



No Hat, No Cattle

Sally Jewell, Interior's weekend warrior.

By Dave Skinner

With Ken Salazar, secretary of the Interior Department, resigning from the Obama administration, attention has turned to his successor. Radical environmentalists attempted to petition the selection of their dream candidate, Congressman Raul Grijalva, a Tucson Democrat who recently joined the board of the lawsuit-obsessed Center for Biological Diversity. Cooler heads apparently prevailed. On February 6, the White House announced that Sally Jewell of Seattle was the nominee to be Interior's next secretary, not the openly extremist Grijalva.

British-born Sally Jewell is currently chief executive officer of REI

U.S. President Barack Obama announces the nomination of Sally Jewell, CEO of Recreational Equipment Inc., to Interior secretary at the White House in Washington on Feb. 6, 2013. Photo © REUTERS/Yuri Gripas

(Recreational Equipment Incorporated), a noted outdoor-sports retail chain. Raised in the eastern Seattle suburb of Renton, she graduated in 1978 from the University of Washington with a degree in mechanical engineering. After three years in Oklahoma with Mobil, Jewell returned home to the Northwest and a banking position specializing in petroleum finance.

In 1996, she was appointed to the board of directors of REI, leaving Washington Mutual in 2000 to become REI chief operating officer, then CEO in 2005. Married to Warren Jewell, also an engineer, with two grown children, she has climbed Mount Rainier and last year, the 16,000-foot, always bitterly cold Vinson Massif in Antarctica.

What policies might Jewell emphasize at Interior if confirmed as secretary?

The Businesswoman

REI was founded in 1938 as a buyers' club for Seattle-area mountaineering enthusiasts, basically a hiker's Sam's Club. According to the *Seattle Times*, Jewell's father, a British anesthesiologist, is REI member #17249. Today, REI claims 4.7 million members who pay \$20 for a lifetime membership that entitles them to a 10 percent dividend (actually a discount) on full-priced items, but in recent years, REI has generalized, moved upscale, and "greened."

Jewell currently pulls in about a million dollars a year running the "country's largest consumer cooperative," a 9,500-employee retailer with revenues of \$1.8 billion for 2011, clearing \$116 million of operating profit enabling \$99 million in member dividends. REI's revenues in 2005 were \$880 million, with \$72 million in operating profit.

Significantly, REI's 130-plus stores are located in large urban markets. For example, all 10 of its Washington stores except Spokane are safely behind the Cascade Curtain that protects liberal Seattle from America. REI's Nevada outlets are in Reno, Henderson and Vegas. Wyoming has no REI store, nor do most of the plains states.

REI helped pioneer "ecotourism." Since 1987, REI has offered "outdoor adventure" travel packages of varying challenge and service levels. For an extra fee, one can even

book guilt-free "carbon neutral" trips to all seven continents.

The Environmentalist

Jewell is as green as REI. Besides being on the board of regents of her alma mater, the University of Washington, Jewell helped found and is immediate past president of the Mountains to Sound Greenway, a 1.5-million-acre greenbelt program on the Interstate 90 corridor across Snoqualmie Pass.

In 2009, Jewell won the Rachel Carson award from Audubon. Audubon, of course, was Pew Charitable Trusts' fiscal pass-

Not surprisingly, after reaching the top at REI in 2005, Jewell became politically active, supporting causes and politicians who could help REI's bottom line.

through for \$14 million to gin up "hunter and angler" support for the Clinton Roadless Initiative. And *National Journal* reporter Catherine Hollander speculated in February that Jewell might "unite environmentalists and sportsmen."

Jewell is also vice chairman of the National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA), joining its board the same year (2005) she became CEO of REI. NPCA, of course, has been a primary plaintiff in "regional haze" litigation to regulate (or close) coal power plants hundreds of miles from any national park.

The Political Engineer

But Jewell's environmentalism has a self-interested and smart business aspect: In a 2005 article about Jewell's taking REI's helm, *Seattle Times* reporter Monica Ouchi noted: "REI also wants to move the meter on the number of kids who participate in the outdoors. 'Our competitors are TV, video games, and kids who are overscheduled,' Jewell said." In other words, engineer Jewell crunched the spreadsheets available to her as REI's COO, showing not just profit and loss, but also demographic trends of REI's consumer base—and her response to those trends helps explain why she is now Obama's nominee for secretary of the Interior.

In terms of moving the meter, in 2011 REI reported that it "invested \$4.48 million [in 330 grants] in national and community-based nonprofits focused on engaging volunteers in conserving local natural spaces."

In short, natural spaces where customers can wear out the gear they buy at REI—then buy more.

Not surprisingly, after reaching the top at REI in 2005, Jewell became politically active, supporting causes and politicians who could help REI's bottom line. Among her state-level contributions, mostly small, is \$1,000 against the same 2006 property-rights initiative opposed by cow-hating cardboard-baron Gordon Younger. Federal Elections Commission's records show \$42,300 in federal political gifts, all since 2006. Recipients tend to be green Democrats, including "Wild

Olympics" supporter Norm Dicks, and new Washington Gov. Jay Inslee. Jewell also maxed out for Obama in 2008, but not in 2012.

