

Forest Voice

Defending Nature, Saving Life Since 1988

www.forestcouncil.org

If We Really Want Change...



We Have To Make It Happen

The Audacity of Hope... or Hype?

Another administration; another chance to get it right. Of course, every new administration promises change, but this one is founded on something more primal and essential to the human psyche: hope. On election night, for many, that hope was realized. Indeed, much of the nation — and the world — is grateful that we have awakened from our collective insanity, and that our national nightmare will soon be over.

Barack Obama provides such a stark contrast to George W. Bush that it is easy to become hopeful, if not outright giddy. Obama has gravitas, and Bush does not. He is engaged, and Bush is not. He is compassionate, and Bush is not. He is eloquent, and Bush is not. But having said that, it would be wise to remember that environmentalists have been shafted by Democrats almost as often as we have by Republicans. The difference is: Republicans do it without pretense.

Even now, awash in the afterglow of realized hope, serious concerns remain. With the exception of the occasional nod to global warming, the environment barely got a mention in the long, caustic run-up to the election. And when Obama actually took a position on the issues, his pronouncements were problematic. He declared himself for “clean” coal, nuclear power, and energy-inefficient ethanol, and encouraged oil companies to exercise their domestic leases. He saw nothing wrong with substantially upping the cut on public lands or burning forest biomass to produce electrical energy.

These, he may claim, are “transitional” policies which can be abandoned once non-polluting energy sources are developed. But if the past teaches us anything, it is that the coal, nuclear, oil and timber industries will lobby long and hard to retard meaningful change and keep things just the way they are — which is to say, in a state of continued environmental decline. As Naomi Klein so capably documents in “The Shock Doctrine,” creating and taking advantage of disasters has now become the key economic strategy of corporatists who could not otherwise advance their agendas. And we can no longer afford to delay.

Unarguably, the Bush administration leaves the nation with many urgent problems. In eight years it turned a mansion into a fixer-upper, and there is a lot that needs fixing. But when your fixer-upper catches fire, you don’t take time to repair a dripping faucet before turning your attention to the more pressing problem.

Even as America’s love affair with mediocrity steadily eroded, environmental problems have been exacerbated by nearly a decade of inattention. Lester Brown of The Worldwatch Institute informs us that all living systems are in decline. Al Gore warns that, “the era of procrastination, of half measures, of soothing and baffling expedients, of delays, is coming to a close. In its place, we are entering a period of consequences.” These sober realizations give rise to an urgency that informs our hope for the new administration. If we had the president-elect’s ear, this is what we would tell him:

We have the audacity to hope that Democrats will grow a spine. It’s past time that Democrats stand for something besides re-election. For six years Democrats were kicked in the teeth and offered no meaningful opposition while the country was turned into something we barely recognized. When they finally gained control of Congress, they promptly laid down to provide the Bush machine a flat surface to roll over. Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi behaved timidly, showing themselves to be “leaders” in name only. They refused to filibuster and shrank from their obligation to hold impeachment hearings. Congress is obliged by oath and charter to champion the Constitution and the rule of law, and to provide a counterbalance to the executive branch. The Democrat-controlled Congress failed to do either.

We have the audacity to hope that the EPA and the Departments of Interior, Commerce and Agriculture will not be staffed by industry hacks. The top positions in these agencies are filled by lawyers, lobbyists and former executives of the worst polluters and plunderers in their respective industries. Their objective is to ensure that regulatory agencies don’t work, and that the crooks and despoilers are not inconvenienced by the enforcement of laws. Without honest oversight, the best intended legislation will be undermined, and regulatory agencies will continue to serve as subsidiaries of the industries they are chartered to regulate.

We have the audacity to hope that integrity returns to governance. After eight years of governance based in fraud, lies, and secrets, bolstered by Democrat inaction, the nation

urgently needs faith in its leadership restored.

We have the audacity to hope that every Bush administration edict that undermines our constitutional protections, threatens our freedoms, and imperils our environment will be overturned. This should include, but not be limited to: prohibitions on spying, torture, and illegal search and seizure; the elimination of oxymoronic free speech zones; and the reinstatement of *posse comitatus* and *habeas corpus*.

We have the audacity to hope for an end to the privatization of the commons. Our national forests, public lands, parks, and water resources must be protected in perpetuity for the common good, not for the financial gain of the few. We hold other assets in common as well, including roads, bridges, government buildings, public transportation, public education, Social Security, fire and police departments, the courts, the military, and so on. Neither the physical assets nor the functions they perform can be rightfully sold off or outsourced without the people’s consent.

We have the audacity to hope that there will be a true and full accounting of the value of natural systems. Valuing nature only as a commodity is suicidal. Standing forests, for example, provide oxygen, sequester carbon, cool the planet, conserve, release, and purify water, provide wildlife habitat, recreational opportunity and, for many, spiritual solace. The economic and intrinsic value of those services must be weighed before forests are leveled. According to a study commissioned by the European Union, we’re “losing natural capital at between \$2-5 trillion every year.” That’s equivalent to twice the cost of the current financial meltdown — but happening every year! Forest decline alone is estimated to cost about 7% of global GDP. These losses are not only foolish, they hasten planetary warming and decline.

We have the audacity to hope that the nation will not again postpone meaningful action to curb global warming. All we lack is the political will. If we have any chance at all of reversing this coming calamity, we must start *today* to make changes on an unprecedented scale. A “Marshall Plan” for green, non-polluting, renewable energy would not only create the jobs and technologies of the 21st century, but has the potential to provide the nation with a common moral purpose so lacking during the Bush years.

We have the audacity to hope that the government will address the needs of common people. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness — at their most basic — require clean air, pure water, and a livable planet. These basic needs require sufficient regulation to protect us from fraud and predation. They require a health care system that is not punitively expensive and an educational system that leaves graduates burdened with knowledge, not debt. And, especially in times of crisis, they require that we hold fast to our values and freedoms, not barter them away for the illusion of security.

Hope, it has been said, makes a good breakfast but a poor supper. Today we stand hopeful and ready to roll up our sleeves in service of a just and livable world. But if our hope is not met with action, it will soon turn to despair or worse, resignation. There is, Mr. President-elect, nothing audacious about hope. Hype, which offers false hope clad in grandiloquence, now that would truly be audacious — and tragic.

Admittedly, the new president will inherit unprecedented challenges from an administration which — through greed, incompetence and design — stripped the nation of much of its wealth and many of its options. But we Americans are nothing if not resilient, and we urgently need to believe our hope has not been misplaced.

We stand ready to follow; a wounded nation yearning for a leader worthy of our trust.

—Tim Hermach, President,
Native Forest Council

Forest Voice

© 1988-2008
ISSN 1069-2002
Native Forest Council
PO Box 2190
Eugene, OR 97402
541.688.2600
Fax 541.461.2156
info@forestcouncil.org
www.forestcouncil.org

Forest Voice is sent free to members of the Native Forest Council. The cost of U.S. membership is \$35 annually. Bulk orders of the *Forest Voice* are available for \$50 per 100. A complimentary copy is available on request.

All rights to publication of articles appearing in *Forest Voice* are reserved.

Publisher/Executive Editor
Tim Hermach

Managing Editor
Jim Flynn

Associate Editor
David Porter

Special Thanks
David Porter
Marriner Orum
Charlotte Talberth
Deborah Ortuno
Leeona Klippstein
Shannon Wilson

No Thanks
All those who feel it’s OK to cut deals that leave us with less native forests, soil, air, and clean water.

Submission Guidelines
We welcome unsolicited submissions that address issues relevant to public lands protection and support the Native Forest Council’s mission. If you would like us to return your work, please include a SASE or send to info@forestcouncil.org.

Inspired? Incensed? Impressed?
Please contact:
Native Forest Council
PO Box 2190
Eugene, OR 97402
541.688.2600

Cover art:
Manny Francisco

This publication contains copyrighted material the use of which may not be specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in our efforts to advance understanding of environmental, political, human rights, economic, democracy, scientific, and social justice issues, etc. We believe this constitutes a “fair use” of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the U.S. Copyright Law. In accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107, the material in this publication is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for research and educational purposes. For more information, go to www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml.



Native Forest Council

The Native Forest Council is a nonprofit, tax-deductible organization founded by business and professional people alarmed by the wanton destruction of our national forests. We believe a sound economy and a sound environment must not be incompatible and that current public-land management practices are probably catastrophic to both.

The mission of the Native Forest Council is to protect and preserve every acre of publicly owned land in the United States.

Board of Directors
Allan Branscomb
Calvin Hecocca
Tim Hermach
Michelle Maher

Advisory Board
Ed Begley, Jr.
Jeff DeBonis
Larry Deckman
Ed Dorsch
Erika Finstad
David Funk
Rev. James Parks Morton
Fraser Shilling
Karyn Strickler

President
Timothy Hermach

Staff
Bill Barton
Rachel Barton-Russell
Monica Morrison

Volunteers
John Borowski
Michelle D’Amico
Rick Gorman
Michael Lang
Jeanie Mykland
Steve Northway
David Peltier
Michael Riegert
Johnny VanHerwaarden

Forester
Roy Keene

Seattle Office
206.783.0728
seattleinfo@forestcouncil.org
David Divelbiss
Suzanne Pardee

Regional Representatives

Margaret Hays Young
Brooklyn, NY
718.789.0038

Linda Marina
Burlington, VT
802.540.0196

Kris Moorman
Ames, IA
515.232.1316

Wayne Norton
Gainesville, FL
352.373.8733

Jason Tamblyn
Duluth, GA
770.851.4181

Printed on 100%
Post-Consumer
Recycled
Paper with
Soy-based Ink



News and Views

Nature Loss Dwarfs Financial Crisis

The world’s economy is suffering more from the loss of forests than from the current crisis on Wall Street, according to a new EU-commissioned study. The study says that the cost of deforestation annually is between \$2 and \$5 trillion dollars. These numbers were arrived at after researchers put value on, and then added together, the many ways in which forests “work” for us, including absorbing CO2 from the air, and providing potable water. The idea behind the study is that as forests disappear, the natural world no longer provides services which it used to provide for free. So, the human economic system must step in and find a way to provide these same services... (BBC) (*Editorial note: \$2-5 trillion mentioned fails to account for the “replacement-cost of goods sold” or any other measure of value of the trees being destroyed.*)

Chemical Released by Trees Cools the Planet

Scientists in the UK and Germany have discovered that trees release a chemical that thickens clouds above them, which reflects more sunlight and so cools the Earth. The research suggests that chopping down forests could accelerate global warming more than was thought, and that protecting existing trees could be one of the best ways to tackle the problem. The scientists looked at chemicals called terpenes that are released from boreal forests across northern regions such as Canada, Scandinavia and Russia. The team found the terpenes react in the air to form tiny particles called aerosols. The particles help turn water vapor in the atmosphere into clouds. Because trees release more terpenes in warmer weather, the discovery suggests that forests could act as a negative feedback on climate, to dampen future temperature rise. The team looked at forests of mainly pine and spruce trees, but said other trees also produce terpenes so the cooling effect should be found in other regions, including tropical rainforests. (*Guardian*)

Pollution Causes 40% of Deaths Worldwide

About 40% of deaths worldwide are caused by water, air and soil pollution, concludes a Cornell researcher. Such environmental degradation, coupled with the growth in world population, are major causes behind the rapid increase

Letters

Dear Editor,

I read the *Forest Voice* over coffee around the time the print edition came in. It sounded a little spiteful to me. Sort of like we’re out to get those baaaaad s.o.b.’s. Don’t we need to work together? Can’t we figure out how to do that? It reminded me a little of witch hunting, asking me to report on other organizations, etc. How the *&^% do I know? It was just a little too backbiting. Just expressing my opinion FYI.

—Maureen
Seattle, Washington

Our reply:

Dear Maureen,

You’re right. Everyone who wants to protect our forests, watersheds and life on Earth has to join together to stop the destruction. This is what Zero Cut has always been about, hoisting a banner for people to rally behind. But the question remains: what do we do when some of the biggest players on the team keep throwing the game?

