



# Andrus Center for Public Policy *Report*

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## *Dateline: The West*

### Conference Co-Sponsors:

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## Thoughts from Peter Jennings

In addition to participating all day in *Dateline: The West*, Peter Jennings, anchor of ABC's World News Tonight, delivered an evening address, which was open to the public without charge. 1,000 people crowded into Boise State University's Student Union to hear Mr. Jennings, whose experience as an on-the-ground reporter included covering the building of the Berlin Wall in the 1960s and its demolition in 1989.

It included the civil rights movement in the south during the 1960s and the struggle for equality in South Africa in the 70s. Jennings was one of the first reporters who went to Vietnam in the 1960s, and he went back to the killing fields of Cambodia in the 1980s. In short, during his career as a reporter, he has covered the major news events all over the world.

His remarks in Boise revealed a thoughtful, well-informed observer of the world and of the west. Following are some excerpts from his comments during his day and evening in Boise on December 6, 2002.

### *On the west:*

There has been a realization in the media that the western story is a national story and that what happens out here, particularly when it comes to

public lands, is a story which, since the 1960s and the Endangered Species Act, has become of greater interest to people all over the country, which is why I said... this is a national story, not merely a western story.

### *On the business of news:*

There is tremendous business pressure, but don't forget, it is the Congress of the United States that

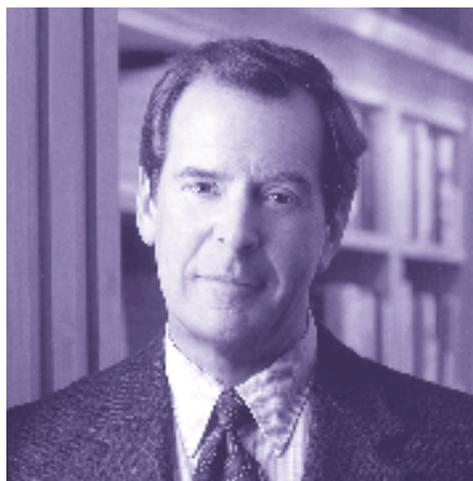
decided to do away with regulation in broadcasting. It's not fair completely to say we are unanswerable to the public. To answer that gentleman's question, we are extraordinarily answerable. All you have to do is turn us off or change the dial or choose someone else.

In the universe of media explosion, with so much coming at us all the time, what we're looking for is context. I don't think of all the stuff we get every day as information; I think of it as data. So even on the evening newscast, you now find us striving, not always successfully, to be a little better at finding a niche in the media universe. The best way to go is context.

### *On the anti-government west:*

I am somewhat puzzled at the tendency here in the west to be

*Thoughts, continued on page 2...*





**Cecil D. Andrus was elected four times by the citizens of Idaho to serve as Governor. In addition, he served four years as Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior under President Carter. He elected not to run again in 1994 and subsequently established the Andrus Center for Public Policy where he donates his service as chairman.**

**From the Chairman:**

In 1995, we set out to create a civil, non-partisan arena in which to look at important issues from a lot of different perspectives. Those issues have included the Endangered Species Act, river management, public lands management, wildfire policy, rural development, and, most recently, the ways in which the coverage of the west by the national media impacts the formation of policy and our understanding of those issues. In the years since 1995, we have done what we set out to do, and I am proud of our success in advancing public understanding and productive discussions of critical and often contentious western issues.

We are always eager for your feedback and your thoughts on what subjects we should tackle. So let us hear from you. We are a lean operation and rely on support from organizations, foundations, and businesses—support that has allowed us to present our conferences. In addition, without the good help of volunteers and people who care about thoughtful public policy, we would not have been successful. I am grateful to all of them.

Sincerely,

Cecil D. Andrus

*Thoughts, continued from page 1...*

anti-government and even to only reluctantly acknowledge that the federal government and western development are incontrovertibly together. Without the government, western development would have been so different. I made the short and obvious list. Without the Louisiana Purchase, without the Mexican War, without the railroads, and certainly without what the government established here during World War II—the western defense industries, the research institutions, the western military bases—surely the west would have been very different. An objective person would argue that it would have been a much poorer place without the federal government.

