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Endangered Species Act target of new bill

By MICHELLE MITTELSTADT
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - Congress should impose a freeze on any new government action under the Endangered Species Act pending a rewrite of the sweeping 1973 legislation, two Texas Republican lawmakers contend.

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison and Rep. Lamar Smith on Wednesday introduced legislation to enact the moratorium. Their measure also would place a freeze on any new critical habitat designations and lift other government agencies' need to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding endangered species.

"Amendments are needed to restore the constitutional protection of private property rights that for too long has been ignored by Congress and Washington rulemakers," Mrs. Hutchison said.

Advocates of a pared-down Endangered Species Act are seeking to rewrite the legislation to limit the number of new listings, beef up protections for private property owners and guarantee them compensation if they lose value or use of

their land as a result of government action.

Environmentalists argue the proposals would gut the act, reduce protections for vulnerable species, and cost the government untold dollars to compensate affected landowners.

"It's interesting they don't want to put a moratorium on the things that cause a species to go extinct," said Kevin Kirchner of the Sierra Club's Legal Defense Fund.

"As much as folks like Sen. Hutchison and others like to use it as a whipping boy, the Endangered Species Act is one of the most popular environmental statutes in the United States," he added. "People have a pretty fundamental sense that we ought not to do things that cause other species to go extinct."

The Clinton administration, which currently has 109 proposals pending to declare plant or animal species threatened or endangered, contends the act is flexible enough.

The moratorium is just one of several proposals by the new congressional GOP majority to slow government rule-making or repeal some of it outright. House Majority

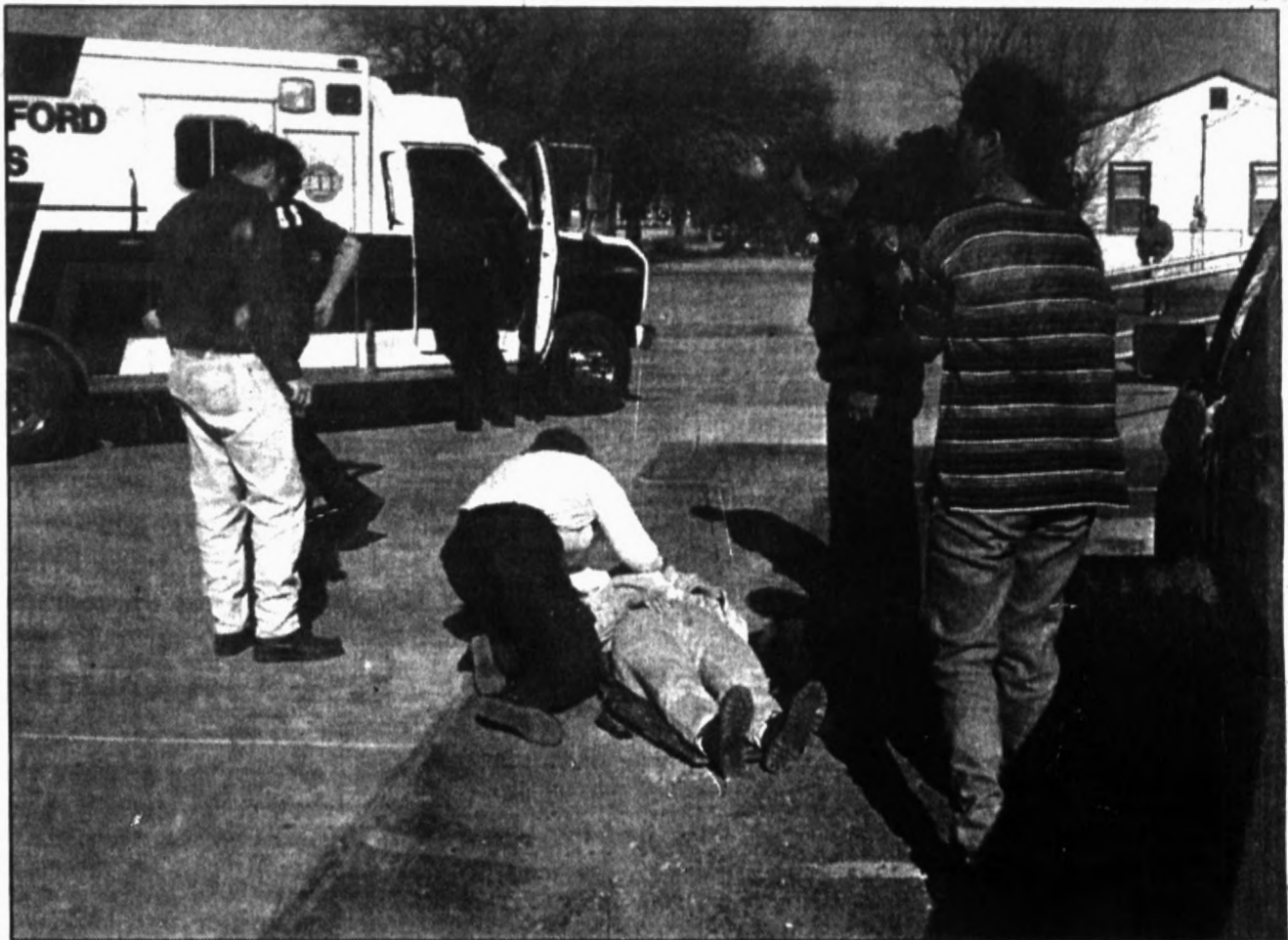
Whip Tom DeLay, Mrs. Hutchison and others have proposed a six-month freeze on any new regulations government-wide.

