

Pinedale Man Heads New Outdoor Council; Bell Executive Director

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The Wyoming Outdoor Coordinating Council elected Bill Isaacs of Pinedale as president, and George Cassel of Riverton as secretary - treasurer in its first meeting at Casper Saturday. The Council also selected Tom Bell of Lander as executive director.

The Outdoor Council was formed to coordinate the policies and programs of various groups interested in Wyoming's outdoor resources. Bell said the Council will work with all state and federal agencies and all other interested groups on any matters affecting natural resources and the public interest.

Bell, 42, is a former employee of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, a former newspaper reporter, and, more recently, a Junior High School science teacher at Lander.

He was employed as a fish hatchery assistant at Dubois and fisheries biologist at Buffalo. Later, he was a unit manager at Ocean Lake and also worked as upland game bird and waterfowl biologist in the Riverton area. He has a bachelor's degree in wildlife conservation and game management and a master's degree in zoology from the University of Wyoming. He worked for a time on the Wyoming State Journal at Lander.

He is a disabled veteran of WW II, having lost an eye on a bombing mission over Austria in 1944. He and his wife, the former Muriel Wilcox of Sheridan, have four sons. They reside on a small ranch north of Lander.

Bell said he would work out of Lander and maintain an office there.

Isaacs is a former dude rancher and outfitter in the Pinedale area. He is presently serving as president of the Wyoming Wild-

life Federation.

Cassel is owner and operator of the Wyoming Motel at Riverton. In its first action, the Council said it was going to take up the

problems of fencing on the public domain, and a current problem involving exclusive use of parts of the Jackson Hole Elk Refuge by a private individual.

Bell Says BLM 'Sold Out' In Rule on Diamond Ring Fences

Tom Bell, executive director of the new Wyoming Outdoor Coordinating Council, said the recent decision of the Bureau of Land Management to authorize illegal fences in the Casper area was a "sell - out of the public's interest."

Bell was referring to fences authorized for the Diamond Ring Ranch at Casper. The authorization allows the ranch to keep the fences but they have to install cattle guards for antelope crossing.

"Interested individuals, including myself, filed affidavits against those fences in 1965, with the hopes that some of them would come down," Bell said.

"Our affidavits said the fencing was illegal, unlawful, and unpermitted and constitutes an enclosure of or assertion of right to public lands without title in violation of Section 1061, Chapter 25, Title 43, USCA; (and) said fencing is a clear and present danger to the wildlife population of Wyoming and constitutes a taking of the public's natural resources and the public domain for illegal private use."

STILL DANGER

"The situation hasn't changed," Bell said. "There is still danger to the antelope in the area in spite of the cattle guards the Diamond Ring Ranch is supposed to install, and we still object to some of their fences."

Bell said the Wyoming Game and Fish Department has been watching very closely in areas

where cattle guards and so-called "antelope passes" have been installed in sheep-tight fences especially for antelope.

"Cattle guards just aren't the answer so far as antelope are concerned," Bell said.

"In the Big Horn Basin, neither antelope-passes nor cattle guards were used to any appreciable extent. Antelope populations in the Seminoe Backwater area are down approximately 70% in spite of the fact that cattle guards are used by the antelope to some extent at certain times."

Bell said there has been no hunting in the Seminoe area since the fences were built in 1964. Range use in the fenced pastures has increased, however, he said.

"Multiple use seems to apply to all other uses, after livestock have had their shot at it," Bell said.

"Let's call a halt to all sheep-tight fencing on public lands until we really know what the present fences are doing to major antelope herds," Bell said.

"The stockmen were able to keep grazing fees pegged at low levels; why not give the rest of the people who own the public lands a break also?"