MISSION
The Center for the Rocky Mountain West is a resource for a region which its people care deeply about—a resource they can use to better understand the region’s past and present and to explore aspirations for its future.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES
Objectivity in research and inquiry can best be pursued by fully revealing the major values underlying such work. The work of the Center rests upon several fundamental propositions regarding the Rocky Mountain West:

- The belief that there is something unique about this mountainous region, which deserves careful study and attention. The people who live here see the Rocky Mountain West as a place unlike any other, a place they care deeply about, a place that often seems fragile and threatened and in need of special care.

- The belief that we are at a point in the region’s history when it is particularly appropriate to develop a regional awareness and regional capacity to assist in charting new directions, increased immigration coinciding with fundamental restructuring of the region’s economy, decentralization and other changes in governing structures, and the growing influence of globalization and centralism, all call for more rigorous study and discussion of the region’s history and the change it is experiencing.

- The belief that the region’s “first” people—its many tribal peoples—must be partners and contributors in helping to articulate and design the region’s future.

- The belief that understanding the region’s heritage and cultural diversity is essential to its advancement. That understanding the past is imperative to visualizing the future.

- The belief that interaction and exchange across the U.S.-Canada border should be expanded to create new ways of thinking about the shared region and its future.

- The belief that the region’s advancement depends upon expanding its capacity for both understanding and imagining future choices and alternatives and for being able to work across sometimes great ideological divides.

- An optimistic belief in the future of the Rocky Mountain West.

DIRECTOR’S WELCOME
I have been a busy and productive year for the Center, punctuated by a very sharp note of sadness because of Carroll O’Connor’s passing at the beginning of the summer. Please see the memoir section of this report to get a sense of Carroll’s commitment to both the Center and the University on a whole. It is because of the faith that Carroll and his wife Nancy and many other donors have had in the work of the Center that we’ve been able to make the progress described in the rest of this report. We are grateful for that support in all its forms, and we are most especially and lastingly grateful to Carroll and Nancy.

The vision to which all of our supporters have subscribed has been that of a regional center, based at The University of Montana, but reaching out to study and serve the entire Rocky Mountain West. As this report illustrates, during this last year the Center has carried that work in the region more effectively than ever before.

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the Center’s work, our reach into the region looks both forward and back. We remain convinced that understanding the region’s past is fundamental to shaping its future. Accordingly, the Center has helped sponsor Professor Gary E. Moulton, one of the country’s preeminent Lewis and Clark scholars, in teaching two history classes at the University during fall semester, 2001. Professor Moulton has given students and the larger community the opportunity to explore the history of Lewis and Clark’s journey as it intersects the Bitterroot area. The Center also helped publish a wide-ranging anthology, Forty Years After The Big Sky—co-edited by William Farr, Associate Director for Humanities and Culture at the Center—which examines the life and legacy of A.B. Catleague, Jr.

I am grateful for the assistance the Center provided me in writing and publishing my own book, This Sovereign Land: A New Vision for Governing the West. In this and other ways, the Center has steadily become more involved in ongoing discussions about western public land and natural resource issues. Pat Williams contributes regularly to these and other regional dialogues by continuing to write a regular column for the region’s newspapers, providing frequent commentaries on Montana Public Radio, and hosting a statewide humanities program on public radio.

Our public policy work is closely tied to our work on regional economic issues. Larry Swanson’s ongoing work in assessing the changing economies of areas near Forest Service lands in the West has been used extensively, while the Center’s Regional Economics Assessment Database (READ) has been adapted to the needs of resource conservation and development districts and regional economic development organizations across Montana.

The Center’s service to the region is only possible because of the dedication of an outstanding staff, a committed Advisory Board, generous donors, and a strong institutional base at the University of Montana. With all of these forms of help, we are privileged to do the work described in this report.