Of course, you don’t have to take our word for it: check out the new book by Christine MacDonald called “Green, Inc.: An Environmental Insider Reveals How a Good Cause Has Gone Bad,” which comes to the same conclusions we have: there needs to be a revolution in the conservation movement. As abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison said: “Little boldness is needed to assail the opinions and practices of notoriously wicked men; but to rebuke great and good men for their conduct, and to impeach their discernment, is the highest effort of moral courage.”



in human diseases, which the World Health Organization has recently reported. Both factors contribute to the malnourishment and disease susceptibility of 3.7 billion people. Air pollution from smoke and various chemicals kills three million people a year. In the United States alone about three million tons of toxic chemicals are released into the environment—contributing to cancer, birth defects, immune system defects and many other serious health problems. Soil is contaminated by many chemicals and pathogens, which are passed on to humans through direct contact or via food and water. Increased soil erosion worldwide not only results in more soil being blown but spreading of disease microbes and various toxins. (*ScienceDaily*, August 14, 2007)

Md. Police Put Activists’ Names on Terror Lists

The Maryland State Police classified 53 nonviolent activists as terrorists and entered their names and personal information into state and federal databases that track terrorism suspects, the state police chief acknowledged. Police Superintendent Terrence Sheridan revealed at a legislative hearing that the surveillance operation, which targeted opponents of the death penalty and the Iraq war, was far more extensive than was known when its existence was disclosed in July. The former state police superintendent who authorized the operation, Thomas Hutchins, defended the program. He said the program was a bulwark against potential violence and called the activists “fringe people.” Sheridan said protest groups were also entered as terrorist organizations in the databases, but his staff has not identified which ones. “I don’t believe the First Amendment is any guarantee to those who wish to disrupt the government,” Hutchins said. But Sen. James Brochin (D-Baltimore County) noted that undercover troopers used aliases to infiltrate organizational meetings, rallies and group e-mail lists. He called the spying a “deliberate infiltration to find out every piece of information necessary” on groups such as the Maryland Campaign to End the Death Penalty and the Baltimore Pledge of Resistance. Sheridan said that he did not think the names were circulated to other agencies in the federal system and that they are not on the federal government’s terrorist watch list, but Hutchins said some names might have been shared with the National Security Agency. (*Washington Post*, October 8, 2008)

—Holly,
Maple City, Washington

Native Forest Council & Forest Voice Turn 20!!!

We’re celebrating 20 years this year, looking back on where we’ve been and looking forward to the next 20 years. We’re also looking for your feedback on the content and quality of our one-of-a-kind newspaper, the *Forest Voice*. In particular:

- In what way has the *Forest Voice* educated you over the years?
- Did any particular articles teach you something new? Enrage you? Give you hope?
- Any pictures that just blew you away, from a stunning forestscape to a heart-wrenching clearcut?
- What features in the paper would you like to see more of? Less of?

We’ll publish some of the responses in future issues, and use the feedback to make your *Forest Voice* newspaper more of what you want to see. (Send to PO Box 2190, Eugene, OR 97402 or info@forestcouncil.org.) Thanks to all our supporters for staying true to your principles and supporting the Native Forest Council and the *Forest Voice* through the years!

What Happened on the Way to the Inauguration?

By Tim Hermach

The transition to a new administration held promise of a change in leadership and direction for our foundering economy and deeply stupefied and polarized population. Running on a platform of hope and change, Barack Obama promised a new direction for America. Now, six weeks after the election and a month before the inauguration, the change we were counting on seems a remote possibility at best, at worst, a nasty deception that was foisted on a public starved for a chance to create the lives we as Americans have been led to believe were available to us.

President-elect Obama has chosen a cabinet, most from President Clintons right-of-center team. Many of these Clinton retreads have even drifted farther into the pockets of Wall Street since their time in the White House. He has traded former Chevron board member Condi Rice for current Chevron Board member Jim Jones. He has chosen financial sector power player and former Clinton staffer Rahm Emmanuel as his chief of staff. His pick to head the Department of the Interior is a big oil and coal proponent and his Agriculture pick is a supporter of GMO's and the fantasy of corn ethanol. This is not change; this is the status quo on steroids.

During the campaign, the dogmatic democrats and the liberal folks hoping and praying for change continually espoused the line "we have to get him elected then we will hold his feet to the fire." A huge groundswell of folk put their hearts and souls into what became a unique and unstoppable campaign. Unprecedented fundraising and internet organizing combined with the collapse of the economy carried Barack Obama to victory in an electoral landslide. Now Obama's blueprint is coming into focus and all those who were so sure that change was at hand should be screaming bloody murder.

"I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of my country. . . . Corporations have been enthroned, an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money-power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until the wealth is aggregated in a few hands and the Republic is destroyed." This quote by Abraham Lincoln provides an insight into what has happened to our coun-



try. The moneyed interests that have extracted most of the wealth from the middle class and fomented a divisive and polarized condition in our society have used their ad agencies, corporate media and wealth to create an illusion of change while keeping the same players in power. When it came time to hold the president-elects feet to the fire, it was done. Not by the forward looking folks who put this man in office, rather, the ruling class who control all things political handed him his cabinet picks and industry and big business are cheering "his" choices.

He has backed off his promise to implement a windfall profits tax on big oil. He has decided not to eliminate the tax breaks for the richest among us. He has decided not to leave Iraq on the schedule he promised. He has supported what has now become an \$8.5 trillion dollar give-away to the same people responsible for crashing the largest and most productive economy on Earth. He is talking about a massive expansion of the already bloated military.

If you're wondering what happened, look no farther than the talking points used by the conservative pundits during the election process. They said Obama had the most liberal record in the Senate. They said he would bring socialism to America. They created a climate of fear in their base about what would happen

to our country if this "Socialist" were elected. They had us believing we were truly looking at a change.

A close look at his policy proposals showed that his positions on the issues were not "far left" as stated. The recurring dialog of the faithful said that when he was elected he would swing gently left and bring real change to our nation. It now appears that the swing was hard to the right and the folks who counted on being heard during this transition will be looking for real change for at least another 4 years.

Again, Abraham Lincoln "It is the eternal struggle between two principles, right and wrong. Throughout the world it is the same spirit that says you toil and work and earn bread and I'll eat it." Today, the corporations and their minions in Washington are eating your bread.

While it is still possible that Mr. Obama will somehow lead the powerful, positional cabinet personalities he has selected and create an Obama administration that will do good for our country, with each pick of an entrenched Washington insider that outcome becomes less likely. If he does not do this, how can our nation survive? Quoting Lincoln again, "This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or exercise their revolutionary right to overthrow it." The last election was an exercise of our constitutional right to amend the government. It does not appear that we were diligent enough in vetting the choices and it now appears who we chose will not manifest the change we were so desperately seeking.

Mr. Obama seems to have decided not to value and regard nature as anything but a savings account to be liquidated or a grocery store to be plundered. All for the benefit of those entrenched powers that are the masters of Wall Street. How much more of this can our nation take? If the incoming administration continues, in general, the failed environmental, economic, social, military, and foreign policies we have endured for decades, it may be time to look at Mr. Lincoln's second option and start over.

Tim Hermach is director of the Native Forest Council.

Salazar and the Tragedy of the Common Ground

By Jeffrey St. Clair

Although America's greatest Interior Secretary, Harold Ickes, who had the post for nearly a decade under FDR, was from Chicago, the playbook for presidential transitions calls for picking a Westerner for Interior, as long as the nominee isn't a Californian. Pick someone from Arizona or New Mexico or Colorado. Of course, Colorado has produced two of the worst recent Interior Secretaries: James Watt and Gale Norton. Ken Salazar may make it three.

And why not? After all, Salazar was one of the first to endorse Gale Norton's nomination as Bush's Interior Secretary.

By almost any standard, it's hard to imagine a more uninspired or uninspiring choice for the job than professional middle-of-the-roader Ken Salazar, the conservative Democrat from Colorado. This pal of Alberto Gonzalez is a meek politician, who has never demonstrated the stomach for confronting the corporate bullies of the west: the mining, timber and oil companies who have been feasting on Interior Department handouts for the past eight years. Even as attorney general of Colorado, Salazar built a record of timidity when it came to going after renegade mining companies.

The editorial pages of western papers have largely hailed Salazar's nomination. The common theme seems to be that Salazar will be "an honest broker." But broker of what? Mining claims and oil leases, most likely.

Less defensible are the dial-o-matic press releases faxed out by the mainstream groups, greenwashing Salazar's dismal record. Here's Carl Pope, CEO of the Sierra Club, who fine-tuned this kind of rhetorical airbrushing during the many traumas of the Clinton years:

"The Sierra Club is very pleased with the nomination of Ken Salazar to head the Interior Department. As a Westerner and a rancher, he understands the value of our public lands, parks, and wildlife and has been a vocal critic of the Bush Administration's reckless efforts to sell-off our public lands to Big Oil and other special interests. Senator Salazar has been a leader in protecting places like the Roan Plateau and he has stood up against the Bush administration's dangerous rush to develop oil shale in Colorado and across the West.

"Senator Salazar has also been a leading voice in calling for the development of the West's vast solar, wind, and geothermal resources. He will make sure that we create the good-paying green jobs that will fuel our economic recovery without harming the public lands he will be charged with protecting."

Who knew that strip-mining for coal, an industry Salazar resolutely promotes, was a green job? Hold on tight, here we go once more down the rabbit hole.

The Sierra Club had thrown its organizational heft behind Mike Thompson, the hook-and-rifle Democratic congressman from northern California. Obama stiffed them and got away with it without enduring even a whimper of disappointment.

In the exhaust-stream, not far beyond Pope, came an organization (you can't call them a group, since they don't really have any members) called the Campaign for American Wilderness, lavishly endowed by the centrist Pew Charitable Trusts, to fete Salazar. According to Mike Matz, the Campaign's executive director, Salazar "has been a strong proponent of protecting federal lands as wilderness...As a farmer, a rancher, and a conservationist, Sen. Salazar understands the importance of balancing traditional uses of our public lands with the need to protect them. His knowledge of land management issues in the West, coupled with his ability to work with diverse groups and coalitions to find common ground, will serve him well at the Department of the Interior."

Whenever seasoned greens see the word "common Winter 2009

ground" invoked as a solution for thorny land use issues in the Interior West it sets off an early warning alarm. "Common ground" is another flex-phrase like, "win-win" solution that indicates greens will be handed a few low-calorie crumbs while business will proceed to gorge as usual.

In Salazar's case, these morsels have been a few measly wilderness areas inside non-contentious areas, such as Rocky Mountain National Park. Designating a wilderness inside a national park is about as risky as placing the National Mall off-limits to oil drilling.

But Salazar's green gifts haven't come without a cost. In the calculus of common ground politics, trade-offs come with the territory. For example, Salazar, under intense pressure from Coloradoans, issued a tepid remonstrance against the Bush administration's maniacal plan to open up the Roan Plateau in western Colorado to oil drilling. But he voted to authorize oil drilling off the coast of Florida, voted against increased fuel-efficiency standards for cars and trucks and voted against the repeal of tax breaks for Exxon-Mobil when the company was shattering records for quarterly profits.

On the very day that Salazar's nomination was leaked to the press, the Inspector General for the Interior Department released a devastating report on the demolition of the Endangered Species Act under the Bush administration, largely at the hands of the disgraced Julie MacDonald, former Deputy Secretary of Interior for Fish and Wildlife. The IG report, written by Earl Devaney, detailed how MacDonald personally interfered with 13 different endangered species rulings, bullying agency scientists and rewriting biological opinions. "MacDonald injected herself personally and profoundly in a number of ESA decisions," Devaney wrote in a letter to Oregon Senator Ron Wyden. "We determined that MacDonald's management style was abrupt and abrasive, if not abusive, and that her conduct demoralized and frustrated her staff as well as her subordinate managers."

What McDonald did covertly, Salazar might attempt openly in the name of, yes, common ground. Take the case of the white-tailed prairie dog, one of the declining species that MacDonald went to nefarious lengths to keep from enjoying the protections of the Endangered Species Act. Prairie dogs are viewed as pests by ranchers and their populations have been remorselessly targeted for elimination on rangelands across the Interior West.

Ken Salazar, former rancher, once threatened to sue the Fish and Wildlife Service to keep the similarly imperiled black-tailed prairie dog off the endangered species list. The senator also fiercely opposed efforts to inscribe stronger protections for endangered species in the 2008 Farm Bill.

