

Inside Interior:  
Gale Norton

Gale Norton is the current Interior Secretary, confirmed in January 2001 and expected to remain through President George W. Bush's second term.

Photo: Department of Interior

This is the last in a monthly series of interviews with former Interior secretaries, conducted by Charles Wilkinson and Patricia Limerick, co-founders of the Center of the American West in Boulder, Colo.

The series is co-sponsored by the Nature Conservancy.

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## Introduction

Patricia Limerick: Let us remember the context in which Secretary Norton, our guest tonight, in which her confirmation hearings took place.

The California blackouts were under way in January of 2001, when she was confirmed to office. The prolonged western drought was launched. I think this is understood, but I think it's worth saying, that no secretary of the Interior controls, causes or ends drought.

Then, of course, the 9/11 attacks in her first year, which certainly changed the whole context and face of government in all the agencies.

The profile of our guest tonight shows her interesting, dynamic and varied career. Many phases showing enterprise in spirit in taking on new challenges:

University of Denver Law School graduate in 1978; senior attorney, Mountain States Legal Foundation; assistant to the Deputy Secretary of Agriculture; Associate Solicitor of the Department of the Interior; Colorado Attorney General, 1991-1999; Senior Counsel, Brownstein Hyatt & Farber; and Secretary of the Interior from 2001 to the present.

This has been Secretary Norton's signature message: Her collaborative conservation initiative, the Four C's. Communication, Consultation, Cooperation, all in the service of Conservation.

I will linger here for a minute on her time spent at the Mountain States Legal Foundation and I will read a quotation from her confirmation hearings.

When a senator asked her about her association with James Watt, this is Secretary Norton's response:

"Senator, that is difficult for me in a respect that you might find surprising and that is, I don't know everything that James Watt thinks about issues. I've only really spoken with him once in the last 10 years. I am not in constant communication with him on policy issues. I think that we have issues in common, but in the 20 years since I worked at Mountain States Legal Foundation at the same time Jim did, I have had lots of different experiences.

"My experiences at Mountain States Legal Foundation were in defending some wonderful people of the West; defending ranchers and farmers and small-business people, who were very earnest about the things that they did and who in good faith really felt strongly about their land and their ability to make decisions.

"Since that time I have also had the opportunity as attorney general to deal with people who did not have that kind of regard. To deal with people who thumbed their noses at environmental laws, who flagrantly violated those laws. Those people, some of them are spending some time in prison because of our prosecution of them. We recovered tens of millions of dollars in fines and penalties against those who violated Colorado's laws.

"I think the characterization of who I am is different than the characterization of who Jim Watt is. I mean him no disrespect but I am my own person."

This is a fine passage from her confirmation hearing about the fun of standing for public office and going through a confirmation hearing:

"Filling out all that financial paperwork was the first time I ever felt thankful my husband and I don't have more assets. I had to put together copies of every article I'd ever written and find information on every controversial issue I was ever involved in. I still ended up on my hands and knees in a crawl space under my house searching through endless boxes of dusty files. I thought at the time, the glamour of being a Cabinet member nominee is clearly over-rated."

... Now a tour of the major issues of Secretary Norton's four years in office: Her collaborative conservation initiative, the Four C's. This has been her signature message delivered on many occasions: Communication, Consultation, Cooperation, all in the service of Conservation. The principle behind those Four C's, here are a couple of quotes from her:

"We are at a time when we must move beyond command and control and punitive approaches. We will succeed in the 21st Century only if we tap into the greatest conservation resource America has: the people who live on and love the land they call home."

The quest for energy independence, obviously accelerated by international questions and questions raised about our dependence on foreign oil sources. Secretary Norton is a proponent of drilling in ANWR but she will speak for herself on the constraints under which she would want to see development proceed.

There is, of course, the issue of natural gas production in the Rockies and that is something she will speak to, especially her reflections on the important and compelling questions posed by surface owners who are experiencing development of the subsurface mineral rights.

Here are some achievements of an impressive nature: partnerships with the Nature Conservancy, partnerships with local citizens' groups, the Los Anagos National Conservation Area in Arizona, and most dramatically, the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Baca National Wildlife Refuge, as Secretary Norton said on Sept. 13, 2004: "Today we dedicate and proclaim a new national park to forever preserve a landscape sculpted by wind and water and we introduce what now becomes the largest wildlife refuge in Colorado."

Secretary Norton, with others in the administration, has been dealing with the vexing problem of what to do to reduce the results of a century of fire suppression through thinning and prescribed burns.

The concern about the maintenance backlog in national parks has been a driving issue for her to try to find the funding to deal with leaking sewers and other dilemmas in the parks. The use of the Water, Land and Conservation Fund to build to the parks and add to their territory.

Controversies over mechanized recreation have obviously been an important issue in her time, as well.