—Daniel Kemenis
Director

...a region people care deeply about...
TRIP TO CALGARY... CANADIAN LECTURE SERIES

In March of 2003, the Center's senior staff—Daniel Kemmis, William Farr, Larry Swanson, and Pat Williams—travelled to Calgary. Alberta to discuss the potential for cooperation and collaboration between the Center and the University of Montana, the University of Calgary, Robert Frazer, UMI's director of Development, also made the trip and attended several meetings with key University of Calgary administrators.

During the two-day visit, the Center group was hosted at dinner by the Calgary Civic Trust, a nonprofit organization of key Calgary citizens, that promotes efforts to sensitively plan for Calgary's growth and change. Center staff visited UCalgary's campus, touring the work and future plans of the Center, and exploring areas for possible collaboration. They attended a session of UCalgary's Western Caucus, an interdisciplinary group of faculty with common issues in western Canadian issues.

The Center was asked by representatives of both UCalgary and the Civic Trust to help plan and co-sponsor a conference that would pull together key decision makers from the major cities of the entire Rocky Mountain West region of the U.S. and Canada. The conference, tentatively entitled 'Cities of the Rockies,' would examine the rapid growth and change occurring among the region's largest metropolitan centers and other emerging cities, explore common problems and opportunities associated with this change, and provide a forum for city officials from the region to share experiences. The conference would be held in Calgary in 2003.

The Center is also establishing a Canadian Lecture Series beginning in 2002, bringing regional scholars and researchers from both the University of Calgary and throughout Alberta to The University of Montana to share their work and scholarship.

PUBLICATIONS

In the last year, Center faculty have contributed to a variety of publications and print media. Daniel Kemmis published pieces in two anthologies: "Wolves as Biodiverse Savannas" in Wolves in Human Communities: Ecology, Politics, and Ethics, Island Press 2001; and the Forward to Across the Great Divide: Explanations in Collaborative Conservation of the American West, Island Press 2001.

William Farr published an article in the Summer 2003 issue of Montana: The Magazine of Western History, entitled "Ducks, Seyler: Painting the Blackfeet, Painting Glacier Park, 1913-1914." The Great Plains Literature Project also published Farr's article "When We Were First Past: The Blackfeet Treaty, the Western Tribes, and the Creation of the Common Hunting Ground, 1855" in the Spring 2003 issue.

...to better understand what they value most...
HUMANKINDS AND CULTURE

Humboldtians of the unknown land share with the challenge of integrating the culture they have
inherited with opportunities for the future. Through public conversation—a lecture, symposium,
exhibit, publication, and scholarly research—the Center’s Humanities and Culture programs,
hosted by Center Associate Director William Farr, celebrates the region’s arts culture.

CENTER AWARDS ANNUAL
RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS TO UM FACULTY

The recipients for the 2001 O’Connor Center for the Rocky Mountain West Summer Faculty Research Fellowship Program are Deirdre McNamara, associate professor of creative writing, and Richard N. Barrett, professor of economics. The fellowships, $2,500 each, are designed for full-time faculty members to pursue regional research focused on the humanities, arts, Native American studies, or other topics within the various professional schools. This year’s awards represent the third set of annual summer research fellowships.

Professor Barrett’s research will assess the impact of tribal casinos on local economies in which they operate in the Rocky Mountain region. Economic conditions on reservations within the Rocky Mountain West are among the very worst in the nation, and gambling enterprises have been widely represented as the “last, best chance” for the development of reservation economies. According to Barrett, “Policy makers and the public in the Rocky Mountain West need to assess whether and how tribal casinos can promote development in the region’s particular context.”

Author Deirdre McNamara plans to use the fellowship to research on a book, the locus of which is the Rocky Mountain Front and north-central Montana, specifically the area in which two Davidlaskie brothers mined silver. This is also the site of some of the pivotal developments of the Lewis and Clark expedition, including a confrontation with a party of Blackfeet on the Two Medicine in 1806. Additionally, she has received some of the largest amounts of nuclear fallout from atomic tests in Nevada during the 1950s. “The region is, then, an important setting in which to explore the complicated relationship between the federal government and ordinary Montanans,” says McNamara.

