



The TRAILBLAZER

July 2002

Niagara Group of the Sierra Club

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Executive: 'Big Coal' Swayed Bush

(from the Washington Post, May 23, 2002 by Eric Pianin)

A member of a government advisory committee on coal charged last year that President Bush's decision to reverse himself on a campaign pledge to reduce carbon dioxide emissions was a "monumental mistake" that resulted from vigorous coal industry pressure, newly disclosed documents show.

Jane Hughes Turnbull, an executive of a California renewable energy concern, made the assertions in a March 16, 2001, letter to Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham explaining her decision to resign from the National Coal Council, the advisory group. Bush had announced three days earlier that he had abandoned his campaign promise to reduce power plant emissions of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that many scientists say is to blame for global warming.

"The recent reversal in policy is profoundly short-sighted, an obvious and expedient response to industry -- I should say to misperceived industry interests," Turnbull said in her letter.

Turnbull, a Clinton administration appointee, said it had become evident by the time of the 2000 presidential election that the coal industry's leadership "was intent on bolstering the economic well-being of the industry, if need be at the expense of the environment," rather than seeking a more balanced approach using both coal and cleaner, renewable energy sources.

Atlantic Chapter to Meet in Buffalo

We will be hosting the next meeting of the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club in Buffalo on June 29 and 30. The group will meet for business on Saturday, and then stay for a bus tour of "hot spots" in our area on Sunday. Richard Lippes is making arrangements for the bus.

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Endorsement of Quality Quest Approved

The Niagara Group of the Sierra Club has voted support of the efforts of Quality Quest of Grand Island to establish a nature center on the eastern shore of Beaver Island State Park. The Group also supports the idea that the Wetland Stabilization project be completely implemented as soon as financially possible. We sent news of our action to Quality Quest president Bill O'Connor and to Assemblyman Sam Hoyt.

Development of Virgin Land in Hamburg Raises Concerns

At the last meeting of the Niagara group of the Sierra Club, Jen Robins brought up a proposed new development in the Village of Hamburg that has become quite controversial. She stated that we should become informed and involved in this matter to support the residents who are opposed to the sale of a village-owned 15 acre site which contains 6 acres of wetland. (Clover Mgt. has applied to the Army Corps of Engineers for mitigation.) The residents say they have proof that the area is in fact parkland. Their other concerns are increased traffic and noise, loss of property values, and an increase in school population.

The Village Board voted to sell the property at the May 6th meeting. However, the residents have filed a lawsuit through their attorney to halt the start of construction. They have named the Village of Hamburg, the Board of Trustees, Trustee Thomas Tallman, and Country Meadows (part of Clover Management). A hearing was called for May 30.

We will be looking for more information on this matter in the future

Conservative Republican Comments

(from The Wilderness Society's Quarterly Newsletter, Spring, 2002)

Martha Marks is President of Republicans for Environmental Protection. She has stated, "Over the past 20 years...my party seems to have lost its way on conservation... The Republican conservation tradition is down these days, but not out. Twice in the past year, REP America members have appeared at Washington, D.C. press conferences to speak up against industrializing the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Among them were a Roosevelt, a Rockefeller, and an Eisenhower..."

For more information about this organization, go to www.rep.org or contact Martha Marks at Martha@repamerica.org.

Atlantic Chapter Backs Us on CWM in Porter

The Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club, representing 41,000 members including us, heard our report about Chemical Waste Management, its plans to expand, and its hopes to receive PCBs from the Hudson River. After discussion, the Sierra Club approved the following resolution of support:

The Sierra Club, Atlantic Chapter, joins the Niagara Group in supporting the rescission of the October 10, 2001 zoning change that facilitated expansion of the Chemical Waste Management facility in the Town of Porter, New York. No toxic wastes should be disposed of by being landfilled, and this facility would be particularly ill-suited for that purpose.

A committee was appointed to continue study of this issue, and has among its members Jim Mays of Olivebridge, who is national Sierra Club Waste Chair. He comments, "Our general position is to oppose both burning or burial. There are a bunch of technologies in varying stages of development dealing with the class of chemicals called Persistent Organic Pollutants (of which PCBs are one). The problem is that they aren't the conventional wisdom choices for disposal ..."

We are grateful for this support, and have sent the information to the Residents for Responsible Government in Porter.