Water in the west is a key concern. The Klamath River controversy over releasing water for an endangered species – not releasing it to farmers but keeping it in stream for the fish or supplying it to farmers for irrigation – was a very difficult decision, a very difficult process and contentious, but has led to some interesting understandings on her part on how to deal with these issues.

She has in recent time, last winter, stood up to California and told California to stay within its limits of the Colorado River Compact. That was something that California was not used to hearing. In the context of that, Secretary Norton said on several occasions to the press, "The era of limits is upon us."

With the drought, with the issues of allocation of the Colorado, she's reminding us of the important need for deliberation as she has launched in her initiative Water 2025 providing water for the West: "An initiative to promote conservation and efficiency in water usage while resolving disputes among competing users."

The Endangered Species Act. At her confirmation hearings, she was queried repeatedly about her feelings on the Endangered Species Act. Here are quotations in which she says she will certainly uphold the Endangered Species Act, but that she will want to take into account the concerns of farmers and ranchers and to provide incentives to engage private property owners in habitat conservation, and indeed important parts of her administration

include the Landowner Incentive Program for Habitat Conservation and the Private Stewardship Grant Program.

The big issue of where privately owned lands figure into the campaign to preserve endangered species is a big one and she's taken it on quite directly.

The definition of conservation in Theodore Roosevelt's time and the definition of conservation in our time is one of the big questions we've been pursuing in this series, especially in reappraising the role of utilitarian values and preservationist values in the practice of conservation. So exercise your historian license, make some effort to think about what Theodore Roosevelt would be thinking.

At her confirmation hearings, Secretary Norton put forward ideas that I think Theodore Roosevelt would recognize many elements of. I quote her: "Using consultation and collaboration, forging partnerships with interested citizens, we can succeed in our effort to preserve America's most precious places. What is more, we can achieve this while maintaining America's prosperity and economic dynamic while respecting constitutional rights and nurturing diverse traditions and cultures."

The Center for the American West is proud to present the current Secretary of the Interior, Gale Norton.

### Interior Department's Historical Perspective

Gale Norton: I'd like to begin by sharing with you a few of my thoughts on Interior and the overall historical perspective. It's such a great service to have the Secretaries of Interior highlighted and to have those like Stewart Udall, with whom I've had the opportunity to talk with, share their histories. I am a little uncomfortable with being an historic artifact myself.

I have in my hallway leading up to my office the portraits of the former Secretaries of the Interior. I sometimes, late at night, wander through there and look at some of the portraits. They go all the way back to the first Secretary of the Interior, back in 1849. I look at these guys with the beards and the starched collars and sometimes wonder whether things were a lot calmer in those days.

Then I think about the issues they faced: The Gold Rush, the homesteading of the country, the times when battles with Indian tribes were not in courtrooms but were very real bloodshed. I think about one of my prominent predecessors, Harold Ickes, the longest-serving Secretary of the Interior. He was FDR's Secretary of Interior who apparently built the building that we occupy and reportedly went out to measure the offices of other cabinet members to make sure his was the biggest. I am eternally grateful to him.

Interior is so important to the West but is often little understood in many other parts of the country. Ronald Reagan commented that only in Washington, D.C., that the department in charge of everything outdoors would be called the Department of the Interior.

I had an encounter that was fairly widely reported in the press with Jessica Simpson at the White House. I was there at a reception and went over and introduced myself to her and said I was Secretary of the Interior and she said something like, well, you've done a nice job. It was only later, after my husband overheard the people who were standing next to her say, "no, not that kind," that we realized that she thought it was interior decorating that we were in charge of.

But even Westerners don't really understand the scope of the Department of the Interior. We control three-fourths of the state of Nevada, 60 percent of Alaska, half of Utah, and a quarter of a number of other western states.

If Donald Trump owned as much land in the East as we do in the West, he wouldn't own just a few shopping centers and office buildings and casinos, he would own the entire Eastern time zone.

We have national parks, wildlife refuges, not the Forest Service – a common misperception. We have the wide open spaces of the West, the multiple-use lands of the Bureau of Land Management.

Our lands and the off-shore lands that we manage produce a third of America's coal, oil and natural gas. Our Bureau of Reclamation supplies water to 31 million people.

Sixty percent of the produce that you find in the grocery stores comes from water from the Bureau of Reclamation. We have responsibility for working with our Indian tribes, and I am essentially superintendent of schools for 50,000 Indian children.

We have responsibility for the island nations and territories in the Pacific, many of which are closer to Japan than they are to the West Coast of the United States.

In many ways we are custodian of the nation's history. We work with the Indian tribes to keep ancient cultures vibrant. We also are responsible for our nation's patriotic icons: the monuments in Washington, D.C., and Independence Hall where the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence began.

We are also a very modern organization. We do computerized tracking of earthquakes wherever they happen anywhere in the world. We develop high-technology energy and use things like biomass and methane hydrates to look at energy for the future. We even have our own satellite.

