

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN?

The United States faces the most difficult decision in the nation's history--how and when to move from an economy based on non-renewable resources to an economy based on renewable energy technologies. Nowhere in the country is that choice more immediate or clear-cut than in the Black Hills of South Dakota, home of Mount Rushmore's "Shrine of Democracy."



Though everyone accepts the fact that we must, eventually, switch much of our energy production to renewable resources, that change is currently hindered by a lack of knowledge on how to do it. Officials and average citizens alike are searching for a way to go, but actions so far have been haphazard and hindered by not knowing enough about how the switch to renewable technologies will affect our economy, our lifestyle, and our environment.

The best solution offered to these problems so far is the "County Energy Plan," a form of public policy research developed by the Institute for Ecological Policies. The County Energy Plan allows researchers to outline current energy use patterns in a specific area; to define where that energy comes from in terms of money, labor, and resources; and then to show precisely how money, labor, and resources can be used most efficiently and be converted to a renewable energy base.

The County Energy Plan gives the specific and detailed answers that meet an area's needs and allows officials to see all possibilities for the future.

THE BLACK HILLS AREA ENERGY FEASIBILITY PROJECT

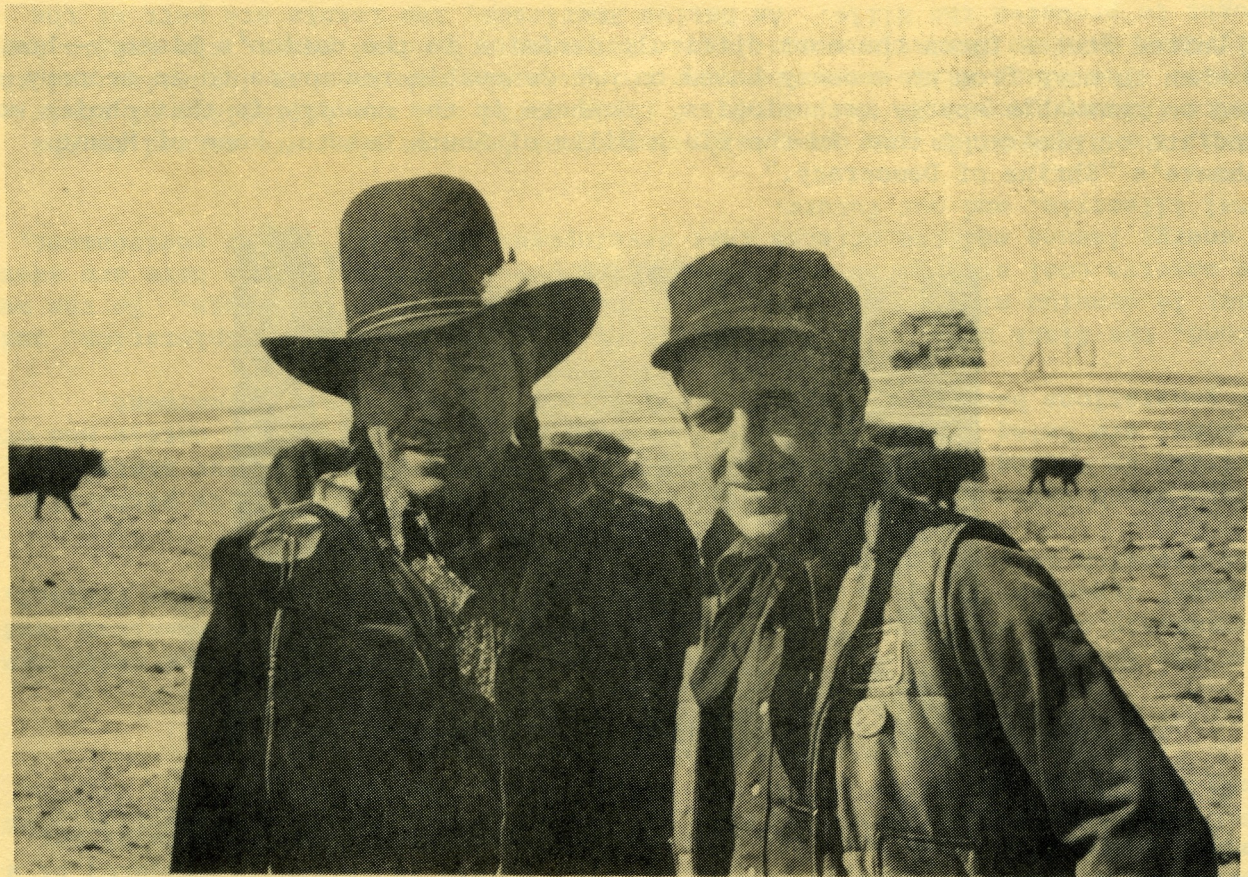
For the Black Hills area, a "Regional Energy Plan" is being developed under the sponsorship of a variety of local environmental, religious, Native American, and farmers' organizations. Called the Black Hills Area Energy Feasibility Project, this research is particularly important for several reasons.