With the Endangered Species Act proposal, Mrs. Hutchison is fingering a topic that has been highly controversial in Texas. The Fish and Wildlife Service last year backed off an attempt to designate a critical habitat for the endangered golden-cheeked warbler in Central Texas after running into a buzzsaw of opposition.

Mrs. Hutchison took aim Wednesday at the Fish and Wildlife Service's latest dealings regarding the warbler and the proposed Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan.

The service is offering what it terms a streamlined conservation proposal for landowners in Travis County and nearby areas that are home to the warbler and other endangered or threatened species.

Instead of the current method requiring landowners to prepare intricate environmental impact and mitigation plans in advance of receiving permission to build, the service now is proposing a \$1,500 permit fee.



Accident scene

Rescue workers give emergency treatment to victims of a two-vehicle traffic accident that occurred just before noon Wednesday on Park Avenue just east of Avenue D. According to preliminary reports, a 1992 Mitsubishi pickup driven by Yesenia T. Castillo, 23, of Amarillo, and a 1993 Nissan 240SX driven by Miguel A. Mata, 21, of Hereford, collided as one of the vehicles attempted to make a turn in the westbound lane of Park Avenue. The two drivers, plus Ismael Castillo, 5, a passenger in the pickup, were transported to Hereford Regional Medical Center, where they were treated and released. Another passenger in the pickup, Sara Castillo, 2, was uninjured. A police investigation into the incident is continuing.

Sugarbeet meeting Friday, banquet set for Saturday

The sugarbeet industry in Hereford and the area takes the spotlight Friday and Saturday with the annual business meeting of the Texas-New Mexico Sugar Beet Growers Association being held tomorrow and the annual banquet following on Saturday.

The annual meeting begins at 9:30 a.m. Friday in Hereford Community Center, and a free lunch will be served. Speakers include Craig Anderson, American Sugarbeet Growers president; Roger Hill, president and CEO of Holly Sugar Corp., and Bill Cleavinger, T-NM association president.

The banquet is set in the Bull Barn beginning at 7 p.m. Saturday. Guest speaker at the event will be Joe Griffith of Dallas, motivational speaker, author and actor, who uses a combination of humor and anecdotes to entertain his audiences. "The Man of the Year in Agriculture" award will also be presented.

Cleavinger said all current growers, farmers interested in future beet production, and other interested persons are invited to the business meeting Friday. Anderson, a grower from Longmont, Col., will address the many challenges facing the national sweetener industry.

Hill will provide hard facts on the future of beet production here. He is expected to discuss the company's continued commitment to the regional industry and its goal of increasing acre numbers substantially in 1995.

Cleavinger will review the direction ASGA is taking to better educate government leaders and the general public. "With the big change in faces in Congress, our efforts will be as important as ever," said Cleavinger.

Leading growers for the year will be recognized by Dennis Printz, Holly ag manager, at both the business meeting and banquet. A mini-trade show featuring

seed companies, ag equipment and other businesses which serve the area industry, will be held in conjunction with the meeting.

As in past years, beet research funded by the grower checkoff program will be discussed. Dr. Charlie Rush and Dr. Steve Winter, along with other Texas Ag Experiment Station plant and soil scientists will provide information that can benefit growers.

The Ag Man of the Year Award, sponsored by *The Hereford Brand*, will be presented at the banquet for the 18th time. The honoree is selected by a committee of past award winners and goes to someone "for outstanding leadership in the agri-business industry and for other contributions to community."

Kenneth Frye was the award winner last year. Other recipients, back through the years: S.L. Garrison, Dick Fellers, Bill Walden, George Warner, John Fuston, Raymond Schlabs, Nick Yosten, F.L. Eicke, the Brorman Brothers, Jerry Roberts, Carl Strafuss, Bill Cleavinger, Donald Hicks, Carl Klouskens, Jim Perrin, and Charles Schlabs.

Griffith may look familiar to the banquet audience Saturday night. As an actor, he has appeared in more than 200 television commercials for such companies as Holiday Inn, McDonald's, and Dayton Tire.

Griffith draws on his experiences as a stockbroker, real estate developer, commercial pilot, and TV newscaster for many of his humorous stories. He subscribes to the theory that "laughter is the best medicine."

He has written several books. His latest, *Speaker's Library of Business Stories, Anecdotes & Humor*, published by Prentice-Hall, is a collection of motivational stories for business speakers.

HISD board retains firm for Shirley School renovations

By GARRY WESNER
Managing Editor

For more than a year, Hereford ISD trustees have discussed what they could do with the aging, porous roof over Shirley School and how to upgrade the existing air conditioning at the same time.

Trustees probed such things as a standing seam metal roof, modified bitumen roofing, roof penetrations, a water chiller-type system and roof-top units.