...After all, though we don't like to admit it in this neck of the woods, the federal government also took care of the Native American problem by relocating them, built the water supply, provided endless federal subsidies and programs that helped the west develop. In short, you could make an intellectual argument



at least that the west is the overwhelming story of government. How could it not be when government owns or administers most of the land between the Pacific and the eastern slopes of the Rockies?

**On national attitudes about the west:**

The widespread support in other parts of the country for the Endangered Species Act is not going to suddenly evaporate. Whether it is a threat to the coho salmon in the Klamath Valley, the spotted owl, the federal government's wildfire policy, which we talked about today, highway restrictions, or snowmobiling in the national parks, increasingly, I think, you should know that Americans in other parts of the country take very seriously the idea that this land is their land, too.

► **Peter Jennings' Bio:** Anchor and Senior Editor, *World News Tonight*. Peter Jennings has established a reputation for independence and excellence in broadcast journalism. He is the network's principal anchor for breaking news, election coverage, and special events. He is the author, with Todd Brewster, of the acclaimed *New York Times* best seller, *The Century*. Their next collaboration, *In Search of America*, has just been published. Jennings currently resides in Manhattan with his wife, Kayce Freed, a producer for *20/20*. He has two children.

The New York Times ...DATELINE... The Salt Lake Tribune  
 Los Angeles Times *The West* USA TODAY  
 THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

*A conference that examined media coverage of western issues and its impact on public policy.*

ABC News anchor Peter Jennings headlined a major Andrus Center conference in December that examined the role of the media in western public policy issues. The conference, *Dateline: The West*, was held December 6 at Boise State University and was presented by the Andrus Center for Public Policy, the *Idaho Statesman*, and Gannett Co. Pacific Group. Former Wyoming Republican Senator Alan Simpson, a frequent and outspoken critic of the media, also participated in the one-day conference as did Katy Roberts, a senior editor at the *New York Times*, Tom Kenworthy, national correspondent for *USA Today*, and Scott Kraft, national editor of the *Los Angeles Times*.

The purpose of the gathering was to explore how news organizations make decisions about what to report and why, and how those decisions, in turn, affect public opinion and public



*ACPP President Marc Johnson enjoys a moment, during a break, with Chairman Cecil Andrus and conference headliner Peter Jennings. (photo courtesy of the Idaho Statesman)*

policy decisions, which are often made far from the west.

A major feature of the conference was a discussion of a series of hypothetical news events that illustrated the media's role in portraying and shaping policy and perceptions about the western United States. In addition to those mentioned, the discussion included reporters, editors, and representatives of a variety of public policy perspectives.

A transcript of the entire conference and a conference report are available on the Andrus Center website ([www.andruscenter.org](http://www.andruscenter.org)) and may be downloaded without charge. Printed versions may be ordered through the Andrus Center.



*Panelists discuss the issues during the "Media's Struggle to Report the West" session. (photo by Chet Bowers)*



**Videotape of *Dateline: The West***  
 Special thanks to Idaho Public Television and to KIVI-TV Channel 6, the ABC regional affiliate, for their teamwork in providing television coverage of *Dateline: The West*. Their combined efforts resulted in an hour-long broadcast, on both Public Television and KIVI, which featured the panel on media coverage in the west. A videotape of the program maybe ordered by contacting Idaho Public Television on either its toll-free line, 1-877-224-7200, or its business line, 208-373-7220.

# Hypothetical Helps Illuminate Issues



Here's a recipe for something special: Bring together one of the world's best known and most respected network journalists with top editors from the *New York* and *Los Angeles Times*, add in two of the best environmental reporters in America, ladle on a measure of several top regional reporters and editors, and then mix with

opinionated current and former public officials and interest advocates.

At the recent Andrus Center *Dateline: The West* conference, with the help of some splendid participants, we were able to shape that recipe into a fascinating discussion, joined at the point where journalism hinges with public policy. It can be admitted now, after assembling a huge and dynamic panel, that it was a raw experiment in exploring the news business and the policy business and how they impact each other. Part of the grand experiment was to ask the panel to consider, not the issues in the morning paper, but rather a series of "hypothetical" scenarios that contained a significant measure of truth.