First, South Dakota is the second poorest state in the nation and is particularly hard-hit by rising prices. The farmers, who are the backbone of our state's economy, are being forced to leave the land where they have raised cattle and crops for generations because of inflation and a low return on their investment.

Second, the Black Hills area is the site of large-scale uranium exploration, and at least 14 uranium mines are planned by a variety of outside interests. To the west are massive coal stripmines and coal-burning power plants. People here are aware of energy issues and the effects that development is having on our environment, our rural lifestyle, and our future.

Third, the Black Hills are especially important because they are sacred to the Lakota (Sioux) people as the center of their world and the birthplace of their people. The Black Hills mean the same thing to the Lakota that Jerusalem and the Holy Land mean to Christians and Jews. For over a hundred years, the Lakota have fought to preserve the Hills. As Native Americans, the Lakota are part of the poorest and weakest minority in the United States. As Indian people in South Dakota, they are the victims of virulent racism that only a few years ago bordered on open warfare.

But that has begun to change recently as people of all backgrounds in our area have come together to learn, to discuss, and to look for alternatives to massive resource mining.



Citizen action and concern have caused Indian and non-Indian alike to see that we must move from non-renewable resources to renewable energy technologies--and in the Black Hills we must, despite our limited financial base, make the change particularly quickly as an example to others who use the energy produced from our land

WHY WE NEED YOUR HELP

The Area Energy Feasibility Project is a key part of that effort. The Study Team has already begun work, even though we have just submitted our proposals to foundations and have not yet received any money. That is why we need your help.

The Study Team is working without pay, and the sponsoring organizations have been loaning us funds for travel to training sessions, printing, telephone expenses, postage, and so on. We are appealing to you for money to continue working while we wait for foundation grants. Our sponsoring organizations are volunteer grassroots groups who operate on very meager finances, and they are unable to extend us the help we need to keep going over the next two to four months. Your donation would also show foundations who are thinking of granting us funds that people care about the Project and consider it worthwhile.

Your donation is tax-deductible. Checks should be made out to "Black Hills Alliance/Energy Study" and sent to P.O. Box 2398, Rapid City, South Dakota 57709. If you have questions, you are encouraged to call Liliias Jones, the Project Coordinator, at (605)341-1663 or (605)342-5127.

As a symbol of our appreciation, those who donate more than \$30 will receive a copy of the Project Report when the Study is done in late Spring, 1981. Your help is very much appreciated by the people of the Black Hills and by the Study Team.

Organizations Sponsoring the Energy Feasibility Project:

Fifth District Farmers' Union
Women of All Red Nations
1980 Black Hills International Survival Gathering
South Dakota Peace and Justice Centers
Miners for Safe Energy
Black Hills Alliance
South Dakota Resources Coalition
Black Hills Chapter, Sierra Club