One little known bit of information about the Department of the Interior is that fairly recently for a short period of time because of some apparent tax problems, we even owned the Mustang Ranch. It gives the phrase "Madame Secretary" a whole new meaning.

To switch to a little more serious side, Patty outlined this in her remarks. It's very important in my approach to the Department of the Interior. Seeing the development of environmentalism during my lifetime, and saw when I first became conscious of environmental issues, the tremendous and very dramatic problems. The Cuyahoga River was on fire. Smokestacks were belching smokes in our major cities. The bald eagle was on the verge of extinction.

We saw from that experience the passage of landmark environmental laws: The Clean Air Act, The Clean Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act. From those things, we have seen tremendous progress.

We also saw development of a great deal of conflict and an incentive for people at times to shout at each other through the

headlines. To demonize each other. We have also seen, though, the gradual development and a few isolated spots and then more and more frequently, people sitting down together to address environmental problems.

Our problems have become more complex and more subtle as we have had success with some of the more dramatic problems. We have broader scale understanding of environmental issues and a broader consensus in support of protecting the environment.

So getting people to sit down to find common ground, to find solutions, to harness innovation and development of new technology and find environmental solutions, those are things that I believe are very important. That is what I have tried to bring to the Department of the Interior.

I look forward to having some discussion. I also want to say, lest I forget while we're having our discussion, that no Secretary of the Interior manages all of our lands alone. We have 70,000 dedicated and wonderful employees at the Department of the Interior and 200,000 volunteers that help us in that and millions of people who care about our lands. It is only a small part that any one individual as Secretary of the Interior can play.

Charles Wilkinson: Let me ask you a question about your first moments in office in January of 2001 and ask you sort of the human side and the policy side. Here you are, sitting in the largest secretarial office in Washington with 70,000 employees. You had run a major office and run it well. Your employees at the attorney general's office speak very highly of you and you were a good manager, but the scale was just totally different. How did you feel about that? Did you feel a sense of inadequacy on some level? Just a small part of that? Who had helped you get the ideas together to take on a job that large. And then on the policy side: If you had one or two main objectives, what would you say they would be?

GN: I had the good fortune of having worked at the Department of the Interior in the 1980s, so I came in knowing some of the career people who had been there for many years, and having a great deal of respect for them. One of the first things I did was to have a reception and invite all of those, the top career employees, into my

office to say how much I was going to be depending on them as I was tackling things coming up.

I had spent time during the very rapid and condensed transition program thinking about some of the things I wanted to get done as Secretary and thinking about the approach I wanted to use. I felt that really one of the most important things was re-establishing a good relationship with the people in the West who were affected by our programs and trying to bring people together. In many ways, it was an attitudes approach that I wanted to have in the department.

I knew that water issues and energy and endangered species issues were all going to be very significant issues that we were going to be dealing with and began working on some of those issues.

### Wilderness Study Areas

CW: Let me have you work through what I think was one of your major decisions last year on wilderness study areas. You privately negotiated a settlement with plaintiffs' attorneys in a case over Utah wilderness study areas. Then really in a summary fashion, very quickly, a matter of a few days, the judge had signed off on the consent decree and what it did, or one thing that it did was to lift the protections from not just the wilderness study areas in Utah but nationwide.

I'm wondering this: You have spoken in very compelling terms, and obviously very sincere terms about wild country. You will often mention archaeological sites, the canyons of the Southwest. I'm wondering how you reconcile that particular action with consultation and collaboration, really pretty close to a secret process, and your love of the outdoors while recognizing inevitably there's going to be some wild country torn up as a result of that decision. How do you fit all of that together?

GN: When I was with Interior in the 1980s we were going through a process that was created under the Federal Land Policy Management Act of surveying all of the Bureau of Land Management Lands to determine which ones would be appropriate to be nominated to Congress to be wilderness areas. That process involved looking at basically all of those lands, looking at the uses and values of those

lands. It was an extensive process. That was something that was viewed at the time as being a one-time project. It was a major project being undertaken to be submitted to Congress. During the Clinton administration there was a change made to say that should essentially be an ongoing process and new areas should be submitted.

Let me back up for a second. In 1992, there was a submission then of all of the work that came out of the 1980s process to Congress of areas that were recommended for wilderness and areas that were not recommended for wilderness but had been studied. All of those wilderness study areas were put into a management status of being treated as wilderness. Those areas are still being treated as wilderness. We have not affected any of those areas. The statutes provided protection of those and I think that is appropriate.

CW: Those have actually been recommended.