Bids were sought last year for a general contractor to oversee the work, but those bids came in at about \$1.2 million, well over the \$950,000 the district had anticipated spending.

In the end, they voted Tuesday to pursue a contract with Quicksilver Co. of Lubbock, a construction management firm that was one of two that made presentations before the board last month.

Quicksilver representatives presented a proposal at the Dec. 20 meeting that included options that would reduce the estimated cost of the project to about \$500,000.

At a special meeting Tuesday in the Shirley School library, Superintendent Charles W. Greenawalt called for a decision on what to do, saying that further delays would jeopardize

the district's chances to begin the project in June after school is over.

In his motion to have Quicksilver manage the Shirley project, trustee Ron Weishaar included a condition that the project be done with a modified bitumen roof and roof-top heating/air conditioning units.

The motion -- which was approved on a 5-0-1 vote with Trustee Joe Flood abstaining and Trustee Raul Valdez absent -- called for Quicksilver to develop plans for the project and present them to the board for approval.

Greenawalt said the action to hire Quicksilver means the district will no longer need the services of architect Larry Harvey for this project.

HISD has already paid Harvey, a Lubbock architect, \$64,000 for design work, handing bids and other work on the project.

The decision also means, he said, that the district will act as its own general contractor for the job, and Quicksilver will provide a manager to oversee the work and deal with school officials throughout the work.

Quicksilver also will bid each job -- electrical, roofing, and others -- individually rather than as a complete project.

Henry King of Quicksilver gave a written proposal to trustees last month, including rough estimates for the project.

He recommended replacing exterior doors and windows at Shirley with energy efficient ones at the same time as the roofing and air condition-

ing project is going on. That, he said, would reduce energy costs and make the building look more attractive.

Preliminary costs based on examinations prior to the December meeting showed Quicksilver would be able to do the job for about \$448,000, including a \$21,000 construction management fee.

Greenawalt said he recommended Quicksilver because of the cost, which would be about \$400,000-\$500,000 less than anticipated, freeing budgeted funds for other construction work.

Two projects on the back burner for next year are improvements to the heating/air conditioning systems at Tierra Blanca and West Central Schools.

Those two campuses were built on an "open" concept, but walls built later to enclose classrooms have disrupted heating ducts, creating inefficient systems that are costly to operate.

Trustees on Tuesday turned aside a request from Flood to consider another construction management firm, this one based in Amarillo, whose architect told Flood he could install a geothermal heating/air conditioning system for about \$950,000.

Greenawalt said opening discussion up to one more company would have opened the door to many other management firms interested in the job, further delaying action.

All trustees were at the meeting but Valdez, who was unable to attend.

Senate starts work on unfunded mandate bill

By JIM ABRAMS
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - Fresh from passing its first bill of the new session, the Senate is ready to consider whether the federal government can force states to participate in expensive programs without giving them the money.

Debate on the so-called unfunded mandates, which many governors and mayors claim are breaking their budgets, was on today's calendar.

On Wednesday, the Senate cleared its first bill, overwhelmingly approving a measure requiring members of Congress to obey the same workplace laws they impose on private businesses.

The debate starting today is likely to be more contentious.

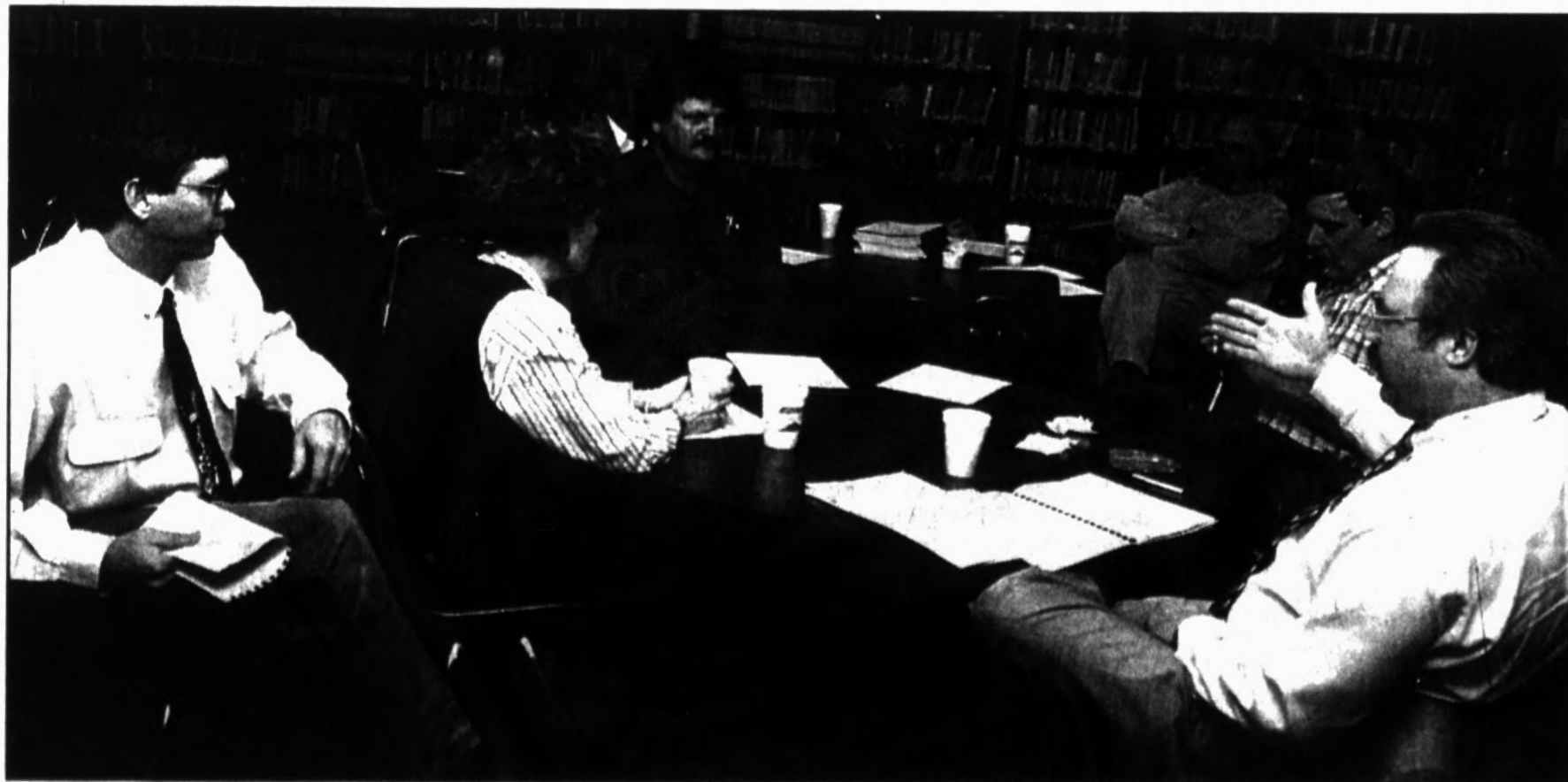
State officials have urged Congress' new Republican majority to take up this issue before tackling a constitutional amendment to