"The Department of the Interior desperately needs a strong, forward looking, reform-minded Secretary," says Kieran Suckling, executive director of the Tucson-based Center for Biological Diversity. "Unfortunately, Ken Salazar is not that man. He endorsed George Bush's selection of Gale Norton as Secretary of Interior, the very woman who initiated and encouraged the scandals that have rocked the Department of the Interior. Virtually all of the misdeeds described in the Inspector General's expose occurred during the tenure of the person Ken Salazar advocated for the position he is now seeking."

As a leading indicator of just how bad Salazar may turn out to be, an environmentalist need only bushwhack through the few remaining daily papers to the stock market pages, where energy speculators, cheered at the Salazar pick, drove up the share price of coal companies, such as Peabody, Massey Energy and Arch Coal. The battered S&P Coal index rose by three per cent on the day Obama introduced the coal-friendly Salazar as his nominee.

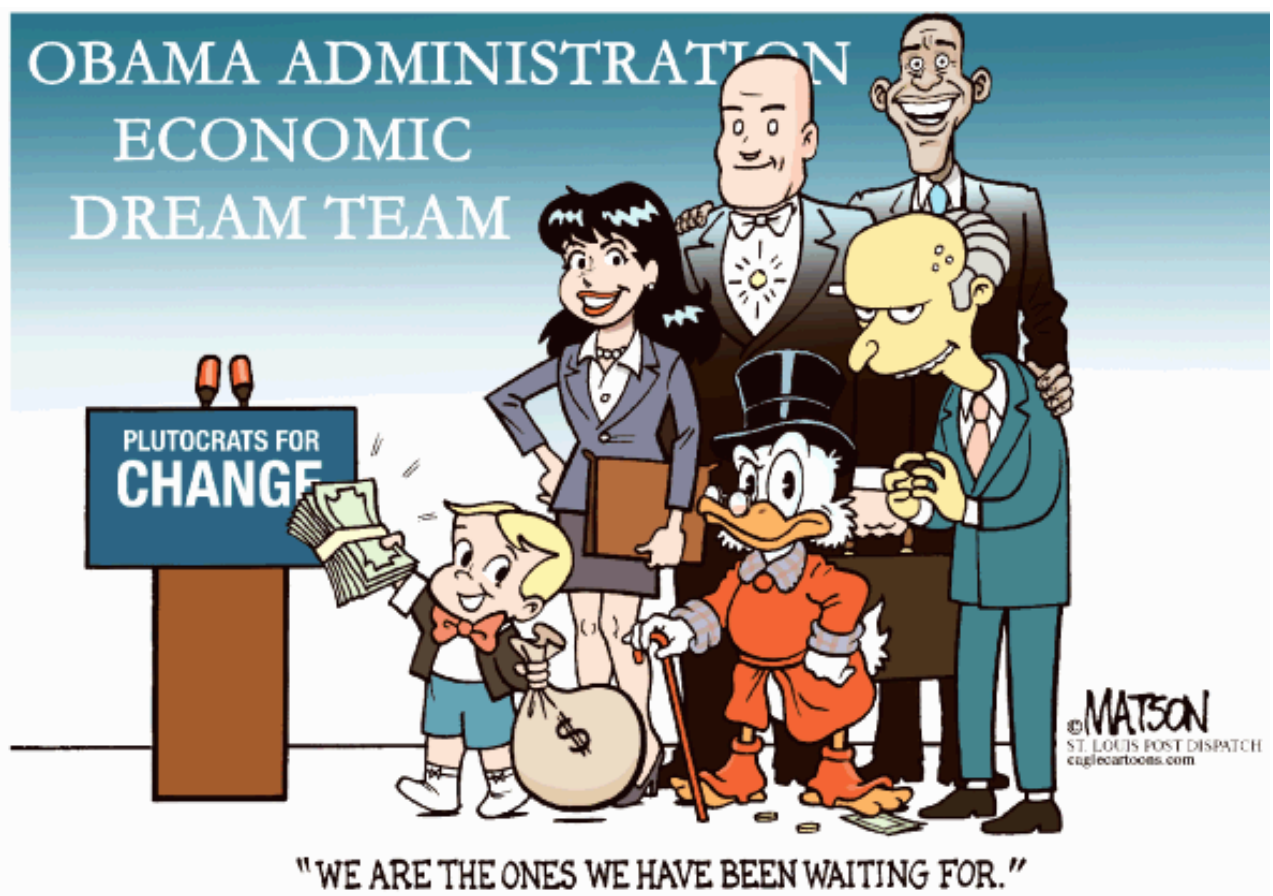
Say this much for Salazar: he's not a Clinton retreat. In fact, he makes Clinton Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt look like Ed Abbey. The only way to redeem Clinton's sorry record on the environment is for Obama to be worse.

As Hot Rod Blajogevich demonstrated in his earthy vernacular, politics is a pay-to-play sport. Like Ken Salazar, Barack Obama's political underwriters included oil-and-gas companies, utilities, financial houses, agribusiness giants, such as Archer Daniels Midlands, and coal companies. These bundled campaign contributions dwarfed the money given to Obama by environmentalists, many of whom backed Hillary in the Democratic Party primaries.

Environmentalists made no demands of Obama during the election and sat silently as he backed off-shore oil drilling, pledged to build new nuclear plants and sang the virtues of the oxymoron known as clean-coal technology. At this point, the president-elect probably feels he owes them no favors. And he gave them none. The environmental establishment cheered.

So the environmental movement has once again been left out in the cold, begging Rahm Emmanuel for a few sub-cabinet appointments. They may get one or two positions out of a couple hundred slots. But Big Green's docile genuflections to Salazar won't make those table-scrap go down any smoother.

Jeffrey St. Clair is the author of "Been Brown So Long It Looked Like Green to Me: the Politics of Nature" and "Grand Theft Pentagon." His newest book, "Born Under a Bad Sky," is now out.books. He can be reached at: sitka@comcast.net.



Save Our Soil!

by Shawn Dell Joyce

We are depleting our topsoil at a rate 10 times greater than nature can replenish it, according to several studies. That's scary because it takes nature up to 500 years to produce one inch of topsoil.

Our 9-year-old son came home from farm camp last summer singing at the top of his lungs: "Dirt, you made my lunch! Thank you dirt, thanks a bunch!" How poignant that this youngster gets what so many of us adults are missing — a basic understanding that we owe our very existence, the food we eat, the clothes we wear and the air we breathe — to dirt!

One heaping tablespoon of the stuff contains more microorganisms than there are people on the planet, points out author Harvey Blatt in "America's Environmental Report Card." Those soil microbes are critically important for healthy plants and crops, which in turn are critically important for healthy humans and other species. Also contained in that tablespoon are the minerals and organic matter which take carbon from the atmosphere and "fix it" into the soil, helping to store moisture and carbon safely in the soil.

In our culture, "dirt" is a derogatory term, like "dirt poor," "dirty," or "soiled." Yet, we need only look back a few years to the 1930s Dust Bowl to see how important dirt really is. In the 1930s, the prairie grasses were plowed under to grow crops. After several years of intense drought, the soils dried out and no crops or native grasses survived to hold the topsoil in place. Winds whipped the topsoil into huge dust storms, causing many families to become refugees, and the loss of more than five inches of topsoil from almost 10 million acres, according to the United Nations.

Five inches may not sound like much, but it takes nature up to 500 years to produce one inch of topsoil. We are depleting our topsoil at a rate 10 times greater than nature can replenish it, according to several studies. [Ed. note: 70% of our nation's topsoil is gone or

polluted.] Topsoil loss is three times worse in more populated places like China and Africa. Chinese topsoil can be found in Hawaii during the spring planting season, blown in the wind to the islands from tilling. African topsoil can be found in Brazil and Florida, according to a US Department of Agriculture report. American topsoil often winds up in our rivers and streams as silt. Many rivers are now brown from topsoil erosion such as the Hudson River in my region.

Our diet and farming practices are the main culprits behind topsoil erosion. Corn is one of the most environmentally-devastating crops to grow. The soil must be tilled, keeping it loose and dry, and vulnerable to erosion. Most of this corn is fed to animals or shipped overseas. For every pound of beef (fed with corn) we lose five pounds of fertile topsoil, according to a Harvard School of Public Health study. This adds up to more than two million acres of topsoil lost every year. On top of this, we lose another million acres to urban sprawl.

"Land degradation and desertification may be regarded as the silent crisis of the world, a genuine threat to the future of humankind," says Andres Arnalds, assistant director of the Icelandic Soil Conservation Service. "Soil and vegetation is being lost at an alarming rate around the globe, which in turn has devastating effects on food production and accelerates climate change."

Soil impacts climate change by storing twice as much carbon as can be found in the atmosphere. Also, soil with organic matter in it holds moisture longer, needing less water for irrigation.

Already, 43% of the Earth's vegetated surface has been degraded by soil depletion, desertification and loss of forests, says author Dale Allen Pfeiffer in his book "Eating Fossil Fuels." Pfeiffer also notes that 10 million hectares of land get added to that figure every year as more lands become degraded. "At the same time, five million hectares must be added to feed the additional 84 million humans born

each year," he adds. What will we do in 2050 with the projected additional three billion more mouths to feed?

"The questions we must ask ourselves now are, how can we allow this to happen, and what can we do to prevent it?," asks Pfeiffer. "Does our present lifestyle mean so much to us that we would subject ourselves and our children to this fast approaching tragedy simply for a few more years of conspicuous consumption?"

A highly effective tool to conserve topsoil is the Conservation Reserve Program, according to Lester Brown of the Earth Policies Institute. Under the program, farmers were paid to plant trees or "cover crops," such as clover, on highly erodible farmland. Reducing tillage was also encouraged. These techniques in combination reduced US topsoil loss from 3.1 billion tons in 1982 to 1.9 billion tons in 1997.

Here are a few things you can do to reduce topsoil loss:

- **Compost fall leaves and vegetable trimmings. Use the compost to enrich the soil in your yard or garden.**

- **Eat only pasture-raised local meats and avoid corn-fed factory farmed meats. [Ed. note: Or become a vegetarian.]**

- **Don't buy or support biofuels made from corn.**

- **Buy direct from small farmers who are less likely to use large scale cultivators.**

- **Teach your children to sing: "Dirt, you made my lunch!"**

Shawn Dell Joyce is a sustainable artist and activist living in a green home in the Hudson River Valley of New York. She can be reached at Shawn@ShawnDellJoyce.com. (Source: www.sedona.biz/sustainable-living0907.htm)

Corporate Takeover Threatens Our Drinking Water Supplies

by Alan Snitow and Deborah Kaufman

In the last few years, the world's largest financial institutions and pension funds, from Goldman Sachs to Australia's Macquarie Bank, have figured out that old, trustworthy utilities and infrastructure could become reliable cash cows — supporting the financial system's speculative junk derivatives with the real concrete of highways, water utilities, airports, harbors, and transit systems.

The spiraling collapse of the financial system may only intensify the quest for private investments in what is now the public sector. This flipping of public assets could be the next big phase of privatization, and it could happen even under an Obama administration, as local and state governments, starved during Bush's two terms in office, look to bail out on public assets, employees, and responsibilities. The Republican record of neglect of basic infrastructure reads like a police blotter: levees in New Orleans, a major bridge in Minneapolis, a collapsing power grid, bursting water mains, and outdated sewage treatment plants.

Billions in private assets are now parked in "infrastructure funds" waiting for the crisis to mature and the right public assets to buy on the cheap. The first harbingers of a potential fire sale are already on the horizon. The City of Chicago has leased its major highway and Indiana its toll road. Private companies are managing major ports and bidding for control of local water systems across the country. Government jobs are also up for sale. For the first time in American history, the federal government employs more contract workers than regular employees.

This radical shift to the private sector could become one of history's largest transfers of ownership, control, and wealth from the public trust to the private till. But more is at stake. The concept of democracy itself is being challenged by multinational corporations that

see Americans not as citizens, but as customers, and government not as something of, by, and for the people, but as a market to be entered for profit.