GN: Those were formal wilderness study areas. During the Clinton administration, they created new wilderness study areas administratively. Those they put into a wilderness management area process without going through land-use planning, without going through a collaborative approach. That was essentially an administrative approach to that. That, I believe, was not authorized by the Federal Land Policy Management Act, and so the settlement of litigation was recognizing that claim as it was raised by the State of Utah that the Department of the Interior does not have the ability, without statutory authorization to do that. I would still like to see Congress act on recommendations that have been submitted which have been sitting before Congress for a dozen years now. Very few of those have been acted on.

I worked with Sen. Hank Brown when he was getting wilderness legislation approved and put into place for Colorado and know you need to have a collaborative local process to create wilderness and I support doing that. Our administration has supported a number of wilderness proposals. What we do have authority to do is work through a collaborative land-use process and to put areas into various categories for protection, for recreation, for scenic values, for wildlife.

One thing that people often don't understand. They seem to view it as either wilderness or very active use. There's a lot in between. If you want to have an area that is open for mountain biking, for example, that cannot be wilderness. Wilderness areas are off-limits for mountain biking, at least for Department of Interior wilderness areas. If you want to have restroom facilities, you can't have those in a wilderness area. So there are things that you need to do as a land manager that may not be appropriate for the unique category of wilderness. So we want, as we do our land-use planning, look at the whole variety of protections that would be appropriate.

CW: Your action applied only because the original inventory came out in 1979 for Bureau of Land Management wilderness and your action applied only to areas added to that inventory later during the Clinton years?

GN: Yes. It only applied to areas designated as wilderness study areas during the Clinton administration and so the areas that were designated before that were not affected by that litigation settlement.

CW: Did you consider some sort of collaborative process for those lands?

GN: That's exactly what we put them into, which is our land-use planning process, which is a very collaborative process. So we in essence put them into an overall collaborative process.

CW: Did you consider a collaborative process before removing them from wilderness study protections?

GN: It's a question then of statutory interpretation which is a little bit different than land-use planning. Statutory interpretation is not quite so much a comment process, or an involvement process as a question of determining what is legally appropriate and how litigation should be settled.

Cobell Indian Trust Litigation

CW: One piece of litigation, the Cobell litigation involving the Indian trusts, has taken a great amount of your time. I'm sure a great deal more time than you expected when you came into office and of your top staff, too. This is the litigation where Indian people who held trust allotments dating back to 1887 have sued the government claiming mismanagement of those funds over more than a century now and seeking recovery and alleging a very large amount of damages.

Right now, there is an ongoing mediation process. Is it a priority of yours to attempt to resolve it through that mediation process? Have you pushed people to try to resolve it there and has there been an offer put on the table? I'm not asking what it is but do you feel the department has made a substantial offer that really would be getting into the ballpark of attempting to settle this long-standing dispute.

GN: This is a conversation that Bruce Babbitt and I had the first day that I took office. He said that that litigation is going to end up taking a lot more time than you expect. That certainly did prove to be the reality. It is one where we have undergone massive changes in our management of Indian trusts. We have invested more of an increase in funding in that area than in any other part of the Department of Interior and have undergone reorganization to be sure that we have people on reservations who are aware of the fiduciary responsibilities and who also can act as essentially customer service representatives to provide information to Indians about the status of their accounts.

The ongoing, or the mediation efforts, have thus far not produced results although we invested a lot of time and effort in undertaking those mediation efforts. I would like to see that issue resolved. That is currently on appeal, we have several parts of that case that are on appeal to the federal court of appeals.

GN: The ongoing, or the mediation efforts, have thus far not produced results, although we invested a lot of time and effort in undertaking those mediation efforts. I would like to see that issue resolved. That is currently on appeal, we have several parts of that case that are on appeal to the federal court of appeals.

The most recent ruling from the District Court judge would have required the Department of Interior to basically go back and find not just basically the bank ledgers, but to go back and find external documentation for each transaction that has gone on over the last 100 and some-odd years.

So looking for canceled checks, and leases, and invoices and all of those things to keep track of everything that's in those accounts, the estimate is that of about \$13 billion went through those accounts in the entire history of those accounts.

The judge's order was estimated to cost \$6 to \$12 billion dollars just to do the accounting work on finding all of that information, so it has been a very difficult issue to try to resolve. I think, unfortunately, whatever the outcome of the case it has diverted a lot of attention and resources from other areas that are much more forward looking for Indian country.

CW: Sometimes in settling litigation you have to come up with a number that's ultimately arbitrary because you can't have complete information. Is the mediation process leaning towards that? Is the mediation process really active where both sides are trying to take some chances to settle it?

GN: I really can't go into some of the aspects of the litigation. In essence, we have been doing historical accounting work. The work that we have done has focused on the more recent accounting. But, so far, we have found very few discrepancies in the accounting. We've got, on one hand, our experience which is showing very little that would be owed to people, and assertions by the plaintiffs that a great deal is owed. To a certain extent there is not a base of information that would be in most litigation, the way in which parties would have a basis for determining what's the ballpark.