balance the budget. Without this bill, they fear even more spending will be shifted to the states as Congress struggles to reduce the federal deficit.

Many Democrats support the idea of ending unfunded mandates but object to the Republican plan to rush the bill to a vote without holding hearings.

Rep. Martin Olav Sabo, D-Minn., the ranking Democrat on the House Budget Committee, wrote Rep. John Kasich, R-Ohio, the panel's chairman, on Wednesday to urge more debate on the bill.

The measure requires Congress to provide funding for future programs imposed on state or local jurisdictions that cost more than \$50 million. Exempt are provisions involving civil and constitutional rights, national security or treaty obligations, emergencies and voluntary programs.



School board at work

Members of the HISD board of Trustees on Wednesday met in the library of Shirley Intermediate School to discuss the roof on the building. Shown taking part in the debate on the facility are, from left, Trustee Mike Veazey; assistant superintendent Nena Veazey; Trustee Joe Flood; assistant superintendent Don

Cumpton; Trustee Ron Weishaar; Trustee Randy Tooley; and Board President Steve Wright. Also present at the meeting but not pictured were Superintendent Charles W. Greenawalt and Trustee Jim Marsh. Trustee Raul Valdez was out of town and unable to attend the session.

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Sports

Niners transforming into trash-talking team

By DAVE GOLDBERG
AP Football Writer
SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Suddenly the San Francisco 49ers are itching to talk back to the Dallas Cowboys.

Just call it a personality transplant, courtesy of Florida State University.

As Michael Irvin guarantees a Dallas win and Cowboys defensive back James Washington says that Steve Young had better beware of his health when the two teams meet Sunday in the NFC title game, back comes this retort from William Floyd, the rookie 49ers fullback.

"That," says Floyd, "is a sign of an insecure team."

Floyd is one of four 49ers from Florida State, a school where trash talking is an art. Four Cowboys played at Miami, including Irvin, and

two more at Florida, so this can be viewed, perhaps, as an intra-Florida rivalry.

In fact, the give and take preceding this third straight NFC title game between Dallas and San Francisco reflects as much the change in the 49ers as it does in the Cowboys, who won 30-20 and 38-21 the last two years before going on to beat Buffalo in the Super Bowl.

"I'd say it's actually mutual respect," says San Francisco linebacker Ken Norton, who should know - he played with the Cowboys for six years before signing as a free agent with the 49ers.

"In a game like this, when everything is on the line, there's just a lot of emotion."

Dallas always had that emotion,

the Miami approach brought by Jimmy Johnson and reflected in the number of Cowboys he had from Miami or Florida, who thrive on "in your face" football.

San Francisco, on the other hand, in the past reflected the laid-back atmosphere of the Bay Area. In fact, you could say that it was Joe Montana, "Joe Cool," who made it clear to younger players that flamboyance wasn't part of the 49ers tradition.

That's different now, particularly since San Francisco has four guys from Florida State (Floyd, Deion Sanders, Dexter Carter and Dedrick Dodge) to counter the Miami-Florida bent of the Cowboys.

So when Steve Young, Montana's successor, was decked in the end zone

by Chicago's Shaun Gayle in San Francisco's 44-15 win over Chicago last Saturday, the entire offense came to his rescue, led by Jerry Rice, the epitome of 49er cool.