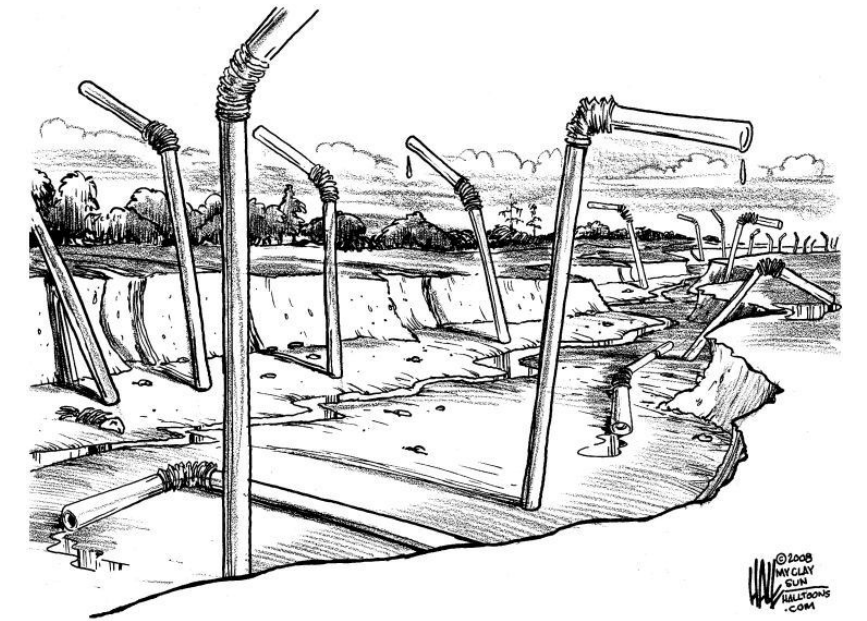
How the Water Revolt Began

And a huge market it is. About 85% of Americans receive their water from public utility departments, making water infrastructure, worth trillions of dollars, a prime target for privatization. To drive their agenda, water industry lobbyists have consistently opposed federal aid for public water agencies, hoping that federal cutbacks would drive market expansion. So far, the strategy has worked. In 1978, just before the Reagan-era starvation diet began, federal funding covered 78% of the cost for new water infrastructure. By 2007, it covered just 3%.

As a result, local and state governments are desperately trying to figure out how to make up the difference without politically unpopular rate increases. A growing number of mayors and governors are turning to the industry's designated solution: privatization.

Providing clean, accessible, affordable water is not only the most basic of all government services, but throughout history, control of water has defined the power structure of societies. If we lose control of our water, what do we, as citizens, really control?

The danger is that most citizens don't even know there's a problem. Water systems are generally underground and out of sight. Most of us don't think about our water until the tap runs dry or we flush and it doesn't go away. That indifference could cost us dearly, but privatization is not yet destiny.



on corruption, cover-ups, and complicity between politicians and giant corporations.

One of the epicenters of this nascent movement has been Stockton, California, in the heart of the state's agricultural San Joaquin Valley. A citizens' group there took on not only the mayor and city council, but also some of the world's largest private water corporations in a preview of the corporate water wars to come.

When private water companies case a city as a potential privatization target, they look for a "champion" in city government, someone who will take the lead in selling off the city's water services. In Stockton, they found their champion in Mayor Gary Podesto, a former "big box" grocery store owner. In his view, it was "time that Stockton city government treat its citizens as customers."

And so a new stage in the water privatization wars beckons as Goldman Sachs, Macquarie bank, huge pension funds, and billionaire investors hop on the infrastructure bandwagon.

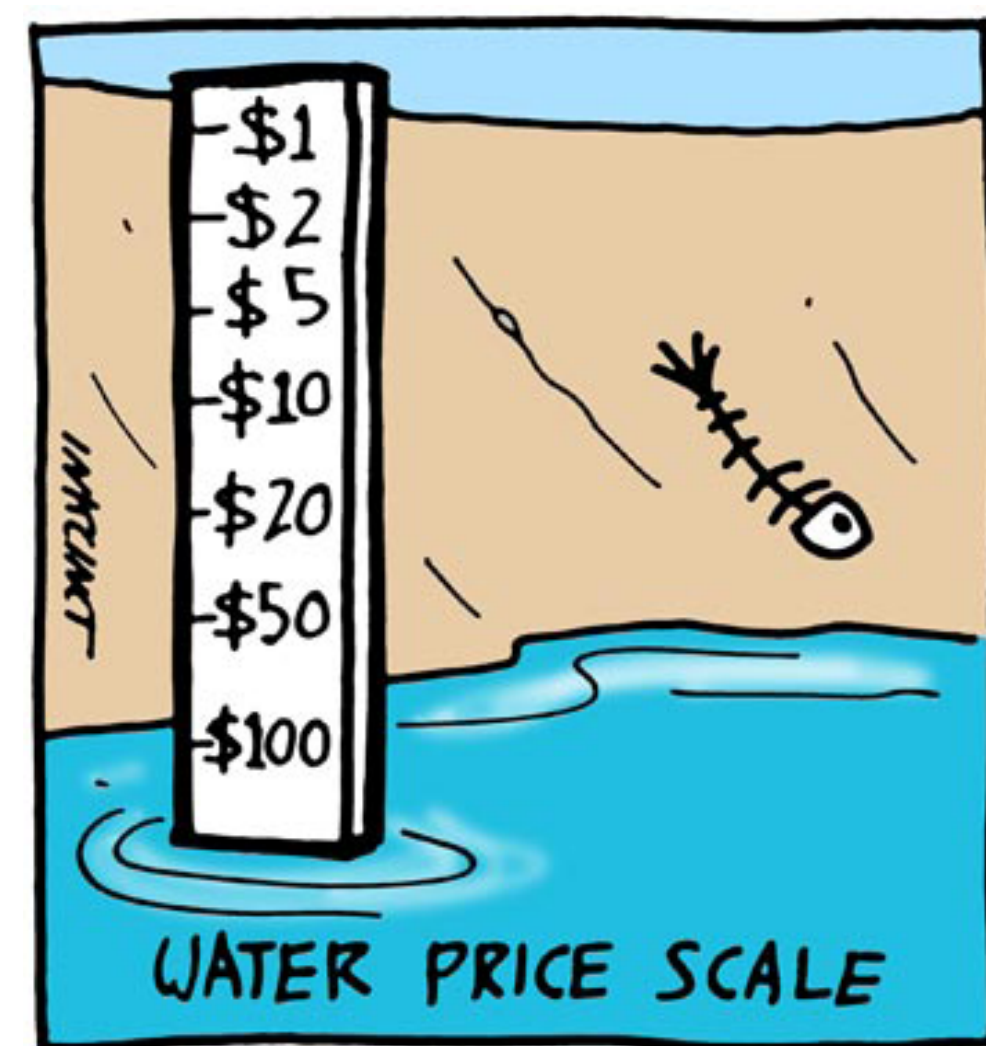
Will the Democrats resist the trend? Past history suggests that the Party is deeply split on the issue of privatization and that only public resistance has slowed the fire sale. No matter who is president, the fate of public services and assets is likely to be left to local citizens groups that have cut their teeth on water battles like the one in Stockton.

Those local groups have already coalesced into a national movement for a democratic and sustainable water future. The unanswered question is whether these twenty-first century water wars are merely a last stand against an inevitable corporatized future, or the beginning of a far-reaching revolt to reclaim citizenship, reassert democratic values, and redefine how we interact with our environment.

Alan Snitow and Deborah Kaufman are award-winning filmmakers whose PBS documentary "Thirst" was the first film to bring attention to the global movement against water privatization. Their book by the same name exposed how the corporate drive to control water has become a catalyst for community resistance to globalization. Snitow is on the board of Food and Water Watch. Kaufman is on the board of the Progressive Jewish Alliance. This essay was adapted from a longer version in "Water Consciousness: How We All Have to Change to Protect Our Most Critical Resource," edited by Tara Lohan.



A pretty serious case of topsoil depletion?



A citizens' water revolt has been slowly spreading across the United States. The revolt is not made up of "the usual suspects," has no focused ideology, and isn't the stuff of headlines. It often starts as a "not-in-my-backyard" movement but quickly expands to encompass issues of global economic justice.

In Lee, Massachusetts, the revolt began against potential water-plant layoffs. In Felton, California, it was initially about rate increases and local control; in Atlanta, broken pipes and sewage lines. In other communities, it focused

H₂Omeland Security & the US Forest Service

Clean Water is ESSENTIAL for Life



The Forest Service has a mandate to protect our precious water. Unfortunately, they do not always live up to this goal...



From the US Forest Service Website:

- “Forests are a source of drinking water for over 180 million people in the United States.”
- “The National Forest System was established with the purpose of “securing favorable conditions of waterflows” in the nation’s headwaters.”
- “Healthy forests provide a host of watershed services, including water purification, groundwater and surface flow regulation, erosion control, and streambank stabilization.”
- “The importance of these watershed services will only increase as water quality becomes a critical issue around the globe.”
- “The loss or decline of forests, our ecological life-support systems, causes significant harm to the nation’s economy and to public-health and well-being.”
-

However, the pictures at the right tell a different story. The Forest Service is selling off our national treasures at a financial loss, and our watersheds are paying the price.



At least 36 states anticipate water shortages within the next 10 years.

—US Government Accountability Office, 2003



Is this how we allow our public servants to act?

Zero Cut on Public Lands

“Clean” Coal? A Dirty Lie

From cradle to grave, ground to ash, the damages coal causes to our environment and society are enormous. Unfortunately, the consequences of burning coal for electricity do not normally weigh into our national discussions about our energy future. As this report shows, the costs of using coal are high and are continuing to rise, especially as our understanding of the consequences of global warming grows.

The coal industry knows that the equation must change or they will be out of business. That is why they are pushing putative “clean” coal. But, coal as it exists today is anything but clean. Ambiguously defined, “clean coal” has become little more than an empty technological promise of a different way of doing business. Coal advocates, including the people and politicians who benefit the most from Big Coal’s checkbook, point to technological innovations they claim can help lessen the worst impacts of burning coal. Ironically, what they do not reveal is that industry has been fighting standards to clean up coal plants tooth and nail since the Clean Air Act was passed, and that a lot of older plants still do not have even the most basic — and readily available — pollution control devices. These coal advocates also fail to look at the full life cycle of coal, focusing their sight on the more well-known damages caused during the burn.

The two supposedly “clean coal” technologies that have attracted the most attention in recent years are carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) and Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle (IGCC). Carbon capture and sequestration is a process where carbon dioxide produced at coal-fired power plants is captured from the plant’s exhaust and then stored underground to prevent it from entering the atmosphere. Although in theory CCS sounds promising, the challenges are enormous, ranging from separating out the CO₂ and transporting it to figuring out how to make sure it stays sealed off for thousands of years to come. In addition, the scale needed to store all of the carbon dioxide pollution from our nation’s coal-fired plants is massive, and would require huge undertakings to ensure that it does not leak into the atmosphere. As of now, carbon capture and storage has not been demonstrated with anything approaching the emissions of a coal-fired power plant and remains an unproven technology. Experts also disagree as to how long it will take for this technology to be available for commercial and wide-scale use.

The second technology, Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle (IGCC), is an alternative system for coal-fired power plants that converts coal to a gas that is burned to produce electricity. IGCC is often promoted as the easiest system to retrofit to capture carbon dioxide emissions in the future should

CCS work out. Proponents also like IGCC because it can emit lower amounts of soot and smog pollution. However, it emits just as much global warming pollution as other coal plants, not to mention the environmental and societal damages caused by mining the coal to fuel the plant and all of the additional coal combustion wastes. Until carbon capture and storage technologies are better developed, the carbon dioxide emissions will be much the same as any other coal plant.

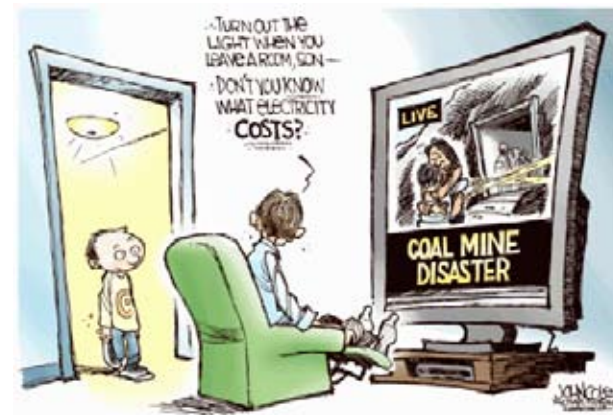
The truth is that promises of these and other future technological innovations that will allow us to use coal with less pollution are not available today. Not surprisingly, these same “clean coal” advocates are also behind efforts to jumpstart a new “coal-to-liquids” industry. Liquid coal creates almost double the carbon dioxide emissions per gallon as regular gasoline, and replacing just 10% of our nation’s fuel with it would require a more than 40% increase in coal mining. On top of these environmental damages, liquid coal needs billions of dollars of government subsidies and incentives to be viable, money that could be much better spent cleaning up our current use of coal and shifting toward cleaner sources of energy. Taxpayers gambled on liquid coal syn-fuels 30 years ago and lost billions of dollars, a lesson we should not have to learn twice.