CW: Are there vast gaps in the records so that there are just large amounts of information that we're lacking completely and the Department has just no supporting records either way. They've been lost or –

GN: For the most part, we have these ledgers that people—they're big books that people went back and wrote by hand in pencil for decades and decades. We tend to have the ledger books. What we

don't have as much are the canceled checks or some of the other information.

As part of what we're doing to get this system reformed, we have established a new repository for American Indian records. We're doing that in conjunction with the National Archives. We've established a program at Haskell Indian University that is located nearby that will have students to be able to work on those records and work in a program to train them to keep track both of BIA and Interior records, but also their own tribal records.

We're really working to have a better management of our records and of the Indian tribal records as well.

### The Four C's

PL: There are critics who say the Four C's are a cover, are a smokescreen, are a way of taking our eyes off the fact that industry will probably come out ahead. I am interested in how you respond to those criticisms. I do think there is a great tension between conservation regulation as it has come to exist and democracy. In the effort to address that, cynical responses are predictable. What do you make of that?

A. I think that overall parts of the challenge of our country for the future is finding ways of meeting needs that we have for the economy, for jobs, for the amenities we enjoy, and at the same time protect our environment. I think that you can find that if you have an atmosphere that encourages people to be creative in their approaches to solving problems. If you get people to understand each other's perspectives. If you have ways of trying to meet a lot of different goals at the same time. I think you can find that best if you can get people to actually sit down and talk with each other.

When you look at it from the pollution perspective, when we originally came in with the Clean Air laws we started mandating you have to have this kind of pollution-control technology on your smokestack. Well, if we had stuck with that approach, people would comfortably be installing 1975 pollution control equipment, and saying, "OK, that's over. We solved that."

What we instead learned is that you need to have programs that encourage people to develop the new technologies. To advance in the way that we find environmental solutions. So we go through things like emissions training and performance and results-based approaches, we have used American ingenuity to solve environmental problems. I think you can do that with land-based issues as well.

People think, when we talk about energy development, of the kind of technology that we used in the 1920s for oil wells, yet when you compare that with what is being used in some of the most advanced sites today, they are using directional drilling from a place on the surface to reach miles underground so there's no effect for miles on the surface because it's all in one spot. There's a lot you can do to harness technology to solve problems. I think getting people to sit down together to identify the places where it makes sense to go the extra mile where you can find common ground. I think those are approaches that have benefits, whatever the environmental issue is.

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Q. Working on energy issues, it seems like the framework for natural gas is so often cast by the industry as the bridge to the renewable future, which does make a lot of sense. I just wonder about the full construction of that bridge so it goes all the way to the renewable future.

You said in the confirmation hearings that it will take long-range solutions on the energy issue. Can you talk about how increased production in the Rockies of natural gas would commit to a longer-range policy towards something that is not so fossil-fuel driven in the future?

A. That takes several different things. We are working in the Department of the Interior on renewable energy, as well. We have issued 10 times as many permits for renewable energy, especially wind and geothermal, as the previous administration did. We've been working to try to address the problems so that we can go forward with those kinds of technologies.

We are working on the development of biomass energy so that we might be able to take some of the brush and the small trees that come out of thinning high-fire-danger forest areas to use to generate electricity or to use emissions controls so that can be a way of providing heat for buildings. There are things like that, that I think are part of the future, that a part of that future that Interior can play.

It also is going to require development of other technologies. A very plentiful supply of energy that we have is coal. And using new technologies—there's a lot of research that's going on to try to have minimal pollution come from the use of coal.

Fuel-cell technology is something that is seen as a way of getting beyond the internal-combustion engine for automobiles. That is something that President Bush feels strongly about and we have been working to try to use that technology. That basically just emits water vapor as the byproduct, so it gets past a lot of the air-pollution kinds of issues.

It's a very complex set of approaches that you need to have. There is no one technology that is going to get us there. There are also some other plentiful supplies of energy that are still in the very, very initial phases of becoming reality. Those are also going to have to be developed.

PL: Interior has grown more by things getting added to it, by acts of legislation, than by any kind of central thinking of what Interior should be. If you could reorganize Interior in some way, if you could move pieces and parts around, pick up that darn Forest Service and

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GN: Well, actually I have joked with Ann Veneman, the Secretary of Agriculture, that she ought to at least send over to Interior the ski areas. I don't really see any significant reorganizations taking place. We do have a pretty good organizational structure, I think. We have worked hard to see that our scientists in the U.S. Geological Survey are working more closely with our land managers. I think that has been one aspect that we have really worked to overcome some divisions within the department. I think through communication and having closer scientist and land-manager relationships between

U.S. Geological Survey and our land-use managers that have to rely on that science for decision-making, I think we are developing a good rapport there.