A screening committee selected the two recipients from competitive faculty submissions based upon their written proposals. The proposals outlined the objectives and proposed research projects and how they will be carried out, and also explained the regional significance of the research for the Rocky Mountain West. The awardees will present public lectures sponsored by the Center.

FIFTY YEARS AFTER
THE BIG SKY
NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE
Fiction and Films
AAB Guthrie, Jr.

A wide-ranging anthology, Fifty Years After The Big Sky—a collection by William Farr, Associate Director for Humanities and Culture at the Center, and Bill Reiff at the University of Montana’s English Department—examines the life and legacy of A.B. Guthrie, Jr., a much-loved, much-read, but understudied writer, best known for his novels, The Big Sky (1947) and The Way West (1949), and for the screen play for the movie classic Shane (1953). Guthrie was a central figure in shaping the seminal myths of the Rocky Mountain West—myths that are still with us today.

In Fifty Years After The Big Sky, published by Montana Historical Society Press, writers including Center staff William Farr, Daniel Kemmis, Pat Williams, historians, and public intellectuals remember and celebrate this powerful author, while challenging readers to reassess his work and its influence on American culture—especially with regard to Native Americans, environmental politics, and the role of women. Eighteen essays examine Guthrie’s life and work from myriad perspectives: looking at his relationship with the media; investigating the Cold War’s influence on his work; remembering the man through the eyes of the people in his hometown of Choteau, Montana; and exploring how the myths that lie at the core of Guthrie’s fiction continue to haunt today’s Montanans.

While offering new material on both Guthrie’s life and work, Fifty Years After The Big Sky is also certain to cause readers to rethink the issue of change, their relationship to the western landscape, and to, once again, reassess the formidable power of literature.

PRESENTATIONS

In October of 2000, William Farr gave a presentation at the Western History Conference entitled “The Western Indians and Going to Buffalo.” Farr also spoke at the 2001 Region Institute Conference in Browning, Montana. His speech was entitled “Blackfeet and the Old North Trail.”

...the belief that there is something unique about the region which deserves study, care and attention...
The Center's New Humanities Radio Program

A statewide, monthly public radio program: "Speaking of That...", began airing in January of 2001. Hosted by Center Senior Fellow Pat Williams, the program has a "magazine of the air" format with a variety of "features" such as: humor, music, readings, and regional news from the Headwaters, a rundown of events from the Rocky Mountain and High Plains regions of the United States, and Canada drawn from the Center's News site. Past programs have featured: Montana's foremost Americans, Indians, Yesterday and Today; Chinese people in Montana and Moc; and Women in Elective Office.

"Speaking of That..." is funded by a $5,000 grant from the Montana Committee for the Humanities and is broadcast across Montana and parts of Idaho and Wyoming by the Center and Montana and Yellowstone Public Radio.

NEPA Pilot Project

An important part of the Center's mission is to contribute to the formulation of national policy on issues affecting the West. For the past several years, the Center has been working with both the executive branch and Congress in the area of natural resources and public lands. In March of 1999, as a result of work commissioned by the President's Council on Environmental Quality, the University of Wyoming's Institute for Environment and Natural Resources and the Center for the Rocky Mountain West cosponsored a workshop to explore the potential role of collaboration in the implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Workshop participants recommended using pilot projects to test and evaluate the integration of collaborative processes into NEPA decision-making.

The report from the workshop was widely circulated both within the executive branch and on Capitol Hill. As a result, in the fall of 2000, four western senators—Michael Grasso (R, ID), Craig Thomas (R, WY), Max Baucus (D, MT), and Harry Reid (D, NV)—asked the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (ICER) to evaluate the best way to use pilot projects to bring collaboration to bear on federal lands and natural resource management by building environmental organizations; resources users; federal, state, and local governments; tribes, people in local and regional collaborative processes; and NEPA experts.