Finally, as this report documents, the inescapable conclusion is that mining coal leads to environmental destruction, polluted waters, and devastated communities. Burning coal causes serious air pollution, jeopardizes our public health, and contributes substantially to global warming. Coal wastes also put our health at risk, polluting drinking water and harming people who live near landfills and impoundments. These dirty secrets have serious societal and economic impacts that need to be calculated into our decisions about the energy future we are building now.

The challenge of cleaning up the way we mine and use coal is not small by any means. On average, our country consumes more than three million tons of coal every day, or about 20 pounds of coal for every person in the nation every day of the year. We mine more than 1.1 billion tons of coal a year, and generate about half of our electricity from coal. To minimize the devastating effects of the way we currently use coal, we need to strengthen our nation’s laws and put policies into place to protect our communities and our environment. Some of these have already been proposed, like restoring the Clean Water Act’s prohibition on filling streams and wetlands with waste.

We owe it to our children to consider smarter, cleaner, healthier options for meeting our energy needs rather than locking ourselves into using a polluting, backward technology for the next 50 years that harms people, damages our environment, and makes global warming much worse. At the same time, we need to be wary of continuing to hitch our future to nonrenewable resources or buying into false promises about dealing with pollution somewhere down the road. We must make sure that coal is mined responsibly, burned cleanly, and does not exacerbate global warming if it continues to be part of our nation’s energy equation.

(Source: www.sierraclub.org/coal)



TVA Dumps Coal Sludge

In a single year, a coal-fired electric plant deposited more than 2.2 million pounds of toxic materials in a holding pond that failed the week before Christmas, flooding 300 acres in East Tennessee, according to a 2007 inventory filed with the Environmental Protection Agency.

The inventory, disclosed by the Tennessee Valley Authority [TVA] at the request of The New York Times, showed that in just one year, the plant’s byproducts included 45,000 pounds of arsenic, 49,000 pounds of lead, 1.4 million pounds of barium, 91,000 pounds of chromium and 140,000 pounds of manganese. Those metals can cause cancer, liver damage and neurological complications, among other health problems.

And the holding pond, at the Kingston Fossil Plant, a TVA plant 40 miles west of Knoxville, contained many decades’ worth of these deposits.

For days, authority officials have maintained that the sludge released in the spill is not toxic, though coal ash has long been known to contain dangerous concentrations of heavy metals. A week after the spill, the authority issued a joint statement with the EPA and other agencies recommending that direct contact with the ash be avoided and that pets and children should be kept away from affected areas.

Residents complained that the authority had been slow to issue information about the contents of the ash and the water, soil and sediment samples taken in and around the spill.

“They think that the public is stupid, that they can’t put two and two together,” said Sandy Gupton, a registered nurse who hired an independent firm to test the spring water on her family’s 300-acre farm, now sullied by sludge from the spill. “It took five days for the TVA to respond to us.”

Richard W. Moore, the inspector general of the authority, said he would open an investigation into the cause of the spill, the adequacy of the response, and how to prevent spills from similar landfills at other authority plants, according to a report in The Knoxville News Sentinel.

Elevated levels of lead and thallium and what the Environmental Protection Agency called “very high” levels of arsenic have been found in water samples taken near the site of the spill.

Though the EPA, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation and the authority have spoken daily about their efforts to monitor air, soil and water quality, complete results have been released for only two samples, both taken from a drinking water intake site that is upstream of the spill.

A test for heavy metals in water, soil or sediment should take two to eight hours, said Peter Schulert, the chief executive of the Environmental Science Corporation, an environmental laboratory near Nashville. “There’s no reason why you couldn’t have the results within a day,” Mr. Schulert said.

(New York Times)

Turning Forests and Food into Gas? A Bad Idea

by Denny Haldeman

Once again, we find our political leadership united around a very bad idea — ethanol and other biofuels — to help gain “energy independence,” to “help farmers” and most importantly, to help citizens avoid the harsh reality of peak oil converging with unsustainable lifestyles.

While some crops are superior to others and forest-eating cellululosic ethanol technology scams are still in development, corn ethanol primacy is devouring the nation’s alternative energy focus. Billions of taxpayer dollars are being thrown into this unsustainable technology and we subsidize each gallon of auto alcohol to the tune of 51 cents per gallon.

To grow enough corn for ethanol to replace our oil addiction would require approximately 482 million acres of cropland, exceeding the current total of 434 million acres of cropland used for all food and fiber. This does not even account for projected growth of oil consumption in the US. There is already a push to put the marginal Conservation Reserve Program lands, vital for wildlife and water quality and quantity, into intense energy crop production.

Old school ethical farmers in the corn belt are already lamenting the destruction of soil-saving windbreaks, some planted during the CCC years, the plowing under of hayfields to corn, highly erodible hilly lands being put into corn, and water drainages being reduced, hearkening back to the depression-era insanity that squandered so much vital topsoil. Cellulosic ethanol scams will fare even worse for the soils as “residues” are scooped up, leaving virtually nothing to feed back to the soil.

In the rush to burn our nation’s dwindling soil resources, corn is king. Corn devours soil nutrients at 12-20 times the rate of soil renewal, meaning it is already a highly unsustainable crop. Corn is also highly dependent on fossil fuel based fertilizer and pesticide inputs. With the inevitable hybridization and genetically modified corn crops, the soil nutrient depletion will accelerate. The Corn Cartel, led by the likes of Archer Daniels Midland and Monsanto, have been working for decades on their plans for corn dominion over the US and are now reaping record profits and subsidies.

In a land already plagued with poisoned groundwater, the incidence of atrazine and other poisons will only become more pervasive. Aquifers, already drained faster than recharge will only dry up faster in direct proportion to our ethanol consumption. It takes around 8,000 gallons of water to produce a gallon of ethanol from corn and each gallon of it leaves eight gallons of toxic waste sludge. Even in the land of 10,000 Lakes, Minnesota is experiencing water shortages from the ethanol production explosion. With 99% of corn production under intensive fossil fuel nitrogen fertilization regimes, there is a directly proportionate resulting contamination of surface and groundwater and growth of the dead zones where our rivers drain.

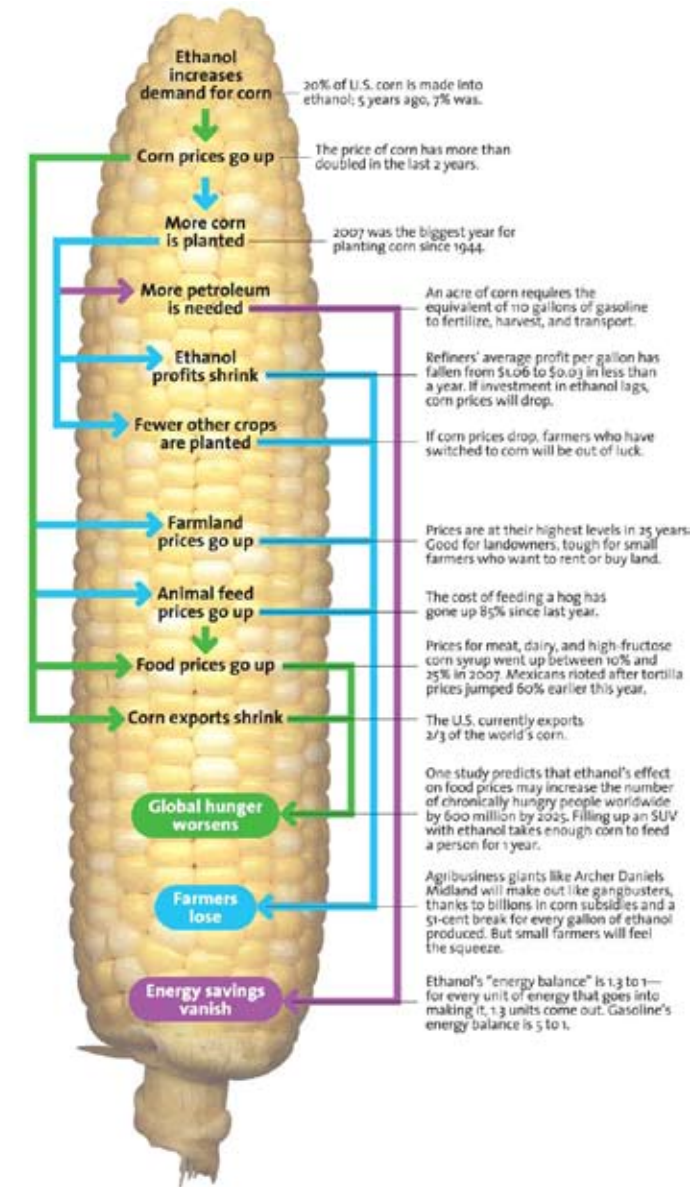
Depending on if you believe the science of the Corn Growers Association or scientists from Cornell University, corn will produce slightly more energy than is required to turn it into ethanol or substantially less. Having monitored the bioenergy crowd for a decade,

repeated inquiries into true sustainability have been met with deafening silence. There is no ethanol plant in operation that can plant, grow, harvest, transport, process, and transport its product on ethanol alone and still show a profit.

Ethanol also contains only 70% of the energy of gasoline. Therefore, it takes much more ethanol to go a hundred miles than it takes gas, undermining the 10-cent price difference at the pump that seems like you are saving money and the earth. Ethanol blends also evaporate far more readily, causing a toxic nauseous moment at the pump and increasing ozone pollution. With the EPA poised to adjust ozone pollution standards to actually protect people, and Chattanooga’s history of barely tolerable air, it is unconscionable for the ethanol bandwagon committee here to be falling for this scam.

Today, communities are fighting proposed ethanol plants on issues from water consumption, water quality, noxious fumes, noise, traffic safety, and other quality of life issues.

Do we feed cars or ourselves? To fuel the average American consumer’s driving habits would require 11 acres of cropland per year, the same cropland that could feed seven peo-



graphic courtesy Mother Jones

ple for a year. Already we’ve seen tortilla riots in Mexico and other places where corn is a food staple and the 60% price increase is prohibitive for the least affluent amongst us.

Ethanol primacy is in direct competition for the dairy and animal industry. In the US, the USDA projects that the wholesale price of chicken will be 10% higher this year, the price of eggs up 21%, milk 14%, beef 6% and this is only the beginning. Other food crops like soybeans, wheat, barley are being plowed under to feed cars instead. Already in Germany there is a shortage of barley leading the good Germans to fear for the future of their beer.

After we do the inevitable Enron-style bailout of the ethanol scamsters, we will be left with soils so depleted of basic nutrients that any subsequent food production will be lower in nutrients, adversely affecting human and animal health and well being.

Indonesian and Brazilian rainforests are falling for ethanol and bioenergy production, slavery is making a comeback, peasants are being driven further into the forests, paramilitary corn cartels are stealing land in Columbia, endangered species are on the run and unmindful consumers of the over-developed world keep on consuming with nary a thought.

The ethanol scam will only accelerate global warming. As forests are cleared, more carbon is released than could ever possibly be avoided by burning ethanol. The mere act of using ethanol as a panacea to keep consumption and the American Weigh alive and unwell, will keep consumers unmindful and uncaring. Politically, that is what this whole snake/corn oil boondoggle is all about. To paraphrase the Jack Nicholson line... “We can’t handle the truth.. about corn, peak oil, unsustainable lifestyles and how we’re ripping off future generations.” The switchgrass crowd, biodiesel crowd, and others intent on devouring soil and landscapes, might be somewhat less devastating, but the same problems will exist to the degree that the Earth’s ability to support us declines and the other degrees continue to rise.