How might a Secretary of the Interior handle a major initiative on grazing rights knowing that a significant part of the policy calculation involves planning, anticipating, and managing the media and interest group reaction to the policy? How does the thought process unfold when editors at the *New York Times* evaluate how to play major policy information that is leaked from the White House? And, does network TV

news fundamentally report "our" western stories differently than the journalist who lives close to those stories?

With appropriate credit to the late, great, former CBS News chief, Fred Friendly, who pioneered this approach to the discussion of public issues, the Andrus Center's hypothetical panel was both great fun and tremendously enlightening. There is something liberating about serious, thoughtful people dealing with tough, important issues without having, necessarily, to defend long held positions. One thing that often emerges in these situations is refreshing candor, great insight into issues and motivations, and, importantly, good humor and real understanding of how complex and confounding policy making—and reporting it—can be.

If only our "real" public policy discussions were always held on such a lofty and civil plain. Then again, the Andrus Center has always believed that bringing diverse voices together and allowing them to talk are the critical first steps in making good public policy. We'll keep trying new approaches in hopes of continuing to stimulate the dialogue and enlighten the policy. That is what we are here to do.

Come join us next time, or join us again.

Marc C. Johnson, President, Andrus Center



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# News Brief



## Board of Governors Named

Cecil D. Andrus, Chairman of the Andrus Center, has announced the formation of a Board of Governors for the Andrus Center. The board has been asked to suggest possible conference issues and to participate in long-range planning for the Andrus Center. The board members are: **Les AuCoin**, Chairman of the AuCoin Institute at Southern Oregon University, former Democratic Congressman; **Dan Evans**, former Republican Governor of Washington and U.S. Senator; **Yvonne Ferrell**, former director of the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation; **Neil Goldschmidt**, managing partner of Goldschmidt Imeson Carter, Secretary of Transportation in the

Carter Administration, and former governor of Oregon; **Jim Joseph** of the Sanford Institute at Duke University, former ambassador to South Africa; **Patrick Noonan**, founder of Nature Conservancy and director of The Conservation Fund; **Mike O'Callaghan**, executive editor of the *Las Vegas Sun*, former governor of Nevada; **Peter S. O'Neill** of O'Neill Enterprises of Boise; **Patrick Shea**, former director of the Bureau of Land Management, now a partner in Ballard, Spahr, Andrews & Ingersoll in Salt Lake City; **Cathy Silak**, partner in Hawley Troxell Ennis & Hawley, former Idaho Supreme Court justice; and **Alan Simpson** of Wyoming, former Republican U.S. Senator.

## Senior Fellow Chairs NSAB meeting

The Andrus Center Senior Fellow, Dr. John Freemuth, chaired the meeting of the National Science Advisory Board of the Bureau of Land Management on January 20-21, 2003 in Washington D.C. The committee, comprised of representatives from universities, industry, and non-profits, considered issues on invasive species, curriculum reform, and strengthening the

role of science in BLM decision-making. Anyone interested in the committee's efforts may contact Dr. Freemuth at 208-426-3931 or at [jfreemu@boisestate.edu](mailto:jfreemu@boisestate.edu).



**John Freemuth, Ph.D.**  
Senior Fellow,  
Andrus Center for Public Policy

## Rocky Barker is Named Andrus Center Visiting Fellow

Rocky Barker, the widely-known and respected environmental reporter from the *Idaho Statesman*, has been named 2003 Visiting Fellow at the Andrus Center. Barker is currently on sabbatical from the newspaper to write a book, *The 1988 Yellowstone Fires and Their Legacy*. He is the author of *Saving All the Parts: Reconciling Economics and Endangered Species Act*, which was published in 1993 by Island Press and cited for "excellence in achievement" by the Sigurd F. Olson Nature Writing Award judges. With Ken Retallic, he co-authored *The Flyfisher's Guide to Idaho* and the *Wingshooter's Guide to Idaho*. He inspired and helped organize several Andrus Center conferences: *Snake: The River Between Us*, *Rural Idaho: Challenged to Change*, *The Fires Next Time*, and the Center's most recent conference, *Dateline: The West*.

