Ivan Doig
Author, resident of Seattle

Author Ivan Doig, born in Montana and now a resident of Seattle, is considered among the pre-eminent literary figures in the West. His first book, "This House of Sky," was a finalist for the National Book Award.

"Sometimes — this is unmistakably one — it is best to listen to what the ground under us suggests:

"That this West where we are lucky enough to set foot every day is permanently on the dry side of that stripe of precipitation decline once so legible on maps at the 100th Meridian and now writ who-knows-where in the unfolding zigzag chronicle of global warming.

"That therefore we Westerners ought to know our aquifers from our elbows and rain in our habit of using the wet stuff to float every conceivable notion of subdivision and golf course; that furthermore, in an archipelago of ecologies ranging from the depth of Death Valley to the surge of the Tetons, we ought to be smart enough to know that one size — be it suburbanizing bulldozers, boxes to put rivers in or penchans to drill or dig for what is called energy but more truly is commodity — doesn't fit all.

"That when you come right down to it, the wisest evaluation of what we have managed to accomplish so far at this sunset end of the compass was enunciated by a 19th-century cowman, no less: 'Our good luck consists more in the natural advantages of our country than in the scale of our genius.'

"And, consequently, that those among us who periodically yelp for a Sagebrush Rebellion are never really on the side of the sagebrush.'

Paul Sandoval
Former state senator

North Denver neighborhood activist Paul Sandoval, a Colorado native, is a former state senator and member of the Denver school board.

What should every Westerner know? The Denver Post asked an assortment of people. Here's a sampling of their responses.

Charles Chaput

One-page fax to Ron Franscell, Denver Post

Ron--Here it is, I hope it'll serve. Have somebody send me a couple of tear sheets when your piece runs, would you? Again, big congrats on the spiffy job.

What Every Westerner Should Know

Sometimes--this is unmistakably one--it is best to just listen to what the ground under us suggests:

that this West where we are lucky enough to set foot every day is permanently on the dry side of that stripe of precipitation decline once so legible on maps at the 100th Meridian and now writ who knows where in the unfolding zigzag chronicle of global warming;

that therefore we westerners ought to know our aquifers from our elbows, and rein in our habit of using the wet stuff to float every conceivable notion of subdivision and golf course;

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and consequently that those among us who periodically yelp for a Sagebrush Rebellion are never really on the side of the sagebrush.
FOR IVAN

Thanks for agreeing to take part in this fun story, Ivan. As I told you, my new job sends me in search of extraordinary stories that illustrate the evolution of the West. I am working on a story about a project you apparently already know something about. It's being done by the Center for the American West at the University of Colorado. The Center is compiling a book of commentary by common people, mostly via the Internet, on "What Every Westerner Should Know." Ultimately, all these comments will be compiled into book form sometime next year.

For MY story in the Denver Post, I am seeking short, pithy comments from Westerners of note. I am looking for up to 200 words on the subject "What Every Westerner Should Know." You can e-mail it to me at rfransccll@denverpost.com. My deadline isn't punishing, but I'd love to have your thoughts by March 8.

You're a natural for this for many reasons, as a Westerner, an observer and interpreter of our culture, and a fine writer, to boot. Your comments would appear in an upcoming edition, likely a Sunday, with your name, some of your titles and possibly a photo. Does this sound like something you'd like to do?

MY FAX NUMBER APPEARS BELOW.

Ron Fransccll, The Denver Post
303-567-2633 (home)
720-560-2180 (cell)
901-838-0521 (fax)
Fax

Date: Monday, February 26, 2001
Total Pages: 2
Subject: What Every Westerner Should Know

Name: Ron Franscell
Company:
Voice Number: 303-374-1033
Fax Number: 801-838-0521
PO Box 28221 #16
Lakewood, CO 80228

Name: Ivan Doig
Company:
Voice Number:
Fax Number: (206) 542-6658

Note: Attachment has all the vitals.Thanks!!
one-page fax to Ron Franscell, Denver Post 27 Feb. '01

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that therefore we westerners ought to know our aquifers from our elbows, and rein in our habit of using the wet stuff to float every conceivable notion of subdivision and golf course;

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