But the largest single recipient of Jewell's political money has been the Outdoor Industry Association PAC: \$11,500. Jewell is OIAPAC's biggest individual contributor besides OIA president, Frank Hugelmeyer. OIAPAC, of course, is the political arm of the Boulder, Colo.-based Outdoor Industry Association. OIA, in turn, is best known for its biannual, winter/summer outdoor retail shows, held in Salt Lake City since 1996, and for biannual threats to Utah Govs. Mike Leavitt and Gary Herbert to take OIA's show elsewhere—if Utah doesn't support more wilderness.

The Weekend Warrior

Both OIA and NPCA have produced numerous "studies" promoting the economic importance of outdoor recreation and tourism. The goal is land policies that would exclude other uses that might intrude on the "outdoor experience" that REI sells. Trouble is, during the five days of the week that REI's customers are back in their urban cubicles, those other uses contribute many billions more overall to rural economies.

But there's more: REI Foundation was granted \$500,000 in 2011 by REI the company. Importantly, \$150,000 of that grant money went to the Outdoor Foundation, established by the Outdoor Industry Association to "be a driving force behind a mas-

sive increase in active outdoor recreation in America.” The politically correct kind, of course. Everest Plus donors to Outdoor Foundation include clothing supplier North Face, REI, and the Conservation Fund, which “saves” land by flipping it to the government.

Coincidence? No...a plan. In 2011, Sally Jewell had the honor of introducing President Obama at the White House America’s Great Outdoors (AGO) conference. As *RANGE* has reported, AGO was created to respond to the problems environmental organizations are having recruiting youth. Furthermore, the environmental education entities that provide alternative recruitment pathways are seeing fewer students as schools necessarily focus on the three-R basics. AGO is not about getting young Americans to play outside. It is targeted more toward recruiting new environmentalists with government funding. Those so recruited will go either into activist groups, or into bringing “suitable”—meaning urban and preservationist—new workers into environmentally corrected federal land-management agencies.

But outdoor retailers also stand to benefit directly from AGO. REI’s active urban customer base is wealthy, but inevitably aging. Is there any more cost-effective way to ensure a long-term customer base for REI and other outdoor retailers than through a government-funded “Great Outdoors” marketing effort?

No matter what, Sally Jewell is a skilled navigator of corporate bureaucracy, and pretty darn savvy at political engineering, too. But her history of involvement with public-lands issues is primarily that of urban recreational users, who view public lands strictly as weekend playgrounds. She has spent all but seven years of her life in the Puget Sound area, where her father raised her on weekend escapes to Seattle’s mountains and salt water.

Unlike Raul Grijalva, Sally Jewell has no personal history of being directly or overtly hostile to the traditional economic multiple uses that sometimes burst the bubble of weekend escapists. However, she’s never shown any friendship or interest, either, which leaves the question: How will a weekend warrior like Sally Jewell manage the rest of the week on America’s public lands?

We’ll all find out soon. ■

Dave Skinner is waiting for spring to show the heck up in fabulous Kalispell, Mont.

Some Sour Gas From the Past

Captain of lockout, Bruce Babbitt. By Dave Skinner

Just one day before President Obama nominated Sally Jewell to replace Ken Salazar as secretary of the Interior, 12-years-gone former Secretary Bruce Babbitt gave a 45-minute policy speech at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

Babbitt’s presentation, clearly timed and aimed for Sally Jewell’s ears, was classic Bab-

codified Babbitt’s last-days bureaucratic National Landscape Conservation System lockout.

But the makeup of Congress shifted in 2010, leaving Babbitt to express his unhappiness that 30 bills designating another five million wilderness acres failed to pass the next Congress—as he put it, the first Con-



Babbitt was the beauty who brought wolves back to Yellowstone. It cost us all plenty—and still does.

bitt, the same extreme and imperialistic approach that characterized his tenure serving President Clinton: 17 million acres of Bureau of Land Management public lands became national monuments under Antiquities Act executive orders; and Babbitt himself unilaterally locked up another 10 million acres of BLM land into pseudo-park National Landscape Conservation System units—27 million acres in eight years, most in the final four.

Babbitt, who today enjoys a board seat with World Wildlife Fund in his spare time, demanded that “conservation be placed on equal ground with energy development.” To make his case, Babbitt expressed his angst that during Obama’s first term, six million acres of public lands’ energy leases were matched by only 2.6 million acres “permanently protected.” The protection, of course, came in the 2009 omnibus public-lands bill that not only designated 2.7 million acres of new wilderness areas, but also legalized and

gress since World War II that did not designate “a single new acre” for parks, monuments, or wilderness.

Babbitt was also unhappy that Obama had not used the Antiquities Act to protect the subject lands in the failed bills, plus another 3.5 million acres listed as possible monuments in the secret-then-controversial Interior Department “Our Vision, Our Values” memo.

So, what is the former secretary’s solution to all this? First and foremost, he called on President Obama to “make vigorous use of his executive powers beginning with the Antiquities Act.” Second, Babbitt demanded that Congress and Obama approve full, permanent funding of the Land & Water Conservation Fund. Finally, from this point forward he called on the administration to declare a policy that for every acre of new energy leases on federal lands, an acre of new, permanent wilderness, park or monument be designated. ■