### National Museum of the American Indian

CW: We were talking about Indian issues and I thought we would turn to a really historic and very exciting event which was the opening of the new museum. It's an amazing place, physically, and the way the exhibits are presented is really different. It's different than any other museum anybody has ever been in. When you went through it find yourself thinking about the future of Indians? Was there a sort of vitality there that gave you a sense of what we can expect from Indian Country in the future? I know that you've been out to some reservations.

Most of the museum is the display of artifacts and of art works and wonderful objects that have been created that span history from very ancient to very current. There are a few areas of the display that are just wonderful and they are going to be rotating exhibits and each of them focuses on an individual tribe and its history.

They really show not just the history of the tribe and the tribe as the ancient culture but also pictures of the current members of the tribe, their current activities and current practices, and it really is a museum about living culture. I think that that is one of the things that was most wonderful about the ceremony for the opening and about the museum itself. It is about the Indian cultures, not just as historic, but as a way of enriching the future.

I'm very excited. I was delighted to see the museum itself and really touched by the ceremonies and the coming together that was a commemoration of the opening of that.

### Question and Answer Period

Q. Madam Secretary, in what way has the Bush administration improved on environmental concerns from what the Clinton administration did possibly involving such areas as logging, air pollution and regulation of power plants?

A: First of all on the power plants, although that is not really an Interior issue, it's EPA. The president's Clear Skies proposal that has been submitted to Congress but also is moving forward administratively would reduce emissions from power plants for three major pollutants by 70 percent. That is a very significant advancement.

In the conservation area, with both Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture, we have vastly increased the funding that is devoted to programs that bring people together for conservation activities. We are really putting our money where our mouth is on conservation through cooperation. We are, for example, increasing the funding for the North American Wetlands Conservation Act that is to restore wetlands in the United States, as well as working cooperatively with Canada and Mexico.

We have been working with farmers and ranchers on conservation reserve program, a wetlands reserve program in their areas.

One of the things that I like the best on those programs at Interior is a project to work with landowners on endangered species. Endangered species for most farmers and ranchers is a very negative concept. I went to South Dakota and had a town hall meeting. A whole bunch of ranchers showed up and wanted to talk about prairie dogs. They told me that the year that they first started talking about listing prairie dogs as endangered species, the sale of prairie dog poison doubled. Clearly that is not the result we want from endangered species protection.

Through some of the programs that the president actually brought with him from Texas, we are providing funding for farmers or ranchers or other landowners to restore habitat or to enhance habitat for endangered species on their property, and we provide the technical assistance for them to do that. It really taps into people's usual enthusiasm about wildlife and it gets people involved in protection of endangered species in a very positive way. That's the kind of thing that we're trying to do.

We have programs for coastal wetlands. Something called Partners for Fish and Wildlife that focuses on all types of wildlife habitat. We're working more closely with state wildlife agencies, so through a variety of ways, we are working more closely with people in the

private sector on projects that are really going to make a difference in environmental protection.

Q. Let me ask you this. In a principled way, doesn't it really come down to this or would you say no: That in your view, and in the Bush administration's view of balance, environmental protection had just gone somewhat too far and that in terms of balance overall it had to be pulled back somewhat. That's not in your view being anti-environmental, it's just a principled view that we had gone too far.

A. I don't view it in those terms. I think it is not a question of how much you protect the environment but how you protect the environment. When I was a much younger attorney, I spent a year at the Hoover Institution at Stanford really trying to reconcile the question of how you protect the environment and allow people to have freedom and to make their own choices.

The issue I focused on was air pollution, emissions trading. To use market forces to establish basically a way for people to be creative as they're making decisions about environmental protections. So it's not just top-down regulation after regulation from the Environmental Protection Agency. It is people who are given a standard that they need to meet and can come up with all kinds of different ways to meet that standard.

Similarly, it's not a question of how much. Do we want to have more or less endangered species protection? That's not the issue. The question is whether you want to have people enthusiastic about protecting endangered species or if you want to have a system that is based on a very punitive approach.

Yes, there are people who violate the environmental laws. There are people who shoot endangered species or poach endangered species. For them the punitive, criminal justice approach is the right approach. But for people of good will trying to solve problems, trying to find ways of having an alternative to a regulatory mandate coming from Washington, I think, is a very good way of protecting the environment. At the same time, we are meeting other human goals.

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

Q. Madam Secretary, why does this administration chose to support ANWR drilling instead of greater fuel efficiency when the latter has a far greater, longer-lasting impact on our oil dependency?

A. The president's national energy plan called for both. The dispute on cafe standards is one that has tended to focus on automobile efficiency standards, has actually been a dispute about how that decision is made and who makes that decision. There is opposition to having Congress set those standards because of the automobile safety tradeoffs. Letting people make their own decisions about safety of automobiles, to have the people who are making that decision more from a scientific and automotive engineering perspective and the federal agencies make that decision, rather than Congress setting that decision.