Floyd and Ricky Watters, chewed out earlier in the season by coach George Seifert after post-touchdown end zone demonstrations, are now more or less free to do their thing (a phrase coined in the San Francisco of the 1960s).

Also credit the arrival of Sanders this season.

Sanders brought overwhelming talent and considerable baggage. In fact, when he was signed, the 49ers' biggest concern wasn't the money but the fact that he brought a trash-talking persona ("This is MY House," he said after his successful return to

Atlanta) and an entourage worthy of a heavyweight boxer with him.

But this week, it's been Dallas that's been doing the talking.

Even before the Cowboys beat Green Bay 35-9 last week, Irvin was predicting they'd become the first team to win three straight Super Bowls.

And Washington, who could easily have been the MVP in last year's Super Bowl, took note of the fact that Young ran for 60 yards in the 49ers' 21-14 regular-season win over Dallas

at Candlestick, most of it on bootlegs.

"The last time we treated him like a quarterback," Washington said. "This time we'll treat him like a running back. If he doesn't slide when he's supposed to, he's going to get connected."

The old 49ers would have said nothing, preferring to go back into the training room for a lunch spread of bris and wine.

The new 49ers?

"Hey, I don't mind," Young said. "That's football."

Cowboys' Smith plans to play

By DENNE H. FREEMAN
AP Sports Writer
IRVING, Texas (AP) — Emmitt Smith says he is willing to take any risk to help the Dallas Cowboys win the NFC title game, even if it means doing more damage to his hamstring.

Smith said Wednesday that he won't be bothered by conditions at soggy Candlestick Park in San Francisco because he will be mentally geared to handle anything.

"I'm not concerned about the field conditions," Smith said. "I'll be mentally prepared for anything. I'm just going to wrap my left hamstring tight and be out there as long as I can be effective."

Smith jogged lightly Wednesday and said he would turn it loose against the 49ers despite the

possibility of making the injury worse.

"This is a risk I have to take," Smith said as he stood on a bench in the middle of the dressing room with electrodes dangling off his hamstring.

"I'll risk the damage."

Smith said dealing with a hamstring pull is totally different than playing with the pain of a separated shoulder as he did in the 16-13 overtime victory over the New York Giants in the final regular-season game of the 1993 season.

"You can deal with the pain in the shoulder, but the hamstring is your power muscle," Smith said. "I felt totally helpless out there (against) Green Bay on Sunday. It's hard to go on one good leg and one bad leg."

Smith first pulled the hamstring on Nov. 19. After three weeks rest, he played most of one quarter before leaving after feeling a "twinge" during the Cowboys' 35-9 playoff victory Sunday over the Packers.

Earlier in the season, Smith had troubles with his right hamstring.

"I don't know how close to 100 percent I'll be, but I'll go as long as I can," he said.

"This is mind over matter and it will be a challenge. I just hope I'm a 'running back' out there. The difference between a 'running back' and a 'back' is a lot. I have to be able to duck and dodge like a running back. If not, I'm out on a limb."

Smith said the mud might help him. Ground crews have been working hard on trying to dry out the Candlestick Park field. However, Smith knows that when the tide comes in, the field gets slick anyway.

"In the past, I have run well in poor conditions," Smith said.

Asked if the Cowboys could win without him, Smith said, "The team will have to find a way, to win no matter what."

Free agent Blair Thomas will play when Smith can't.

Bowling

Monday Night Mixed

Team	W	L
Juanita's Express Burrito	46.5	25.5
Mixed Up	41.5	26.5
Allied Millwrights	40.5	31.5
Bryan's Sprinkler Service	35.5	36.5
Cheeto Bandits	33.5	30.5
Marisa's	33.5	38.5
7 Pin	31	41
Have Shoes Will Run	16	48

High game, women: Glenda Minson, 211; April Hudson, 197; Sandi Blevins, 194.

High series, women: Betty Taylor, 526; Minson, 501; Hudson, 458.

High game, men: Shawn Minson, 210; Tracy Minson, 207; Steve Brock, 189.

High series, men: S. Minson, 538; T. Minson, 537; Brock, 513.

Chargers prepared for blue-collar battle

By BARRY WILNER
AP Football Writer
PITTSBURGH (AP) — The San Diego Chargers expect to fit right in at Three Rivers Stadium. The way they're talking, they could swap spots with the Pittsburgh Steelers and feel right at home.

"I think we understand our personality," Chargers coach Bobby Ross said Wednesday. "We're a blue-collar type of football team. We don't have a lot of first-round draft choices, only one on our offense, and that's a 15-year veteran (tackle Stan Brock) we got from somebody else."

"We've been a team that is very good at focusing and getting ourselves prepared to play."

The Chargers must prepare for playing in the AFC championship game Sunday in the most hostile of environments. The Terrible Towels will be waving, the noise will reach a crescendo before kickoff - and build from there - and the opponent will have the best rushing game and the second-most stingy defense in the league.

Not exactly a day at Coronado Beach for the guys from Southern California.

But the Chargers don't seem concerned that, even as a blue-collar team, they are headed to blue collar central.