If we poured trillions of dollars in subsidies to the oil and corn industries and untold resources into truly sustainable technologies, we could actually avert the worst case scenario of the end of oil and ensuing chaos and anarchy. Consumption-based taxation on fuels, vastly improved mileage standards with current technology and technology in development, supporting improvements in solar, wind and storage technologies, car pooling, a conscientious and ethical public, combined with our ingenuity and technical prowess, we could develop truly sustainable options without a noticeable impact on our sacred standard of living like we’re the only creatures on the planet.

There is a reason that Toyota is now the biggest auto dealer in the US: innovation and mileage. The Chevy Volt is promising to get 150 mpg, mostly driven by electricity. Solar technology is on the verge of becoming competitive to the Earth-ripping, subsidized technologies of ripping mountain tops off for coal, mining and leaving nuclear waste for 10,000 generations to deal with, and oil wars that kill and maim millions. Decentralized solar and wind could power virtually all of our current home and transportation needs. If we quit driving our food an average of 1,500 miles per bite and bought locally, lived within our means as communities and individuals, we might find an actual higher quality of life as we re-create communities based on our old values of taking care of the planet for future generations, living by the golden rule, and being tough enough to figure things out and do right. Just sit down by your car and take a swig of your favorite ethanol beverage, share a shot with your SUV, and ponder ways to avert disaster and the bad-mouthing of us by who is left of posterity.

Denny Haldeman is a carpenter, organic farmer, and a founding member of Earthworks.



Why Won't We talk About Overpopulation?

by Albert Bartlett

Throughout the world, scientists are prominently involved in seeking solutions to the major global problems such as global climate change and the growing inadequacy of energy supplies. They present their writings in publications ranging from newspapers to refereed scientific journals, but with a few rare exceptions, on one point they all replace objectivity with "political correctness." In their writings the scientists identify the cause of the problems as being growing populations. But their recommendations for solving the problems caused by population growth almost never include the recommendation that we advocate stopping population growth. Political Correctness dictates that we do not address the current problem of overpopulation in the U.S. and the world.

We can demonstrate that the Earth is overpopulated by noting the following:

A SELF-EVIDENT TRUTH

If any fraction of the observed global warming can be attributed to the actions of humans, then this, by itself, constitutes clear and compelling evidence that the human population, living as we do, has exceeded the Carrying Capacity of the Earth, a situation that is clearly not sustainable.

As a consequence it is AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH

that all proposals or efforts at the local, national or global levels to solve the problems of global warming are serious intellectual frauds if they fail to advocate that we address the fundamental cause of global warming: namely overpopulation.

We can demonstrate that the U.S. is overpopulated by noting that we now (2008) import something like 60% of the petroleum that we consume, around 15% of the natural gas that we consume and about 20% of the food we eat. Because the U.S. population increases by something over 3 million per year, all of these fractions are increasing. Natural gas production in North America has peaked in spite of the drilling of hundreds of new gas wells annually. In a nutshell, the U.S. in 2008 is unsustainable.

Let's look at two prominent examples of this political correctness. The book, "An Inconvenient Truth" was published to accompany Al Gore's wonderful film by the same name. On page 216 Gore writes; "The fundamental relationship between our civilization and the ecological system of the Earth has been utterly and radically transformed by the powerful convergence of three factors. The first is the population explosion..."

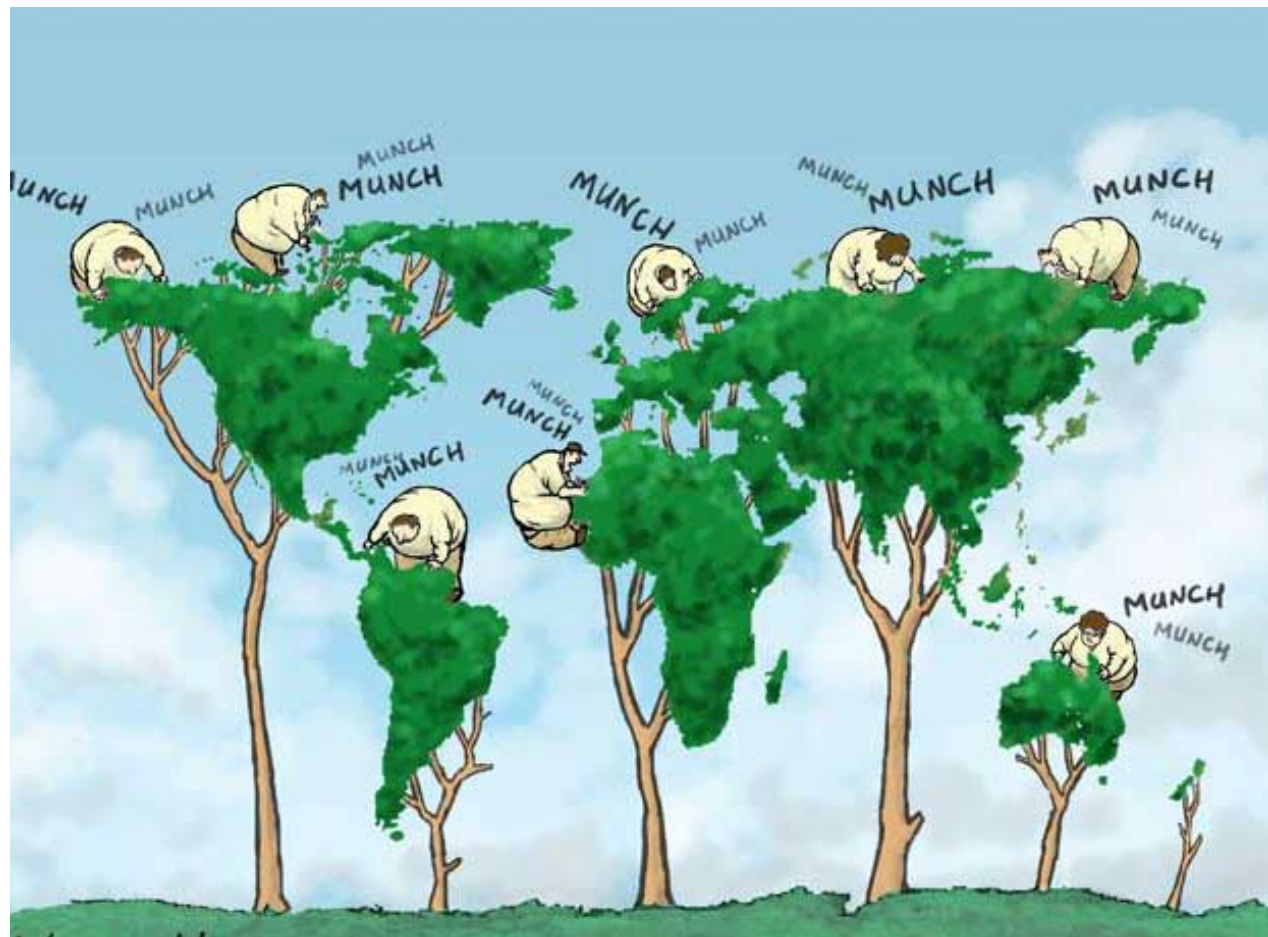
It's clear that Gore understands the role of overpopulation in the genesis of global climate change. The last chapter in the book has the title, "So here's what you personally can do to help solve the climate crisis." The list of 36 things starts with "Choose energy-efficient lighting" and runs through an inventory of all of the usual suspects without ever calling for us to address overpopulation!

As a second example, in the Clearinghouse Newsletter we read the statement, "Human Impacts on Climate" from the Council of the American Geophysical Union, The title recognizes the human component of climate change which we note is roughly proportional to the product of the number of people and their average per capita annual resource consumption. The last paragraph of the A.G.U. statement starts with the sentence, "With climate change, as with ozone depletion, the human footprint on Earth is apparent." The rest of the paragraph suggests what must be done, and it's all the standard boilerplate. "Solutions will necessarily involve all aspects of society. Mitigation strategies and adaptation responses will call for collaborations across science, technology, industry, and government." Etc., Etc., Etc... There is no mention of addressing the overpopulation that the statement recognizes is the cause of the problems.

(The above article first appeared in the Teachers Clearinghouse for Science and Society Education Newsletter, Spring 2008.)

Scientific American and the Silent Lie

The September 2006 issue of *Scientific American* is a "Special Issue" devoted to "Energy's Future Beyond Carbon" with the subtitle "How to Power the Economy and Still Fight Global Warming." As I read the issue I thought of Captain Renault, the Chief of Police in the movie "Casablanca" who says to an assistant, "Major Strasser has been shot. Round up the usual suspects." The implication of the Chief's order is clear. Never mind finding the culprit, just "round up the usual suspects."



A few years ago I wrote an article calling the attention of the physics community to this shortcoming. To my amazement, most of the letters to the editor responding to my article supported the politically correct unscientific point of view.

Many journalists look to the scientists for advice. The scientists won't talk about overpopulation, so the journalists and the reading public can easily conclude that overpopulation is not a problem. As a result, we have things such as the cover story in *Time* magazine, April 9, 2007, "The Global Warming Survival Guide: 51 Things You Can Do to Make a Difference." The list contained such useful recommendations as "Build a Skyscraper," (No. 9, Pg. 74) but not one of the 51 recommendations deals with the need to address overpopulation!

What's one to do when scientists and political leaders demonstrate their understanding of the fact that overpopulation is the main

cause of these gigantic global problems, yet the scientists' recommendations for dealing with the problems never call for addressing overpopulation?

The main body of this special issue consists of nine articles relating to global warming, each dealing with one or more of the usual suspects. These are summarized in the first article, "A Climate Repair Manual." There we read that global warming is a major problem: "Preventing the transformation of the earth's atmosphere from greenhouse to unconstrained hothouse represents arguably the most imposing scientific and technical challenge that humanity has ever faced. Climate change compels a massive restructuring of the world's energy economy. The slim hope for keeping atmospheric carbon below 500 ppm hinges on aggressive programs of energy efficiency instituted by national governments." The culprit is world population growth, but *Scientific American* is just rounding up the usual suspects.

(The complete article is at www.culturechange.org/cms/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=85&Itemid=1.)

Albert A. Bartlett, physics professor emeritus at University of Colorado at Boulder, has long been a tireless educator of the public on the subjects of energy and the fallacy of sustainable economic growth. He can be reached at albert.bartlett@colorado.edu.

Factory Farms Foul our Soil, Air & Water

Multi-million dollar corporations control many factory farms. The factory farms owned or controlled by these corporations are plagued with pollution problems. Lagoons at many of these operations have broken, failed, or overflowed, leading to major fish kills and other pollution incidents. Operators have sprayed waste in windy and wet weather, on frozen ground, or on land already saturated with manure. More and more, local communities and environmental groups are looking to the courts to remedy environmental violations.

Lagoons and Sprayfields Threaten Public Health

People living near factory farms are placed at risk. Hundreds of gases are emitted by lagoons and the irrigation pivots associated with sprayfields, including ammonia (a toxic form of nitrogen), hydrogen sulfide, and methane. The accumulation of gases formed in the process of breaking down animal waste is toxic, oxygen consuming, and potentially explosive, and farm workers' exposure to lagoon gases has even caused deaths. People living close to hog operations have reported headaches, runny noses, sore throats, excessive coughing, respiratory problems, nausea, diarrhea, dizziness, burning eyes, depression, and fatigue.

The pathogenic microbes in animal waste can also infect people. Water contaminated by animal manure contributes to human diseases such as acute gastroenteritis, fever, kidney failure, and even death. Nitrates seeping from lagoons and sprayfields have contaminated groundwater used for human drinking water. Nitrate levels above 10 mg/l in drinking water increase the risk of methemoglobinemia, or blue baby syndrome, which can cause deaths in infants, and contamination from manure has also been linked to spontaneous abortions. Moreover, the practice of feeding huge quantities of antibiotics to animals in subtherapeutic doses to promote growth has contributed to the rise of bacteria resistant to antibiotics, making it more difficult to treat human diseases. Scientists recently found bacteria with antibiotic resistant genes in groundwater downstream from hog operations.