But that is not to say that we shouldn't be encouraging conservation of energy through automobiles and through lots of other ways. Our administration has imposed the cafe standards, or fuel efficiency standards on SUVs, we've imposed standards on diesel vehicles and in a number of other ways we have been working on those kinds of approaches.

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ANWR is, in a short phrase, our largest potential source of onshore oil in the country and it is a place that we look at the estimates done by the previous administration of how much oil would be produced there. It would produce as much oil as any state, as much oil as the entire state of Texas produces on a daily basis. As much oil as we import from any country with the exception of Canada and Saudi Arabia. So ANWR itself, just in one spot, would produce a very, very significant amount of energy.

The requirement for going into that area would be the toughest environmental standards ever applied to oil and gas operations anywhere. ANWR itself is about the size of South Carolina, the area that is being focused on for energy is about a million and a half acres, and of that 1.5 million acres, the proposal in front of

Congress that we supported would have limited that to only 2,000 acres that would be impacted by it. That was written into the statute as a requirement. If you're going to have oil, which I think is a part of our future for at least the near term, that is the place to produce it that actually has the least impact on the environment of almost any other place.

We did an estimate that it takes over 40 times as many wells in Wyoming to produce as much oil as you can get from one well in ANWR because of the concentration there. I know there is a lot of emotion tied to that issue. I visited ANWR, I visited there in the wintertime, I visited there in the summertime. I've seen the measures that are being used at other facilities that would be the kind of requirements that would be used at ANWR, and I believe that it can go forward in an environmentally responsible way.

## Roan Plateau

Q. Madam Secretary, with all the gas industry talk of directional drilling technology advances, why did the BLM propose drilling from the pristine top of the Roan Plateau in Colorado?

A: I appreciate that question being asked so that we can clarify something about that. There was a draft environmental impact approach that was released that has various scenarios outlined in it. No final decision has been made. The preferred alternative is one that would delay any drilling from the top of the Roan Plateau for an estimated at least 10 years. There would be no drilling from the top, there would be some activities taking place from the base of that where there seems to be a pretty broad consensus that that is appropriate. That would allow for development of new technologies, for people to look at that issue as the technology develops to see whether directional drilling from the base is a way to access that energy. So it is a process that is not going to have drilling taking place in the short-term from the top of the Roan Plateau.

It also sets aside a number of areas on the top of the plateau that are areas of critical environmental concern where there might be leasing of the subsurface but there would not be any access allowed from the surface. You would not be able to have any drilling taking place from the surface of those areas. It is a proposal that was put

together with a lot of collaboration and involvement from the local communities. We did listen to those local communities and we did change the original proposal from the Bureau of Land Management that went out for that area. That's an example of where the collaboration has led to a result that has shifted things more towards a more environmental result.

Q. Madam Secretary, taking the issue of collaboration with local communities a step further. You stress the role of working with collaborative local processes; however, the lands which you oversee are the heritage of the people of this nation as a whole. How do you propose to reconcile issues in which the local viewpoints may substantially differ from the viewpoint of the national majority?

A: It is a question where we, the federal agencies, have certain responsibilities that are very often set out in statute. We have the missions of the various bureaus. The Fish and Wildlife Service has the responsibility for wildlife refuges, the National Park Service has a preservation and enjoyment set of responsibilities, so very often the national perspective is defined by the mission of the particular area. Anything we do, whenever we're collaborating, we have to remain consistent with that mission.

We also have a process that while it involves local communities, also in virtually everything we do, we have an open comment period that allows for input from people from all over the country.

By having more local involvement in our decisions, we have the ability to fine-tune things. To have people who really know an area, who can help us in tapping into their local knowledge, who can help us in finding ways of reconciling some of the problems. It is an approach that involves input from people both on a local basis and also from people on a national basis.

Global warming

Q. Madam Secretary, what is your office doing about global warming?

A: Most of the global warming issues are ones that really deal with the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency. We have been involved in the carbon sequestration, both research

and in some actual projects. There are several utility companies, especially American Electric Power has been actively involved with this, that have worked with us in some of our wildlife refuge areas to restore areas like bottomland hardwood forests in Louisiana. They take areas that once were great habitats and have for a couple of decades have been farmed fields and to restore those to a more natural setting, planting trees and restoring water flows and things like that. By doing that, we have, of course, our great benefit to the wildlife system but also the capturing of carbon. Those companies then register with the Department of Energy and if a system comes into place that has some sort of carbon-credit system, then they would get credit for the work that they have done.

We are also doing some additional research efforts through our U.S. Geological Survey. We have the ice core laboratory that is in Golden, Colo., at the federal center that has ice cores from both the North and South Pole that go back, in one case about 250,000 years and in another case, about 400,000 years. They basically are a lot like tree rings, they sort of provide a record of what the climate changes were, the weather conditions, the temperatures, at those points in time. We have scientists within our department that have been studying that to learn what they can about changes in climate over that whole time period.

