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- 2. Via modem, contact 1-202-547-0061 or 1-702-323-6608.
- 3. Set your modem to E-7-1-N. When the modem responds, type: Compuserve.
- 4. Type 77770,101 for account number.
- 5. Enter: FREE-DEMO at the password prompt. Browse around.

joining Compuserve and the Land Rights Network, you'll upgrade your ability to help compete with the extreme preservationists. You can have fun while making an impact and at the same time help to preserve your future.

Gardner File No. 39 -e-

# Willing Sellers Not Always Willing

Reciting the Great Lies has always been an easy way to get a laugh. Gags like, "The check's in the mail," and "Hi, I'm here from the government to help" always seem to carry the bite of sarcastic irony. Bo Thott of Cutler, Maine, member of the Washington County Alliance has added another to the list: "The federal government only buys land from willing sellers." (see related article, Page 21)

Thott, a 77-year old retired government employee thought he smelled a rat! when the USF&WS Moosehorn Refuge manager, Douglas Mullen, told the *New York Times* that the federal government only buys from "willing sellers." This was reinforced by George Frampton Jr., Assistant Sec. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and former president of the Wilderness Society. He wrote in the *Times* that those who say the government does otherwise are trying to "whip up hysteria."

But when Thott obtained from the National Park Service names of 1130 landowners who sold to the federal government in 1992, he found the facts did not support Frampton and Mullen. The Forest Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service refused to provide the names.

Here's just a sampling of what he found from the Park Service list:

**"We sold voluntarily, but we were told in the event we did not, it would ultimately be taken by eminent domain."**  
(NPS willing seller no. 281)

**"I was told the property would be taken anyway, if I did not sell."** (NPS willing seller no. 971)

**"They locked me out and said I had no legal access."**  
(NPS willing seller no. 181)

*Willing Seller Willing Buyer* is a must read. It is available from Bo Thott at Washington County Alliance, HCR 69, Box 336, Cutler, ME 04626-9602. Please include a self-addressed label and \$3.00 to cover postage and printing. Make checks payable to the Washington County Alliance.

from 1.9 million acres of the California Desert and three new National Parks. It would double the Valley National Monument and make it a Joshua Tree National Monument and create Mojave National Park. Most of the new park area is acres of Bureau of Land Management land designated Wilderness...or basically off limits. Tens of thousands of California jobs will be lost and mines and lost economic activity. More than 100 miles of dirt roads will be closed. Thousands of ranchers will lose their access. The entire ranching culture of more than 100 years will be wiped out. A laboriously-negotiated BLM management plan has never been implemented.

Language in the bill is considered threatening to anyone who gives some hope of a Senate filibuster. Access to tens of thousands of handicapped, children also makes the bill controversial. In many areas of the United States, the California Desert is so hot that a car becomes part of the transport system. Cutting off access and the use of the land for exploration virtually impossible. Hunting and fishing are severely impacted by this immense closure. If the bill is successful, bringing the game out is next to

jeopardizes the California Bighorn Sheep which has fought back from extinction by the installation of underground water reservoirs called guzzlers. The Park Service policy of not allowing guzzlers in their areas. The National Park has virtually no Big Horn Sheep to thrive on BLM lands next door.

Property and multiple-use groups have fought a hard battle since the election of Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer. The U.S. Senate made it an even more difficult fight. There is some hope. Senator Feinstein must run for re-election in 1994. The Desert Bill has been delayed and did not pass the Senate in 1993 so it will have to be considered again in 1994, placing it squarely in the path of Senator Feinstein's re-election campaign.

Senator Feinstein visited the Desert in the Fall and came away with her eyes wide open about the economic impacts and job losses due to the loss of ranching activity. That may have played a role in her vote on the bill.

There is hope if all land rights advocates work together in a coordinated effort. This is especially true throughout California with Senator Feinstein running for re-election. If bill opponents can make this a nationwide issue, it can be defeated.

3. Call other private property and multiple-use support groups in your state to urge their opposition to S 21.

4. Write letters to the editor opposing such a huge lockup.

**For more information:** Call the California Desert Coalition at (909) 684-6509, or the American Land Rights Association at (206) 687-3087.

## Fish and Wildlife Sued Over FOIA Denial

A refusal by the Interior Department to release names and addresses of former landowners who recently sold to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS) has prompted a suit in Federal Court scheduled to be heard in January. Bo Thott, of Cutler, Maine, requested the names in order to determine through an independent survey how many of the former landowners were "willing sellers", as the agency publicly claims they are. (see related article, page 23) In denying release of the names, the Interior Dept. says that disclosure would violate the privacy of the former landowners.

The government and preservationist groups claim that virtually all sales to federal agencies are voluntary, but Thott's recently completed survey of those who sold to the National Park Service (NPS) embarrassed the agency when it turned out that about a third said that they had no choice because of the threat of eminent domain. Others said they were underpaid and were discouraged from challenging the agency by officials who said they would waste their money suing in court.

None of the respondents complained that Thott's NPS survey violated their privacy, as Interior suggests, but several wrote comments expressing their bitterness towards the government's intrusion.

The NPS survey results, reported in *Forbes* magazine, imply that virtually all who sold—even those who said they were willing sellers—would not have, had they had the choice to keep their land or sell privately.

Since the government defines landowners who sell under the threat of condemnation but do not go through court condemnation proceedings as "willing sellers", Thott is seeking to discover through an independent survey if former landowners were treated any better by the USF&W than by the NPS. Results similar to the NPS Survey would be a major setback to USF&WS publicity.