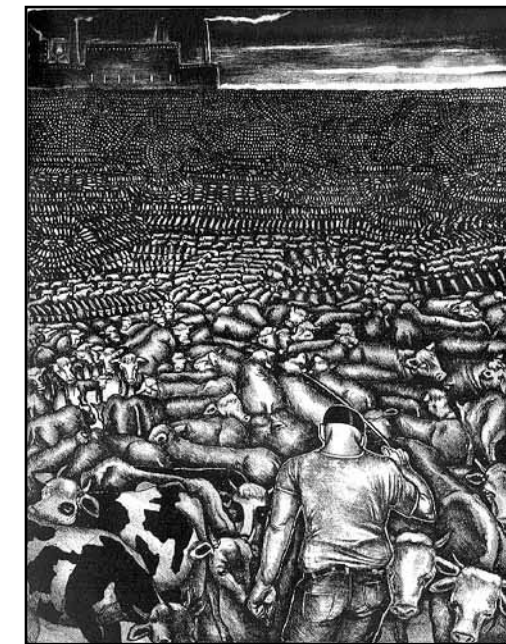
Lagoons and Sprayfields Harm Water Quality

Lagoons and sprayfields pose a grave danger to the water we use for drinking and swimming. Lagoons filled with manure have spilled and burst, dumping thousands and often millions of gallons of waste into rivers, lakes, streams, and estuaries. In addition, the impact of runoff from sprayfields can be severe over time since manure is often over-applied or misapplied to cropland and pastures. There are also often cumulative effects from sprayfield runoff within local watersheds because multiple large-scale feedlots cluster around slaughterhouses. Watersheds as far as 300 miles away are also affected by the atmospheric deposition of ammonia that is emitted from lagoons and sprayfields.

Lagoons and sprayfields are often located in close proximity to waterways and floodplains, which increases the likelihood of ecological damage. Lagoon spills and leaks and runoff from sprayfields have killed fish, depleted oxygen in water, contaminated drinking water, and threatened aquatic life. In many cases, lagoons leak because they are not lined, but leakage may even occur with the use of clay liners, with seepage rates as high as millions of gallons per year. How much a lagoon or sprayfield seeps depends, in part, upon where it is sited. In many places, lagoons and sprayfields have been permitted for places where groundwater can be threatened, such as over alluvial aquifers and in locations with shallow groundwater tables. The lagoon system also depletes groundwater supplies by using large quantities of water to flush the manure into the lagoon and spray it onto fields.

Alternative Approaches to the Lagoon and Sprayfield System Exist

A wide range of alternatives to the lagoon and sprayfield system currently exist, which illustrates that it is not the lack of other options that is driving factory farms to rely



tainable agriculture practices that prevent pollution, such as management intensive rotational grazing, hoop houses, and composting. Alternative technologies that treat the wastewater, including anaerobic digestion, wetlands treatment, and sequencing batch reactors also mitigate some of the risks to surface water, groundwater, air, and public health.

Recommendations

Despite the growing body of evidence that the lagoon and sprayfield system pollutes the environment in numerous ways, the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed technology rules under the Clean Water Act would allow the riskiest lagoons to continue to operate and also allow new lagoons to be built. Instead, EPA should ban new lagoons and sprayfields from being built, and phase-out existing systems. The agency should encourage new concentrated animal feeding operations to use sustainable animal production systems. In addition, EPA's final regulations should include controls that address all air, surface water, and groundwater pollution that can contaminate our lakes, streams, and coastal waters, including ammonia, bacteria, viruses, heavy metals, salt, antibiotics, and other toxins.

(Source: www.sraproject.org)



The Story of Stuff (A Must-See Film)

A masterpiece of low-budget film-making by Annie and Free Range Studios, it is fast becoming the latest poster-child for viral marketing. The website, where you can watch and download the film, www.storyofstuff.com, had a half-million hits in the first two weeks after its release.

The “Story of Stuff” is a short but powerful film about the environmental and social impacts of our current production and consumption systems. The film intends to raise awareness about the often hidden impacts of production and consumption, to highlight the connections between a wide range of issues, and to spark discussion about both the systemic nature of the problem and effective strategies to address them.

The “Story of Stuff” is a fast-paced, fact-filled look at the underside of our production and consumption patterns, with a special focus on the United States. It exposes the connections between a huge number of environmental and social issues and calls for all of us coming together to create a more sustainable and just world. It’ll teach you something. It’ll make you laugh, and it just may change the way you look at all the stuff in your life forever.

To watch “The Story of Stuff,” go to www.thestoryofstuff.com.

Reviews:

Annie Leonard’s “The Story of Stuff” is a mega hit on three levels. First having studied economics right through graduate school, I can tell you that this 20 minute film will make you laugh AND teach you everything you need to know about the global economy. I should have saved my tuition checks. Second, Annie’s use of a short, simple film that breaks a complicated story down to something that we can all understand sets a new bar for activism, bypassing even Gore’s “An Inconvenient Truth.” Annie did this without a multi-million dollar movie budget and award winning directors. Lastly, Annie’s distribution model, giving it away over the web, is going to make this the viral activist hit of the year.

—John Passacantando,
Executive Director,
Greenpeace USA

Annie Leonard has created a masterwork. Her short film “The Story of Stuff” is hilarious, uplifting, and most importantly the clearest explanation of the full cycle of environmental and social impacts intrinsic to our overconsumptive, wasteful, corporate-driven global economy. Every school from middle-schools to colleges should have this film, and discussions of it, firmly in their curriculums. It is amazing how much she has included in a mere 20 minutes, while also making it so very entertaining. This film deserves an Oscar.

—Jerry Mander, author and founder of the
International Forum on Globalization

Annie Leonard’s fast paced video is a must-see for everyone interested in the connection between shopping, the environment, and global economic justice. This fact-filled expose reveals the not-so-hidden costs of economic growth, warning us that Western norms of consumption are neither environmentally sustainable, nor socially desirable.

—Susan Feiner, Professor of Economics, and Director of Women
and Gender Studies at the University of Southern Maine.

“The Story of Stuff” is brilliant! Annie Leonard is on point from start to finish and makes us laugh and moves us to take action, all at the same time. I especially liked the way she centers people and power in the film. This is a one of a kind, powerful work that I will show to my family, friends, and students again and again.

—David N. Pellow, Professor of Ethnic Studies, University
of California, San Diego, and author of “Garbage Wars”

“The Story of Stuff” blows through the arid landscape of the “consumption discussion” like the roadrunner, bringing humor, charm, and an acute political vision to this driest of subjects. It sets a new standard for how to frame and deliver a complex message to a mass audience.

—Andre Carothers, Executive Director Rockwood Leadership Program



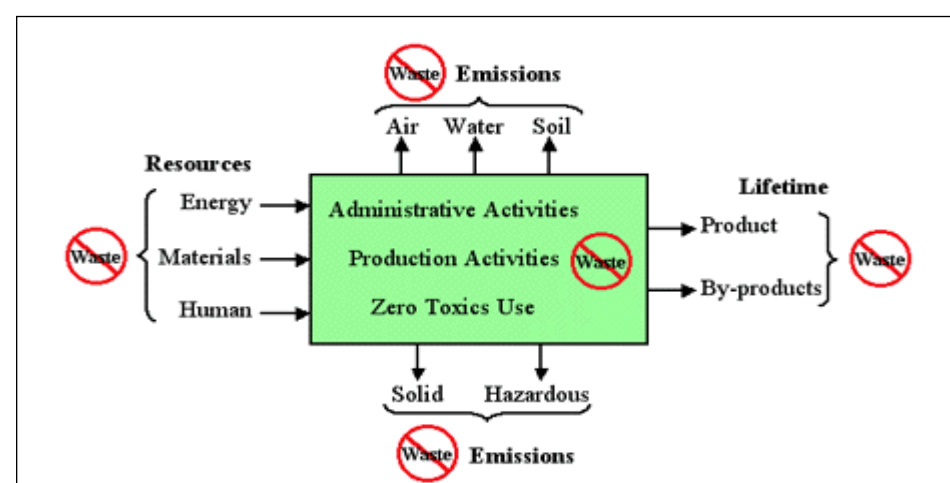
It’s Time For ZERO Waste We Can’t Afford not to

Currently we have a growing population faced with limits of resources from the environment. We understand that our society and industrial systems must begin to mimic nature and move from being primarily linear to being cyclical. Each material must be used as efficiently as possible and must be chosen so that it may either return safely to a cycle within the environment or remain viable in the industrial cycle.

The vision of Zero Waste can be seen as a solution to these needs and a key to our grandchildren’s future. Zero solid waste, zero hazardous waste, zero toxic emissions, zero material waste, zero energy waste and zero waste of human resources will protect the environment and lead to a much more productive, efficient, and sustainable future. The use of an endpoint goal of “zero” recognizes that simply making small steps without a goal may not achieve a sustainable future while use of a clear defined goal will lead to more rapid innovative improvements.

Zero Waste promotes not only reuse and recycling, but also, and more importantly, promotes prevention — designs that consider the entire product life cycle. These new designs will strive for reduced materials use, use of recycled materials, use of more benign materials, longer product lives, repairability, and ease of disassembly at end of life.

A Zero Waste strategy is a sound business tool that, when integrated into business processes, provides an easy to understand stretch goal



that can lead to innovative ways to identify, prevent and reduce wastes of all kinds. It strongly supports sustainability by protecting the environment, reducing costs and producing additional jobs in the management and handling of wastes back into the industrial cycle. A Zero Waste strategy may be applied to businesses, communities, industrial sectors, schools and homes.

(Source: www.zerowaste.org/case.htm)

Corporate Science Curriculum? Our Children Deserve Better.

by John Borowski

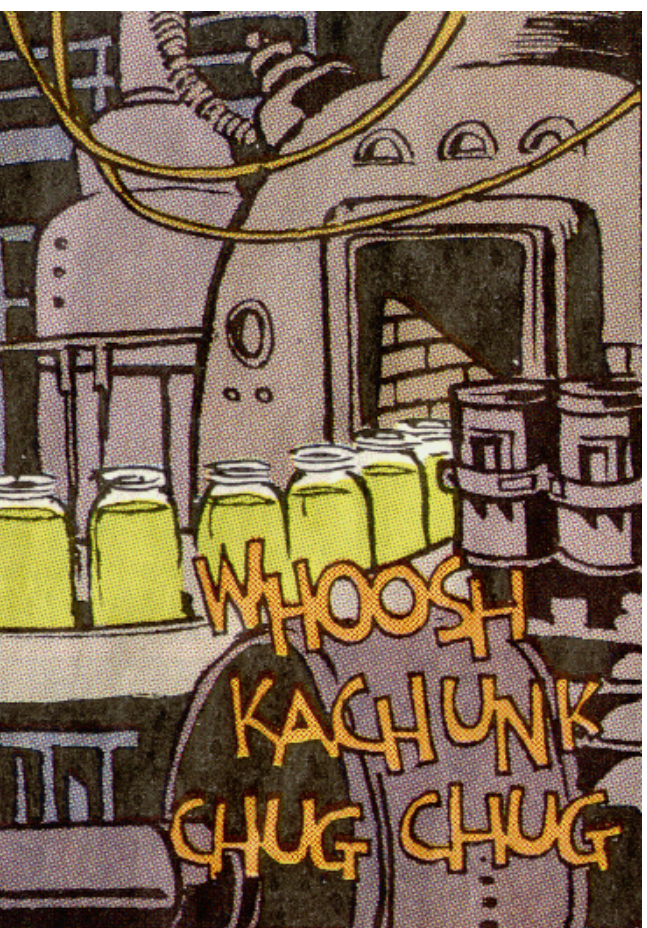
For more than a decade I have attempted to cast a light on “industrial strength” science curriculum: “that curriculum of the corporation, by the corporation and for a corporation’s profits... shall indeed hasten the rate of destruction of the Earth’s resources and indeed, people may perish from the Earth.” I have been an utter failure at convincing many in the environmental community of the importance of reaching out to the 55 million students as future citizens that must be ecologically literate, and that power of ecological knowledge in generating a “love of place” and a genuine, passionate and active response to the looming ecological crisis of species extinction, deforestation and climate change. Never has such a large group of humans gone untapped and ignored in the process of creating change in the name of social good. Yet, corporate entities now spend millions of dollars annually to spawn “science curriculum” for the public good. Theirs is not a curriculum of science; it is a “science of death.” I do not state this glibly or in anger, I state it based in fact. From timber-industry-funded “Project Learning Tree” (PLT) to the charade of energy education by the cartel of oil pimps better known as the American Petroleum Institute, teachers are unwittingly and tragically “teaching” concepts that students may embrace that encourage more oil consumption, more clearcutting and greater avoidance of ecological tenets that clearly state that the Earth as a sustainable system is on life support.

