliminary data on the composition of underlying minerals. "A similar project on land would be much more expensive and time consuming," said Brian Walsh of the Department of Ecology (DOE). A land survey would require the use of trucks, helicopters, explosives and additional manpower.

The last seismic survey on Washington waters raised havoc amongst the state's crab fishermen. In December of 1980, a similar survey was conducted on the Pacific Coast by Ogle Petroleum. In that instance 1,200 crab pots were destroyed when towed under by the trailing seismic cable.

Considering the historical opposition to the oil industry in Puget Sound, it should be noted that Arco is handling the current project with kid gloves. After a public survey was conducted by the DOE of surrounding communities, Arco began working to mitigate potential problems with the fishing industry and local communities.

In that survey, both Thurston and Kitsap Counties, flatly rejected the exploration proposal. In a reply letter to the DOE, the Thurston County Commissioners cited the intense commercial and recreational use of the Sound and expressed concern over the slow flushing action of the lower Sound as reasons for their unanimous rejection.

Cover Photo: Photo by Nielsen
Dams such as this one at Wynoochee Lake in the Olympic National Forest highlight the Northwest's vast capacity for generating hydroelectric power.

Quote of the Week:
The Urge to Buy Terrorizes You.

THIS WEEK'S BEST BET: Frank Wakefield



Recording artist Frank Wakefield, a vocalist and musician considered one of the nation's best country-bluegrass mandolinists, returns to The Evergreen State College Tuesday, October 19, for an 8 p.m. performance on the second floor of the Evans Library.

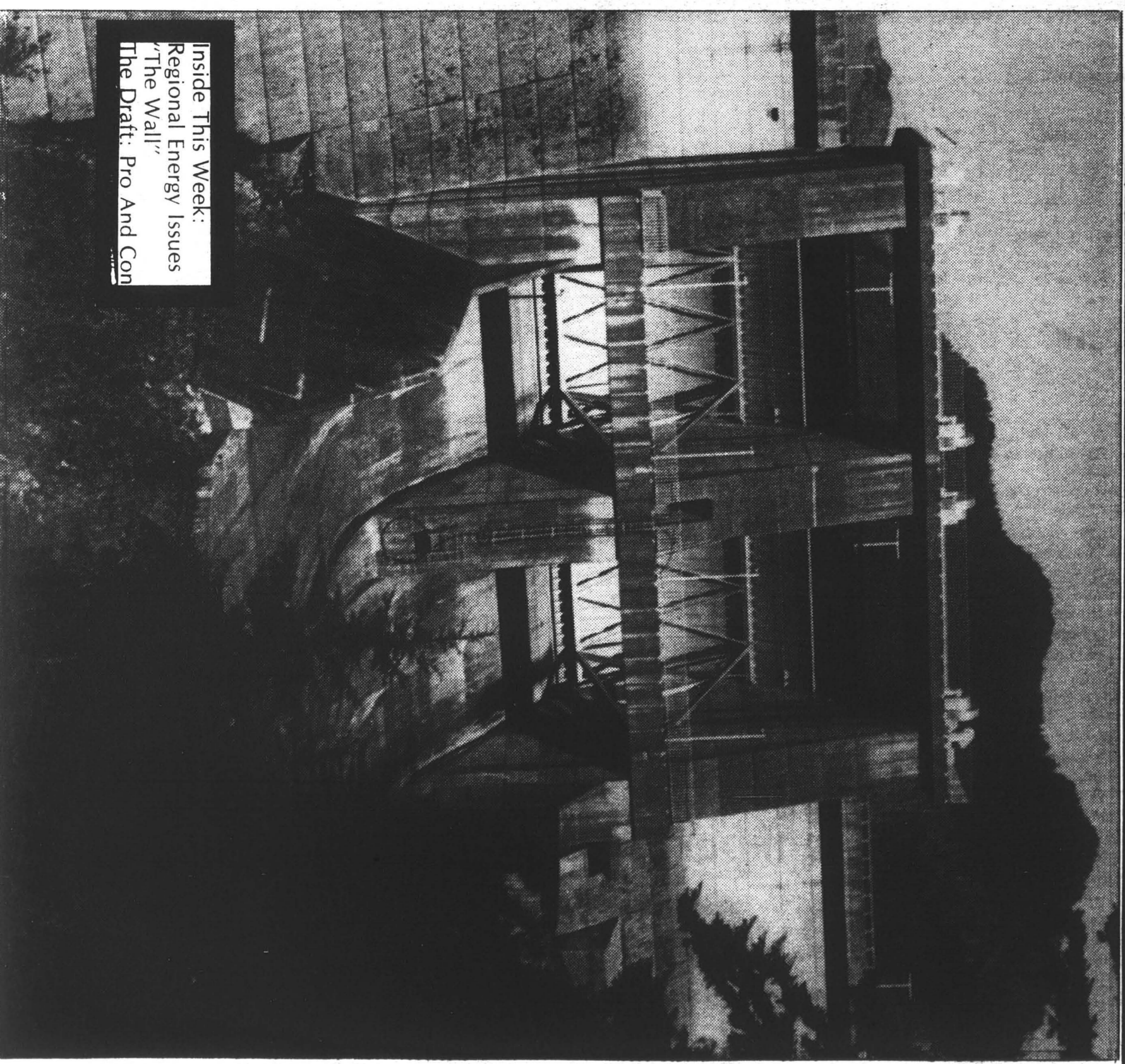
The Emory Gap, Tennessee native, born tenth in a musical family of 14, has performed throughout the nation, taking his three-to-five member bands, recording albums on both coasts, and earning a reputation for live performances that "offer a bizarre but entertaining mixture of his spicy bluegrass variations, his neo-

classical works — played from memory for Wakefield doesn't read music — and his charmingly eccentric stage presence centered around his hilarious but baffling habit of "backing talkbacks."

The untrained hillbilly musician first rose to musical prominence in the 1950s as a performer with Red Allen and the Kentuckians, a bluegrass group. In 1953, critics regard his hilarious but baffling bluegrass "with his recording of New Campground Races which 'moved mandolinists light years away from tradition.' As a member of the Greenbriar Boys in the 1960s, he firmly established his mark

as a mandolin virtuoso of striking talent and originality, and won fame for his classical-style solo pieces on mandolin, his exceptional accordion work, and his compositions encompassing gospel, country, bluegrass, calypso, and classical traditions.

Tickets for Wakefield's Tuesday night concert are on sale now at \$4 general or \$3 for students and senior citizens at Yemmy's Music and Rainy Day Records in Olympia and at the Evergreen Bookstore. Tickets will also go on sale at the door of the Evans Library beginning at 7 p.m. October 19.



Inside This Week:
Regional Energy Issues
"The Wall"
The Draft: Pro And Con

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COOPER POINT Journal



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King Lysen, independent candidate for U.S. Senate was on campus this past week talking to students. He said: "WPPSS is a form of economic bondage. We're (the state) in danger of becoming a colony and they're (Wall Street) going to milk the money out of us." Photo by Nielsen

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