"We've been sticking together, fighting through things all year," said Natrone Means, San Diego's 245-pound battering ram with speed out of the backfield. "If we can fight through one more game, we'll get another week off and then see if we can't do a little something in Miami."

Ah, Miami. Joe Robbie Stadium. Jan. 29. The Super Bowl.

But first, as every player on both teams constantly will remind you, there is the matter of qualifying for the big game. And the road through Pittsburgh is about the most difficult the Chargers could have found.

"It's disturbing to come in here and play, with the noise and how loud it gets," Steelers safety Carnell Lake said. "It's hard to concentrate. The fans have a lot of fun with their towel-waving and the people screaming. It's incredible to see Pittsburgh really get this charged up."

Charged up? Lake smiled at his choice of verbs.

"This is a football town used to winning," he said. "We're just trying to give it to them."

The Steelers wouldn't mind giving the Chargers a nice dose of winter, too. But that doesn't appear likely, with a forecast for Sunday calling for temperatures in the 40s.

"Obviously, we're used to it and we should have an advantage," guard Duval Love said. "But this is to go to the Super Bowl. That shouldn't affect them."

Some of the Steelers also would like to remind the Chargers that it was the second string that carried the load in the season-finale, a 37-34 loss at San Diego.

"The people we had out were very, very important to our team," All-Pro linebacker Kevin Greene said of fellow All-Pro Greg Lloyd and Rod Woodson, tight end Eric Green and fullback John L. Williams, none of whom played in that game. "They are the type of people who can change the outlook of a game."

Their absence three weeks ago - and their certain presence on Sunday - has not changed the Chargers' approach, Ross insisted.

"I told our squad to be up front about Pittsburgh playing us here in December without four key players," he said Wednesday from San Diego, where the Chargers were forced to alter their practice schedule to deal with the storms hitting the West Coast. "But I also told them that we don't have to apologize for winning under those circumstances."

Seahawks to hire Erickson

SEATTLE (AP) — Dennis Erickson made his name coaching the Miami Hurricanes. Now he hopes to earn NFL coaching fame with the Seattle Seahawks.

Erickson, who led the Hurricanes to two national championships and a 63-9 record from 1989 through 1994, was to be introduced today in Palo Alto, Calif., as the Seahawks' new head coach.

In seven years as Seahawks majority owner, northern California land developer Ken Behring has had five losing seasons. Behring wants to see the Seahawks in the Super Bowl.

Erickson will coach the East in Saturday's East-West Shrine All-Star game at Palo Alto. Then he's coming back to his home state, and is

scheduled to appear Monday at the Seahawks headquarters in suburban Kirkland.

Erickson inherits one of the NFL's young quarterback prospects in Rick Mirer, the second player picked in the 1993 draft. Mirer should flourish under the offensive-minded Erickson.

Erickson, 47, coached underdog Washington State to a 9-3 record and into the Aloha Bowl in 1988, beating Houston 24-22 in Hawaii. He was the Pacific-10 Conference's co-coach of the Year in a year when Timm Rosenbach was the nation's passing efficiency leader.

In Miami, he coached 14 All-Americans. Defensive tackle Warren Sapp was this season's Hurricanes star, and Sapp may be the first player chosen in April's draft.

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Too recent to photograph!

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'94 Ranger
11K Miles 10,995, 99DN+TT&L 14.25 APR. 72 mo.

\$226 MO.

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Too recent to photograph!

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1-12 CRYPTOQUOTE
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FHTN QKA GXTLM NTJHMAXX-
HGWX TJ H EAHQQT I IKF.-
JKYAIX YLRKPL

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Public Notice of an Application to Merge

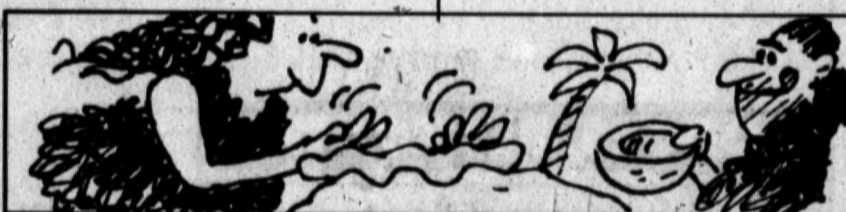
Notice is hereby given that application to merge has been made to the Comptroller of the Currency, Southwestern District, 1600 Lincoln Plaza, 500 North Akard Street, Dallas, Texas 75201-3394, by The First National Bank, Perryton, Texas. The First National Bank of Hereford, Hereford, Texas, Citizens Bank & Trust Co., Pampa, Texas, and First Bank-Southwest, Amarillo, Texas. It is contemplated that all offices of the above-named banks will continue to operate.

This notice is being published pursuant to 12 U.S.C.-1828(c) of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act and part 5 of the regulations of the Comptroller of the Currency. This notice will appear at approximately two-week intervals over a 30-day period beginning January 5, 1995, and ending February 5, 1995.

Any person desiring to comment on the application to purchase and assume may do so by submitting written comments within 30 days of the date of first publication of this notice to: Deputy Comptroller, Comptroller of the Currency, Southwestern District, 1600 Lincoln Plaza, 500 North Akard Street, Dallas, Texas 75201-3394. The public file is available for inspection at such district office during regular business hours.

