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Hawks Rest: A Season in the Remote Heart of Yellowstone by Gary Ferguson

Jordan C. Pederson
Kamas, Utah

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BOOK REVIEW

Hawks Rest: A Season in the Remote Heart of Yellowstone. 2003. Gary Ferguson. National Geographic Adventure Press, Washington, DC. \$15.00, paperback. 214 pages + 1 map. ISBN 0-7922-6891-1.

Hawks Rest begins with an account of a 10-day, 140-mile trek starting near Red Lodge, Montana. Gary Ferguson and his friend LaVoy Tolbert walk to their summer's work at Hawks Rest, a USDA Forest Service backcountry cabin near the southeastern corner of Yellowstone National Park. After giving the cabin basic maintenance and a thorough cleaning, Ferguson and Tolbert get down to work, as per instructions, recording sightings of grizzly bears, recently reintroduced gray wolves, and other wildlife.

Hawks Rest is often called the most remote corner of the lower 48 states, but Ferguson found that it is hardly a lonely place. He states that ". . . over the next month and a half more than 600 people will pass [the cabin], along with two or three times that many horses and mules." The strong opinions and deep-seated views expressed by the passing outfitters, guides, park rangers, forest rangers, backpackers, and biologists are examined in this book. Daily discussion topics at Hawks Rest included, among others, the wolf reintroduction of 1995–1996, grizzly bear management, placement of salt for elk (a practice now prohibited in the Teton Wilderness), supplemental feeding of hay to elk wintering north of Jackson, Wyoming, and regulation of big game guides. As anyone who has spent much time in the western United States knows, the management of our land and natural resources by the federal or state governments is often associated with

deep-seated historical distrust by those who recreate or gain their livelihood on these lands. Varied points of view are expressed by the many people who pass Hawks Rest, and the reader is left to judge who is right.

In addition, the author shows his interest in, and knowledge of, the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and the many historical topics unique to the area. Histories of early native Americans, fur trappers, and the process that made Yellowstone the world's first national park are covered in the book. As one who spends as much time as possible each year in Yellowstone, I found these highlights very educational. Also, Ferguson reveals interesting information on the inner workings of federal agencies as only an insider could.

The area map preceding the text served very well to orient the reader. I kept referring to it to locate the places and geographic features mentioned in the text. Another excellent component was the chapter entitled "Chronology of Events." It chronicles events in the area in a time frame beginning in 1872, when Yellowstone National Park was established, and continuing up to 2001, when salting was prohibited by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

For those of you wanting another perspective on the many issues swirling around the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, *Hawks Rest* is a good read and a fine addition to your library.

Jordan C. Pederson
Box 968
Kamas, UT 84036
jcped@allwest.net