In its report to the Senators, ICER concluded that carefully managed and highly visible pilot projects could help in integrating collaboration into NEPA activities while improving the quality of management decisions. The Center continues to provide policy analysis and recommendations aimed at creating carefully selected and monitored experiments that test new approaches to public land management and governance.

Presentations and Publications

Pat Williams collaborated with Montana State University's Burton K. Wheeler Center for their annual conference, keynote, and two fire conferences by the U.S. Forest Service in Missoula and Whitefish, and spoke on "Wildlands Wars" during the National Wilderness Society's Annual Conference in Montana's Flathead Valley. Williams also spoke on "Reconciliation" at the 125th Anniversary of the Battle of the Little Bighorn in June 2001, and was selected by the Federation of State Humanities Councils as the Walter Capps Memorial Lecturer for the National Conference on "Making Locally Led Conservation Work," also in June. In October of 2000, Kemmis attended the Governor's Conference on Civic Engagement and gave the keynote speech, called "Ruminating Taxpayers Back Into Citizens." He was Guest Faculty at the American Law Institute-American Bar Association and gave a speech entitled "Federal Lands in the West: Interrogating on the New Millennium."
ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT OF WESTERN MONTANA'S BITTERROOT VALLEY

The U.S. Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Research Station asked the Center to prepare an "area economic profile" of the Bitterroot Valley area using REAP. The Center's resulting report observed that the valley had become one of the fastest growing areas in Montana during the 1990s as well as one of the fastest growing areas in the entire United States. The area's population grew an average of 4.6 to 6 percent a year between the mid-1980s and expanded from around 25,000 people to over 30,000.

Much of the valley's recent population growth resulted from sharply higher net migration in the last decade. During the 1980s, only 1,550 people were added to the area's population through net migration. During the 1990s, net migration approached 10,000. The Bitterroot Valley's economy is now increasingly shaped by rapid growth, and the environmental amenities of this picturesque mountain valley are attracting many of its new migrants. The Center's report was provided to Forest Service officials and staff and local area economic development officials.

ADAPTING REAP TO THE PLANNING NEEDS OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS IN MONTANA

The Center has contracted with eleven cooperating economic development districts in Montana to adapt REAP to their various planning needs, including the development of area CED documents or comprehensive Economic Development Strategies. These planning studies are required in order for local multi-county districts, including area resource conservation and development districts (RC&D's) and area economic development corporations, to apply for and receive a variety of types of federal funding assistance in area community development. Planning officials often select time-consuming and cumbersome to identify, organize, and analyze important data and information on area economies and difficulty to accurately interpret such data, even when it is readily available. REAP provides both an organizational framework and interpretable tool for assessing area economies and determining the varying roles they play in the larger economy.

EVALUATING HOW PROXIMITY TO NATIONAL PARK LANDS MAY INFLUENCE LOCAL AREAS

The Center developed a proposal for the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) to evaluate the changing economy of areas near Glacier National Park and to assess what role the park may be playing in the continuing development and change of the area's economy. The study, which will be completed by early next year, will use REAP to isolate and examine patterns of economic change occurring in non-metro areas throughout the western United States near national park lands and similar high amenity public lands. A "peer review" will be conducted evaluating how well the Glacier Park area economy is doing across a wide range of indicators relative to similar areas throughout the West, including those nearby large concentrations of national park lands.

ASSESSING THE CHANGING ECONOMIES OF AREAS NEARBY FOREST LANDS IN THE WEST

The Center is carefully monitoring and assessing the changing economies of non-metro areas in the West nearby national lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service. The Forest Service must manage these lands to achieve the sustainability of nearby communities while maintaining the viability of forest ecosystems. The maps show Forest Service lands in the West including national forest lands (green) and national forest wilderness and wilderness study areas (dark green). Small, somewhat isolated blocks of these lands are shown in the white color and these are excluded in identifying areas nearby Forest Service lands.