January 12, 1995

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CATTLE FUTURES

Table with columns for month (Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec) and price ranges for various cattle types (e.g., CATTLE-FEEDER (COM) 500 lb., CATTLE-LIVE (COM) 600 lb.).

GRAIN FUTURES

Table with columns for month (Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec) and price ranges for various grains (e.g., CORN (CBT) 500 lb., SOYBEANS (CBT) 500 lb., WHEAT (CBT) 500 lb.).

METAL FUTURES

Table with columns for month (Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec) and price ranges for various metals (e.g., GOLD (COM), SILVER (COM), COPPER (COM), ALUMINUM (COM)).

FUTURES OPTIONS

Table with columns for month (Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec) and price ranges for various futures options (e.g., CATTLE-FEEDER (COM), CORN (CBT), SOYBEANS (CBT), WHEAT (CBT)).



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Invisible line separates dry from damp areas

COLLEGE STATION, Texas (AP) - Texas is returning to warmer temperatures and sunshine after last week's bout with cold weather, the Texas Agricultural Extension Service reports.

Dr. Michael Flynn, meteorologist at the National Weather Service Agricultural Service Center in College Station, said a weak high pressure area at the surface and at upper levels of the atmosphere has resulted in a welcome spell of warm weather for Texas following last week's arctic chill.

"A Pacific cold front will bring some cooling to the state late this week, but temperatures should remain above normal in most sections," Flynn said. "Scattered thunderstorms are expected in the east and south around Thursday with little rain expected in the west."

Dr. Billy Warrick, Extension agronomist in San Angelo, said even though West Texas received around three inches of snow last week, it melted quickly.

He said the melted snow did benefit producers by providing moisture needed for future planting.

However, not all parts of West Texas benefitted from the moisture, with producers west of San Angelo left with dry fields.

"The weather seems to have drawn an invisible line through San Angelo - everything east of the line continues to flourish while everything west stays extremely dry," he said.

Gary Bomar, Extension agent in Taylor County, added that many areas east of San Angelo may be receiving too much moisture. Several producers around Abilene reported eight inches of snow last week.

"What was unusual was that all the snow melted within two days," Bomar said. "The result has been saturated fields and these are really limiting what producers in the area can do."

Bomar said he hopes they will get a dry spell soon so the fields can dry up and producers can finish harvesting and continue planting.

Randy Upshaw, district Extension director in Dallas, said ranchers in the area also are hoping for some dry weather to combat the soaked fields.

"Cattle are getting stuck in the muddy fields," Upshaw said. "And

with grazing nearly impossible, producers are having to pay more money to supplementally feed their livestock."

Many beef producers have been forced to "double up" on feeding for cattle due to the conditions, he added.

Parts of Southwest Texas continue to benefit from clear skies and sunshine as many producers prepare for spring planting.

Jose Pena, Extension economist in Uvalde, said the crop outlook at this time is excellent and the soil profile appears to be right on track.

However, Pena said any more moisture could hurt farmers by fueling what could end up being a pest or disease problem.

"Farmers remain concerned about the potential spring insect infestations because of the mild winter," he said. "Many vegetable farmers also are reporting above average incidence of disease problems as a result of the high humidity and warm temperatures."

Flynn said the latest six to 10 day outlook calls for above normal temperatures continuing through the early to middle part of next week. At this time, a spell of wet weather may

occur in the north and east.

The following specific livestock, crop and weather conditions were reported by district Extension directors:

PANHANDLE: Soil moisture short. Pastures, ranges in fair to good condition. Lack of moisture, cold temperatures slowing wheat growth. Preparing land for spring planting. Supplemental feeding for cattle continues.

SOUTH PLAINS: Soil moisture very short to short. Pastures, ranges need moisture. Cotton harvest, ginning near completion; applying fertilizer. Wheat stressed from lack of moisture. Cattle in good condition.

ROLLING PLAINS: Soil moisture short to adequate. Pastures, ranges need moisture. Cotton harvest near completion. Wheat progressing; cool temperatures slowing growth. Cattle in good condition; supplemental feeding continues.

NORTH TEXAS: Soil moisture surplus to adequate. Pastures, ranges in fair condition. Harvesting peanuts, pecans. Wheat, oats progressing; stressing from excess moisture. Cattle in fair to good condition.

EAST TEXAS: Soil moisture surplus. Pastures, ranges in fair to good condition. Preparing fields for spring planting. Pecan harvest complete. Cattle in good condition; supplemental feeding continues.

FAR WEST TEXAS: Soil moisture very short to adequate. Pastures, ranges in fair to good condition. Wet conditions slowing field activities. Cutting, baling alfalfa hay. Pecan harvest complete.

WEST CENTRAL TEXAS: Soil moisture short to surplus. Pastures, ranges benefiting from moisture. Wheat progressing; stands good. Cool temperatures slowing small grain growth. Pecan harvest almost complete.

Cattle in good condition.

CENTRAL TEXAS: Soil moisture surplus. Pastures, ranges in fair to good condition. Harvesting pecans, winter grasses providing good grazing; spraying fields for pests. Cattle in fair condition.