As environmental reporter for the *Idaho Statesman*, he was the primary researcher for an award-winning series of editorials, calling for the breaching of four Snake River dams to save salmon. The team was the first winner of the Dolly Connelly Environmental Journalism Award in 1998. He is a contributor to National Public Radio's "Living on Earth" program and is syndicated as a columnist in more than 60 newspapers across the west by Writers on the Range, a service he co-founded. The National Wildlife Federation awarded him its National Conservation Achievement Award in 1999.

The 28-year newsman has covered environmental issues ranging from mining in Wisconsin, acid rain in Canada, and rain forest protection in Hawaii to fish and wildlife conservation in Russia's Far East and Africa. The

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Andrus Center is dedicated to independent, non-partisan research, analysis, discussion, education, and policy formation on critical issues confronting Idaho and the western United States. The Center is non-profit, privately financed, and housed on the campus of Boise State University.

The Center's mission is to explore energy, natural resource development, conservation, education, economic development, and other significant public policy issues.

Contributions in support of the Andrus Center are tax deductible.



**Rocky Barker**  
2003 Visiting Fellow,  
Andrus Center for Public Policy

Sandwich, Illinois native holds a bachelor's degree in environmental studies from Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin, which awarded him an alumni award for environmental achievement in 1994. His work has appeared in *High Country News*, *Outside Magazine*, *Wisconsin Sportsmen*, *Fin and Feathers*, *Wisconsin Natural Resources*, *The Chicago Tribune*, the *Denver Post*, the *Minneapolis Tribune*, the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*, the *Seattle Times*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. He and his wife, Tina, have twin sons, 23, and a 17-year-old daughter.

## A Word of Thanks

On December 6, 2002, *Dateline: The West* brought together nationally prominent journalists, public policy-makers, and business and conservation leaders to discuss, debate, and consider how the West and its issues are reported and interpreted for the rest of the country.

The organizers of *Dateline: The West* — The Andrus Center, *The Idaho Statesman*, and Gannett Co. Pacific Group — acknowledge the significant sponsorship contribution of all those who made this important and insightful discussion possible:

- APME National Credibility Roundtables Project
- The Brainerd Foundation
- The Bullitt Foundation
- The Key Foundation
- The Lazar Foundation
- Richard King Mellon Foundation
- The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

And special thanks to the **Hewlett Foundation** for its ongoing support for the Andrus Center for Public Policy.

The Idaho Statesman  
IdahoStatesman.com



## A Look Back

The following is a summary of two of the past events of the Andrus Center for Public Policy since its founding in 1995.

June 1, 2000:

### *Policy After Politics*

The summer of 2000 witnessed the presidential campaign, and on June 1, 2000, in an effort to be prepared with recommendations on federal land management policy for the next Administration, the Andrus Center invited current and former governors, who had dealt on the ground with such policies, to share their thoughts on ways to break the land management gridlock of overlapping laws and regulations.

February 11, 1998:

### *The Future of Our Public Lands I*

In February of 1998, the Andrus Center held the first of two conferences on Federal land policy. The principal speakers throughout the one-day gathering were the directors of the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the National Park Service: Mike Dombeck, Pat Shea, and Bob Stanton.



## Suggestion Box

What do you think is the most important issue facing your community? your region? the nation? The Andrus Center has built a reputation on its ability to bring together decision-makers and stakeholders on contentious issues in a non-partisan, respectful forum, to find common ground among them, and to articulate ways to move toward resolution. We continue to look for areas in which those skills can be helpful. Please let us have your thoughts on the issues that concern you. Write us, call us, or send us an E-mail: [info@andruscenter.org](mailto:info@andruscenter.org).



The Andrus Center for Public Policy

Boise State University  
1910 University Drive  
Boise, Idaho 83725

Ph: 208-426-4218

Fax: 208-426-4208

E-mail: [info@andruscenter.org](mailto:info@andruscenter.org)

Web site: [www.andruscenter.org](http://www.andruscenter.org)

Andrus Center for Public Policy  
P.O. Box 852  
Boise, ID 83701

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