Recently I watched in stunned horror as a Conoco-Philips’ commercial touted its “energy educational materials” for teachers. Is this the same Conoco-Philips that wants to exploit wildlife rich Amazon jungle habitat and their native cultures for black gold? Is this the same Conoco-Philips that touts “clean coal” technology: an oxymoron that ranks in its hypocrisy with phrases like “sustainable development” and “smart growth?” You know, the Conoco-Philips who had their director of corporate communications, Bill Tanner, state to the *Times of Trenton*: “The oil and gas industry has lost touch with the public.” No problem, let’s take a sliver of our huge oil profits to lie to teachers and their students.

Sitting in front of me I have PLT curriculum, which, like an educational malignancy, has spread falsehoods, half-truths and obfuscations about forest ecology in classrooms around the nation. PLT now embraces working with the American Petroleum Institute on energy issues. In their “energy module” there is no substantive discussion on climate change, acidification of the oceans, or peak oil. For years, I have toiled to inform other teachers that PLT is the poster child for “guilty of the worst sin — omission” curriculum I have ever thumbed through. Yes, detractors will whine, “but, John, it has some good materials.” Yes, it does, yet, does that provide cover and forgiveness for not thoroughly explaining that trees farms are not forests? That clearcutting old growth and soon-to-be old-growth forests is a climate change debacle (recent data show these forests as carbon reservoirs)? That years of forest fragmentation has caused large predators to decline, watersheds to dry and erosion to eradicate thousands of years of soil building? PLT is a vehicle to put a “smiley face” on an industry that has lied, bilked taxpayers of billions of dollars in welfare subsidies, manipulated lawmakers to encourage more deforestation, and, most grotesquely, made our children’s planet less livable.

Why do environmentalists ignore education? I am at a loss. Blame teachers? I say no, they are busy and yearning for good, lab-based, hands-on curriculum. In the absence of “green groups” providing sound educational data, industry has filled the void. Here is the twist: show me a single, peer-reviewed science document that doesn’t state that all major ecosystems are not in decline. Climate change and species loss lurk around us much like the Grim Reaper’s scythe. And to imagine a world

where climate change irreversibly has altered weather patterns or a planet where 40-50% of our “fellow species” are gone forever is too painful to face — especially in light of the fact that there is time for a massive reversal of fortune. Fifty-five million students are awaiting a clarion call to action: not activism, not maligned “environmentalism,” no, a lifestyle that can be sustained, can be rewarding and can undo the layers of corporate spin that leaves them “comfortably numb” in a world of virtual reality and empty materialism.

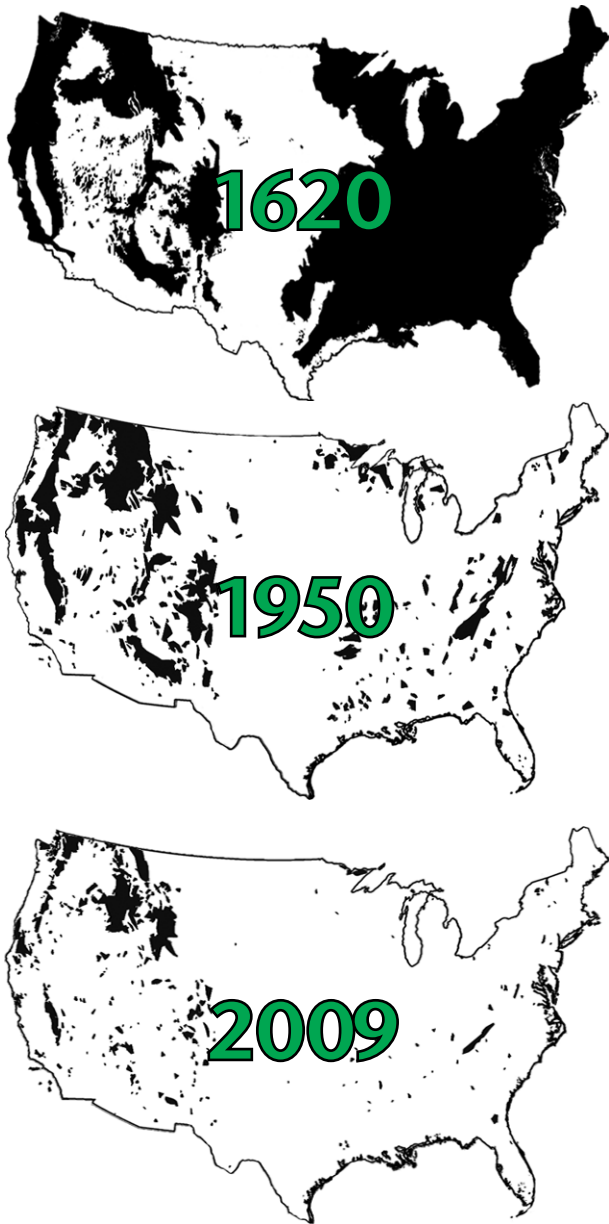


Green groups: pool together resources to help teachers in their quest to make students ecologically fluent. Journalists: expose the agenda of this corrosive curriculum. Enlighten and motivate citizens to action. Parents: demand that corporate America be tarred and feathered and chased out of the education business, or should I say, corporations in the “mis-education” business. Demand that your children be given exciting, lifelong science learning. Education organizations: demand that corporate sponsored curriculum be put through a detailed screening process. Filmmakers: make documentaries and “student friendly” visuals that document mountain top removal, extinction of species, peak oil, the insanity of an economic system that is based on devouring our own life support system (we cannot depend on Viacom, General Electric and Disney to provide this on their corporate TV channels). Teachers: students are hungry for real science that they can feel and see and that stirs a gut reaction. They are hungry for becoming “doers.” They are hungry for curriculum that stimulates thought and debate, that breeds passion and desire to ensure our planet’s resources exist well into future.

Teachers: say no Conoco-Philips’ self-concoined educational myths of clean coal or American Petroleum Institute’s oil soaked diatribes that “...we have enough to power 60 million cars and heat 160 million households for 60 years” or PLT’s mantra of we can have it all by cutting our natural forests and replacing them with sterile monocultures. The “science of death” has no place in our schools, our workplace or in our society. Teach that.

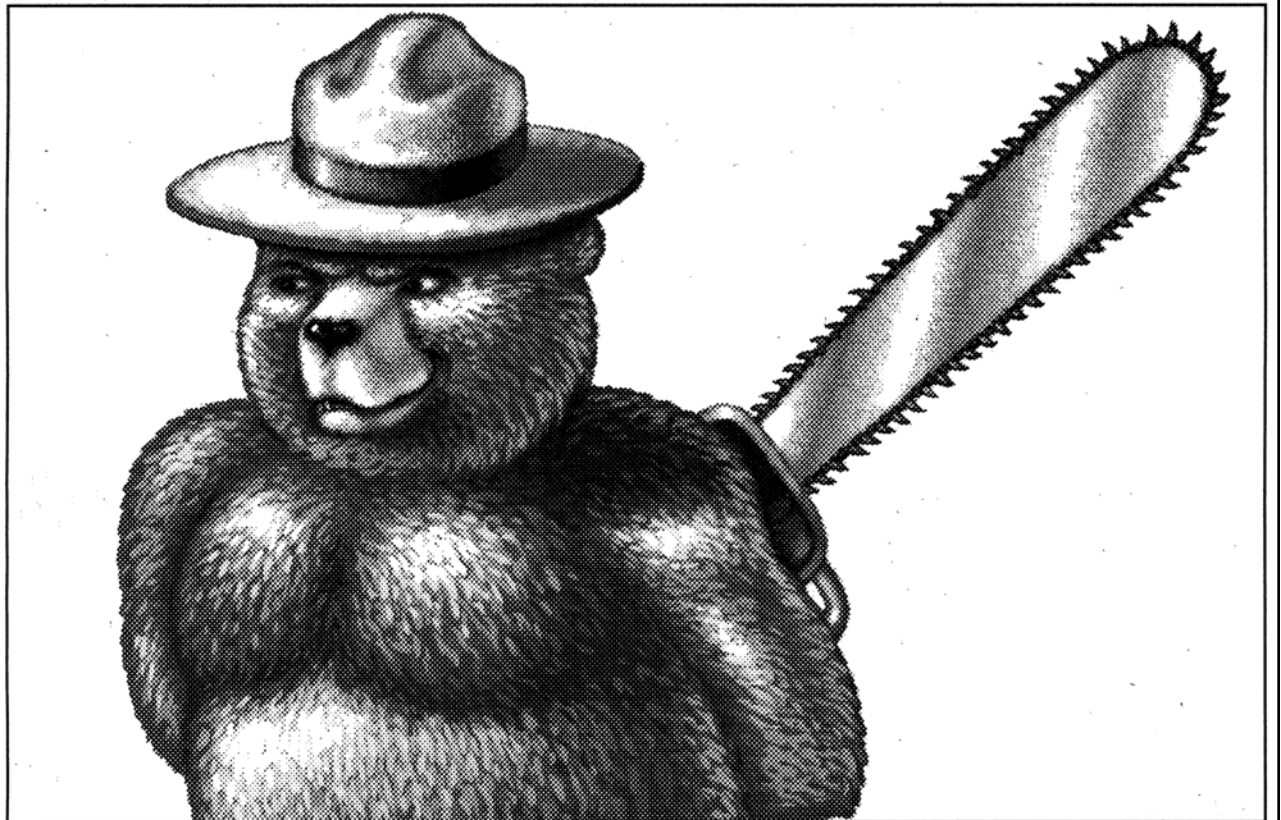
John F. Borowski is an environmental and biology teacher of 28 years. He just successfully fought and won a reversal of a reprimand for posting ecological cartoons in his classroom. He can be reached at jenjill@peak.org.

Save Our Endangered Native Forests



A native forest is a self-regenerating forest that has never been cut or planted by humans.

Our precious forests are disappearing



graphic courtesy of Americans for Ancient Forests

Say it ain't so, Smokey.

YES!

I want to help save what's left of America's forests and watersheds. Here's how to help:

Mail to:

Native Forest Council
 PO Box 2190
 Eugene, OR 97402
www.forestcouncil.org
info@forestcouncil.org

Sign me up!

- \$25 Student/Limited Income
- \$35 Advocate/Basic annual membership
- \$50 Supporter
- \$75 Contributor
- \$100 Conservator
- \$500 Sustainer
- \$ _____ David Brower Circle
- \$1,000 Patron
- \$5,000 Benefactor

- I'll pledge a monthly gift of \$ _____
 - Send me a monthly reminder
 - Bill my credit card
 - Please deduct my monthly gift from my checking account. I'm sending a signed and voided check. I understand deductions may be stopped or adjusted at any time.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

My check is enclosed.

Please bill my VISA

MasterCard Discover

Card number _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Planned Giving

Native Forest Council offers a variety of planned giving opportunities. Gifts of stock, real estate and other assets may offer tax savings for you and provide the Council with a greater net gift. If you are interested in planned giving, contact your attorney or tax advisor and then give us a call at 541.688.2600. Thanks!

Along with your tax-deductible contribution, please check one of the boxes below:

- I want to be a NFC member.
- I am already a NFC member.
- Please count me as a contributor.

I want to help get the word out. Please send a complimentary copy of the *Forest Voice* to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

I want to give a 1-year gift membership of \$35 to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____



Stay informed. Join the Native Forest Council and receive a free subscription to the *Forest Voice*!

The *Forest Voice* is filled with stories of the effort to save the last of our ancient forests. Less than 5% of these once vast forests remain, and they're being cut down at the rate of 185 acres per day. Trees that took 1,000 years to grow are destroyed in minutes. Each year enough of these trees to fill a convoy of log trucks 20,000 miles long are taken from Northwest forests alone! The informative *Forest Voice* will keep you up-to-date on the latest news and unmask the lies and greed of the timber industry in their multi-million dollar effort to cut the remaining ancient forests. Join now, and save the last of the ancient trees for our children.