SOUTHEAST TEXAS: Soil moisture adequate to surplus. Wet conditions damaging pastures, ranges. Vegetables stressed from excess moisture. Limited grazing for cattle; supplemental feeding continues.

SOUTHWEST TEXAS: Soil moisture surplus to adequate. Pastures, ranges improving with moisture. Harvesting cabbage, spinach, southern greens, potatoes. Preparing land for spring planting. Livestock in good condition.

COASTAL BEND: Soil moisture surplus to adequate. Pastures, ranges in good condition. Winter grasses progressing. Preparing land for spring planting. Excess moisture damaging oats. Cattle in fair condition.

SOUTH TEXAS: Soil moisture short to adequate. Pastures, ranges in fair to good condition. Harvesting vegetables, citrus, sugarcane. Rain slowing field activities. Livestock in good condition.

EPA maverick disagrees with project spreading New York sludge in Texas

By VIC KOLENC
El Paso Herald-Post

EL PASO, Texas - Sierra Blanca can do for sewage-sludge management what Love Canal did years ago for changing hazardous-waste disposal practices. That's the view of Hugh Kaufman, a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency official in Washington.

Kaufman, 52, is known as the EPA's gadfly who often takes positions against the agency's official line. He's best known as the man who blew the whistle on wrongdoing by top EPA officials in the first years of the Reagan administration.

That battle resulted in Kaufman filing harassment complaints against the EPA and getting a legal settlement that makes him "a thoroughly protected whistle-blower," said Dave Cohen, an agency spokesman in Washington. "He operates under his own portfolio."

Now, Kaufman is tackling a New York enterprise's sludge-spreading project near Sierra Blanca, about 90 miles east of El Paso.

The EPA's regional office in Dallas sees no problems with the project. And the project operates with authority granted by the Texas Natural Resource Conservation

Commission. But Kaufman, an engineer and assistant to the director of the EPA's Hazardous Site Control Division in Washington, sees it as bad for the environment and bad for the health of Sierra Blanca residents.

"The issues are very much the same (as Love Canal). Instead of industrial hazardous waste, it's sewage sludge," Kaufman said during a recent telephone interview. "The Sierra Blanca case will definitely change the way sewage sludge is managed."

Kaufman has worked for the EPA since its inception in 1971. He's had his hand in some big environmental battles. In the late '70s he helped expose the EPA's lack of action at several hazardous-waste sites, including Love Canal, the neighborhood in Niagara Falls, N.Y., where a chemical-waste dump had leaked for years.

But his biggest claim to fame is blowing the whistle in the early '80s on wrongdoing in the EPA's hazardous-waste cleanup program. EPA Administrator Anne Burford and several top deputies appointed by President Reagan were forced to resign or were fired. One deputy administrator was sent to jail for lying to Congress.

"If he sees something wrong, he'll try to bring it to the public through Congress or the press.... He's sort of a rebel within the agency," said Lois Gibbs, founder and executive director of the Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste in Falls Church, Va.

She first heard of Kaufman when she was the leader of a neighborhood group in Love Canal. Kaufman's outspokenness on the sludge project has landed him in a libel lawsuit filed in December by three New York companies that make up MERCO Joint Venture.

MERCO, with state and federal authorization, has been spreading thousands of tons of New York City sludge on its Sierra Blanca ranch since July 1992. In the lawsuit, the New York companies maintain that Kaufman libeled them by saying "false and defamatory" things about MERCO and its sludge-spreading project during a nationally televised news show last summer.

Kaufman labels the lawsuit "frivolous" and continues to fire shots at MERCO and the EPA's handling of sewage-sludge reuse projects.

"Basically, the way the EPA regulates sludge management is the way EPA managed hazardous waste 20 years ago," Kaufman said. "It's the same as the '70s, when we were dealing with hazardous wastes. It's deja vu here."

Kaufman is again stepping away from the EPA mainstream. The agency favors reusing sewage sludge and has guidelines on how to manage sewage-spreading projects on farms and other lands. Kaufman said the guidelines aren't based on health effects of such projects.

Kaufman is also going against the EPA regional office in Dallas. The office in 1992 concluded the MERCO

sludge project posed no health or environmental problems and said MERCO did not need a federal permit to operate it. MERCO is required to meet certain state requirements under a sludge registration it received in 1992 from the Texas Water Commission, now known as the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission.

Kaufman said he initiated an investigation of the MERCO project several months ago because of Sierra Blanca residents' concerns. He's looking at whether the MERCO project could be classified as a Superfund site, which would mean it's hazardous and would have to be cleaned up.

But Kaufman's boss and EPA spokesmen said they know nothing about such an investigation. "He may be investigating on his own time as a private citizen, but it's not an assignment he got from me or my deputy," said David Bennett, acting director of the EPA Hazardous Site Control Division.

Kaufman gets involved in environmental battles as a private citizen. But, he said, in this case he's speaking in his capacity as an EPA official. He said he doesn't need permission from his boss to investigate. "It's part of my duties as a government official," he said.

He compares his job to that of a beat policeman who comes across an incident. "You don't walk away from it and ask your boss for permission, because by the time you get it, it (the incident) is gone."

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