

Rubella vaccine ready

proposed monument land have already been purchased for subdivision and subsequent land or housing development by a private firm.

K. C. Wofford of the Central Enterprise Realty Company in Colorado Springs says his company has already begun to subdivide the land for private use.

The land was purchased from a private owner, A. W. Gregg of Kyle, Texas, who had kept it off the private market for 17 years waiting for an offer from the Federal Government to purchase the land for the national monument. The sale price to the realty company was \$150 an acre. If the Government were to purchase the 1,800 acres back, Prof. Leopold estimates, it would cost almost double what the Colorado Springs' company paid for it.

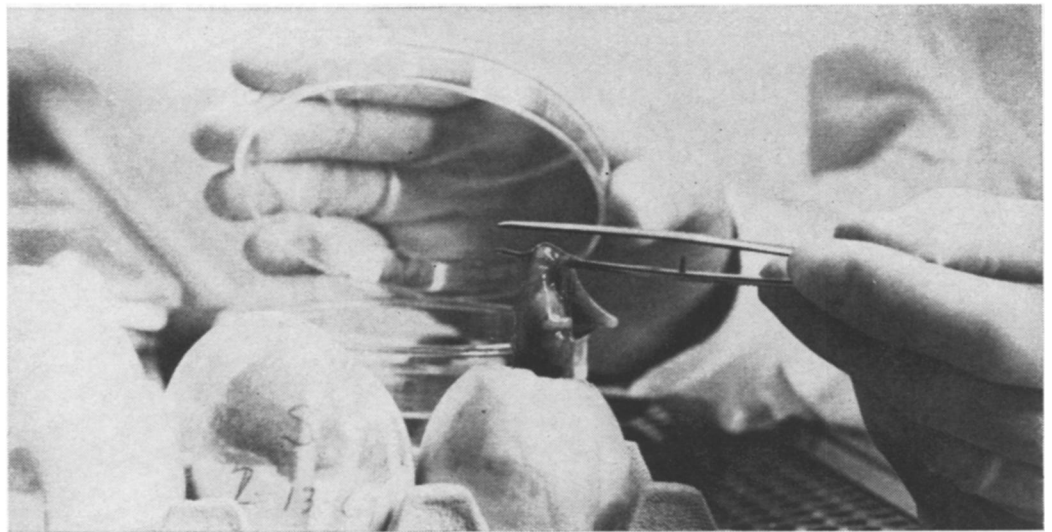
Wofford says there are no plans to purchase any more of the land within the area of the fossil beds and he indicates that his company may sell the land back to the Government. But, as yet, the Government has not allocated any funds for that purpose.

According to a recent report from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, land prices are soaring. The seven percent projected increase in land value has already raised the estimated cost of acquisition \$126,000 since February 1967, when the last bill was introduced in Congress. The scientists feel that using available funds for purchase is the immediate problem. Both the Department of the Interior and the Colorado Open Space Coordinating Council, Inc., agree that development of the monument itself can be delayed for several years if necessary.

Colorado people, says Prof. Leopold, are anxious about the situation. They are very much in favor of the proposed national monument. It would provide an educational attraction to a little known part of Colorado and preserve a national treasure.

"Destruction of such a site," says Prof. Richard Beidleman of Colorado College, "is comparable to what we might think of as a geological book-burning, especially devastating because there is only one irreplaceable volume on this subject in the universe."

"It is worth mentioning," says Dr. Richard C. Bradley, of Colorado College, "that we have here a most unusual circumstance, perhaps without precedent in recent legislative history: A proposal is being made to put a substantial piece of land under the protection of the National Park Service, and it stands virtually unopposed. . . . If this bill fails to pass, it will not be because powerful lobbies were arrayed against it, but because this Congress, deeply involved as it is with the weightier issues of the day . . . could not seem to find the time to consider it."



Merck Sharp & Dohme

Pekin duck embryos are used to grow live-virus vaccine for German measles.

If the cycle that began in 1920 prevails, German measles viruses will be around the United States in droves by late 1970 or early 1971. The last time it struck in epidemic proportions, in 1964, the virus killed or deformed the children of 50,000 women who were infected during the first three months of pregnancy.

If it strikes again in 1970 as predicted, scientists will be ready. Health, Education and Welfare Secretary Robert H. Finch last week approved the first vaccine against rubella, urging that it be used widely among school-age children who might otherwise transmit the disease to their mothers, but cautioning against its routine use in women of child-bearing age because its safety in this group is questionable.

The license, expected since April (SN: 4/12, p. 355), was issued to Merck Sharpe & Dohme in West Point, Pa., following a two year study of the vaccine's safety and effectiveness by the

Division of Biologics Standards of the National Institutes of Health. Tested in 18,000 children, the live virus vaccine induced virtually no side effects and is effective for at least three years. Children given the vaccine in initial pilot studies in 1966 still have antibodies to rubella viruses in their blood.

Research for a vaccine has been underway since 1962 when scientists at Harvard and at Walter Reed Army Hospital isolated the rubella virus. More than 650,000 doses of the vaccine, produced in a duck embryo cell culture system developed by Drs. Maurice Hilleman and Eugene Buynak, are immediately available. Merck plans to distribute two million doses by August.

Regulations governing the standards of another vaccine grown in a dog kidney cell culture also have been set. Although a final license has not been issued, the Philips Roxane Laboratories in Columbus, Ohio, is expected to receive one by fall.

\$1.3 BILLION LATER

MOL shot down

The Defense Department's Manned Orbiting Laboratory has been fighting an uphill battle ever since Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara first proposed it late in 1963. Critics claimed that the military space station, designed to keep two-man crews in orbit for a month at a time, would largely duplicate the functions of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Apollo Applications Program, also designed for extended stays aloft. Others feared that the project might put the U.S. in an unpopularly militaristic position in space.

For those reasons, as well as the

competition among projects for funds even within the Defense Department, last week the MOL was killed.

The various activities scheduled for the MOL would have included detailed surveillance and photography, as well as research in materials, biomedicine, remote sensing and other areas. It has often been assumed, however, that plans also included such controversial subjects as testing of weapons systems (even non-nuclear ones) and the inspection of foreign satellites.

Also the increasing sophistication of unmanned military satellites may well have made MOL obsolete.

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