There are 409 counties in the West whose geographic center is within 20 miles of these lands. Of these, 376 are non-metro counties — counties without a place greater than 5,000 people — and 252 of these are not near a metropolitan area. Population and economic trends in these 252 non-metro, forest land counties during the last decade stand in stark contrast to trends in the previous decade of the 1980s when many communities in these areas experienced economic stagnation, due in large part to declining and decline in the wood products industry and other extractive industries. Unlike losing over 70,000 people through net out-migration during the 1980s, these 252 counties added over 48,000 people through net in-migration during the 1990s. This dramatic change in migration can be attributed to larger changes in the economy and population.

These non-metro, forest land areas are no longer isolated places with slow-growing populations whose life is tied to the rise and fall of extractive industries. They have become "magnet" places for growing populations and their economies are diversifying and restructuring as this growth continues. The Center will actively monitor and regularly report on these changes.

ASSESSING CHRONIC CARE NEEDS AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN RURAL AREAS OF MONTANA

Swanson participated in and was selected for the advisory committee to a University-wide research project for the study of rural health and disability in Montana. A proposal to fund the program was submitted to the U.S. Agency for Health Research and Quality.

PRESENTATIONS

Swanson made a two-hour presentation to selected leaders in Montana's natural resource industry on "Trends in Natural resource industries in the West and Implications for community development," as part of the Montana Census Council's Natural Resource Industry Leadership Institute (February 2003). He presented a seminar on applications of the Center's Regional Economic Assessment Database at the State Meeting of Resource Conservation and Development Districts in Helena (November 2003). He was the luncheon speaker at the MSU's Wheeler Center Conference on Managing Growth in Western Montana, describing and discussing underlying changes in the economy contributing to population growth in the region (September 2000). Among other presentations were speeches to the Billings Rotary Club, Kalispell Chamber of Commerce, Missoula Redevelopment Agency Board, Missoula School Board, and UM President's Advisory Council.

PUBLICATIONS

Larry Swanson wrote a report entitled "The Bitterroot Valley of Western Montana, Area Economic Profile," that was submitted to the U.S. Forest Service. He published "The Bitterroot's Forest Lands — Magnets for New Migrants and Part-time Residents" in the Center's publication "Changing Landscapes." Swanson also completed a REAP User's Guidebook, which was published in June 2000.

...greater interaction and exchange across the U.S.-Canada border

...working together across sometimes great ideological divides
IN MEMORIAM
CARROLL O'CONNOR
AUGUST 2, 1924-JUNE 21, 2000

In 1994, Carroll and Nancy O'Connor made a major contribution to the Center for the Rocky Mountain West as part of the University's capital campaign to help match a challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. To honor Carroll and Nancy and recognize their support, the Center was renamed the Carroll and Nancy Fields O'Connor Center for the Rocky Mountain West in 1999.

Carroll joined Nancy in making that gift because of his continued commitment to The University of Montana, his alma mater. He began his higher education at the University in the 1940s, and it was here that he met his future wife, Nancy Fields, a Montana native. While working as a graduate teaching assistant, Carroll earned a master's degree in speech in 1956.

While Carroll became world famous because of his acting talents, and deservedly so, his less widely known was his care for young people and his commitment to higher education. He generously made several donations towards Native American student scholarships and the support of the new and University of Montana students benefited directly from Carroll's commitment to the summer of 2003 when he returned to UM to share his experience with others by teaching a course entitled Writing the Movie.

Carroll's devotion to the education of students was a fitting reaffirmation of that true part of the Center's mission. After the naming ceremony, Carroll said, "I hope the work of the center here will produce things of value to the whole world. I see this center as a hub that other disciplines can see and pull to do things that we will be known for - the Center to continue to strive to meet Carroll's expectations."