Rendezvous Report

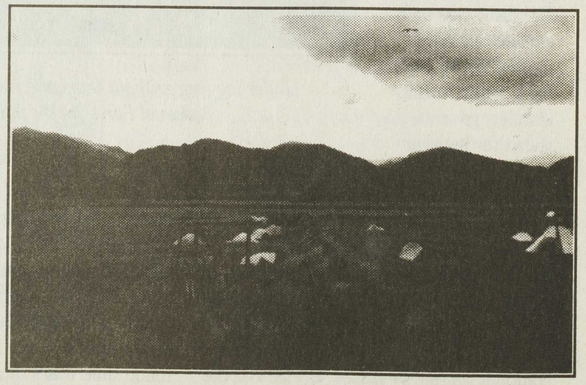
Over 300 people from throughout the United States attended the 10th Annual Wild Rockies Rendezvous, September 29 through October 1 at the Teller Wildlife Refuge in Corvallis, Montana. The weekend was packed with informative presentations, participatory workshops and strategy discussions on key issues facing the region, and informal networking and brainstorming. Here's a recap and some scenes from the weekend.

Many thanks to all who supported, sponsored, contributed to and attended the Rendezvous. We'll see you next year!

Howie Wolke delivers Sunday afternoon's closing keynote address. Dan Funsch photo.

The opening keynote address by Louisa Willcox, formerly of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, energized the crowd and set a positive tone for the weekend. She reminded us that conservation leadership comes from the grassroots and in these tough times we all need to be leaders. Wilderness guide, author and long time conservationist Howie Wolke delivered a riveting keynote address to close the conference and sent us away inspired and hopeful.

Workshop participants explored new approaches to today's tough political climate for environmental issues, ranging from public education to building coalitions with diverse groups, from direct citizen action and protest to electronic mail and working on political campaigns. Skills sessions focused on fundraising for small groups, media skills, and outreach. Evening entertainment provided an ideal social setting for fun and relaxing.

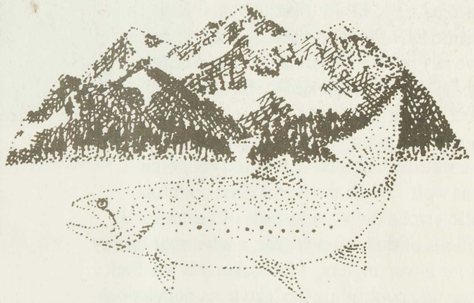


Close to one hundred Rendezvous participants pitched their tents in the hay field behind the slack barn for the weekend. Barbara Borst photo.

Saturday evening's panel debate on grizzly bear reintroduction in the Salmon-Selway Ecosystem drew a standing room only crowd. During the panel, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service project leader John Weaver (who has since been replaced) revealed that the agency would formally consider the Conservation Biology Alternative in their Environmental Impact Statement on the reintroduction. This alternative is supported by leading wildlife scientists in the region, as well as AWR and numerous conservation groups.

Speaking for the industry-environmental coalition that includes Defenders of Wildlife and the National Wildlife Federation, Seth Diamond of the Intermountain Forest Industries Association claimed at one point that open road densities have little effect on grizzly bear mortality. That remark drew laughter from the crowd, and a sharply critical response from Dave Mattson, an independent grizzly bear researcher on the panel.

Saturday evening panel debate. Angela L. Coffin photo.



A Note of Thanks,

Thank you for the praiseworthy 10th Annual Wild Rockies Rendezvous. As a member of a grassroots non-profit preservation group we were empowered by the weekend's pool-of-information, strategy building and networking. It was a pleasure to meet the impassioned masterminds behind our environmental movement around and within the Northwest.

Sincerely,

NRPP, Northern Rockies Preservation Project