Q. Madam Secretary, how does oil drilling on public lands fit in with your conservation ideology?

A: We have to have both a supply of energy for the country, as well as a way in which we protect the environment. We try to work to find ways of reconciling both. We have been working with the Western Governors Association and the conservation fund, brought together our top officials, some ranchers and farmers who are in the split-estate situation, that you mentioned where we have private owners of the surface and federally owned subsurface that has been leased out, as well as conservation groups that talked about how you can have best management practices that would require reclamation of sites quickly, that would require planning so instead of having ten different roads going to ten different wells, you would have one road to serve all of those wells. Where we could group wellheads together to have one pad and the wells using directional drilling to reach other areas.

There are a whole menu of different practices from which our land management officials could choose as they are deciding what requirements would apply to a particular well. We have been working with those groups on a continuing basis to try to continue to improve those approaches.

## National Parks

Q. Madam Secretary, this question concerns our national parks. The first four years of the Bush administration focused on the maintenance backlog for the National Park Service. What will be the focus of the next four years to leave as a legacy for the National Parks?

A: We still have some work to do to finish up on the maintenance backlog. We have about 4,000 projects that are either under way or are completed. We're still working on that. We have a program to enhance our understanding of and to care for the ecosystems within our national parks. Through that we are tackling, for example one big challenge that affects a lot of our areas is invasive species. The exotic species that are crowding out the native vegetation or native wildlife. We are trying to address those issues.

We have been working to do a better job for historic preservation. We have been working through a program that the first lady has gotten very involved in called Preserve America that is working both with the government-owned historic areas but also with local communities that might want to highlight work on their own historic sites. We are trying to work through a variety of different things.

One thing that is exciting right now is the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. We just created a new national park that is in Oregon and Washington. It is a sort of bi-state park that includes the areas where Lewis and Clark camped out when they got to the Pacific. As people are coming to that area in late 2005 for the 200th anniversary, we will have a new national park that will be welcoming them and providing the historical interpretation to make that a meaningful event.

One really exciting thing that has happened during the Lewis and Clark Expedition Bicentennial has been the involvement of the

Indian tribes along the way so that it has been a history of the coming together of the cultures and of the two sides meeting each other as opposed to just the single perspective that we have tended to hear.

Q. Madame Secretary, what ideologies, beliefs or religious attitudes that you hold help shape your actions about the use of natural areas and resources?

A: I tend to come from a fairly Libertarian perspective. In one of my early phases of my political life, I was very interested in the Libertarian approach. That is why I try to find approaches that are not government-coercion-based that are really trying to allow human freedom and human creativity to follow along with protection of our environment. That I think is one very significant aspect.

Another aspect is my background as a lawyer. I believe strongly that we ought to have a rule of law. That we ought to have policies and procedures that are appropriate so we make sure that as we are applying the laws that we enforce the legal mandates. That is why when we faced the situation in the Klamath River Basin that Patty mentioned, where the biologists told us that under the Endangered Species Act we needed to close down irrigation to farm families, we followed that because that was what the law requires. That is also part of my background.

PL: I would like Secretary Norton to give us some last remark, reflections on the department, on being here in Boulder.

GN: I appreciate the opportunity to talk with you tonight. The Department of the Interior is a microcosm for a lot of the changes that take place within our culture. A lot of the pressures that exist in the West and affect all of our lifestyles in the West. I have tremendously enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity to be Secretary of the Interior. My husband and I have gotten to have some fantastic opportunities and experiences. I really love and enjoy the outdoors and to be able to do some of the things that we've done. We had the chance to be surrounded by about a dozen grizzly bears, in the Katmai National Park in Alaska. We've had the opportunity to explore places in Carlsbad Caverns that not even the superintendent had been to. We have been able to visit some of the

most wonderful and spectacular places in the United States. It is a great joy for the people of the United States to have those areas.

We preserve our national parks, our wilderness areas, our areas for our wildlife refuge system. We are learning, as a country, how to meet the challenges. There are always going to be pressures as there are more and more people moving closer and closer into our Western lands. We have more and more requirements that people want to see met from our Western lands.

We also have a great challenge ahead of us, and I think we're making progress in figuring out how we meet those challenges in a way that addresses people's needs and protects those great areas. I see that as the challenge that we are undertaking. It's not always popular to say we have to face reality, we have to meet some of the needs, we have to provide energy from some place. We have to provide recreation that some people love and that some people don't like. We have a great puzzle trying to figure out how you can find the best spots for all of those activities to take place. Different people have different ideas about what would be ideal for our millions and millions of acres that we manage. The great thing is that people care so passionately about our lands. The worst thing is for people to quit caring. We appreciate the debate because it shows how much people care about our lands.