Senator Maziarz (Republican) and Representative DelMonte (Democrat) have introduced legislation to ban the bringing of contaminated sediment from the Hudson to Niagara County. The bills are Senate Bill 7148 and Assembly Bill 11082. Urge others to support these bills!

DID YOU KNOW...

- Chemical Waste Management Listed by EPA as Number One Polluter in New York State
- Of more than 700 facilities in the state reporting toxic releases into the environment in 2000, CWM of Niagara County ranks first.
- The AES Somerset Power Plant in Barker ranked 7th.

Concerned About the Environment? Recruit a Friend to Join!

The Sierra Club is the largest environmental organization in the country. If anyone joins, they are automatically a member of our Niagara Group and invited to meetings.

To join, send \$40 for an individual membership or \$50 for a joint membership to Sierra Club, PO Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968.

The local group meets on fourth Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. at the Harlem Road Community Center, 4255 Harlem Road, Cheektowaga.

Protesting Road in Zoar Multiple Use Area

Larry Beahan, our Forestry Chair, and Mike Kukla, our Chairperson, have written to Gerald Mikol, Region 9 Director of the DEC, protesting the building of an ugly gravel road on the verge of the Cattaraugus Creek Gorge. In their letter, they state that even if the road was considered needed for some temporary work, it needs to be removed now. If space permitted, we would include the entire letter in this paper. If you wish to read it, let us know and we'll send you a copy.

Our concern that the old growth forest in the Zoar Valley area be protected is on record with Governor Pataki and New York State. Gerald F. Mikol, Regional Director of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, responded to an earlier letter by saying that a draft plan is not yet completed, but once it is done that it will be sent to us, as well as a notice of the time and place of public hearings. Stay alert and be ready to participate!

McDonalds Takes a Constructive Stand



(from *Environmental Defense newsletter of March, 2002*)

Thirteen thousand McDonald's restaurants in the U.S. have decided no longer to buy poultry treated with certain antibiotics. Already Tyson Foods, Perdue Farms, and other food producers say they have cut back on antibiotic use in healthy animals.

Bayer, which makes an antibiotic for poultry, is opposing a request by the Food and Drug Administration to ban certain types of antibiotics in poultry.

Take a STAND Against Fast Track Legislation

Do you agree that Congress should not give up its constitutional power of oversight to fix trade deals made by the President, but should be sure that these agreements do not harm the environment or workers? Write to:

- Senator Hillary Clinton, 780 Third Ave., Suite 2601, NY, NY 10017
- Senator Charles E. Schumer, 757 Third Ave., NY, NY 10017

Environmental Leaders Speak Out

On Earth day, leaders of many of the nation's top environmental groups called on President Bush to stop allowing big corporations to weaken our nation's environmental laws. Signers included the presidents or representatives of the Natural Resources Defense Council, Defenders of Wildlife, Friends of the Earth, Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund, Wilderness Society, League of Conservation Voters, Physicians for Social Responsibility, and the US Public Interest Research Group.

League of Conservation Voters Publishes National Environmental Scorecard

The League of Conservation Voters publishes a ranking each year to inform voters of the records of their Senators and Representatives on environmental issues. The listing for 2001 is now available and may be ordered from LCV at 1920 L Street, NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20036, or lcv@lcv.org. Their phone is 202-835-0491.

Scores were recorded concerning Arctic drilling, hardrock mining, Monuments drilling, Gulf drilling, farm conservation, arsenic, Great Lakes drilling, EPA enforcement, fuel economy, national energy policy, energy efficiency, family planning, and fast track legislation.

Senators Clinton and Schumer each received an 88% favorable rating. The only issue on which they disagreed with the LCV was in Gulf drilling.

If you want more details, or to know how your Representative scored, order the whole book from the LCV for \$25.00 or contact Charles Lamb, Trailblazer Co-editor, for more information.

TIME TO CHANGE THE BOTTLE BILL?

When New York first enacted legislation to require deposits on bottles, there was an outcry that it would be costly and inconvenient. In practice, it has helped conservation and created jobs. There is little opposition voiced to it now.

However, did you ever wonder why some bottles are excluded? Why aren't deposits required on wine bottles, for instance? Or on bottled juices?

If bottles or cans are not returned, the merchant keeps the deposit. Shouldn't it go to environmental causes?

Contact your legislators!



DDT Had to Go; What's Next?

Have you read recently about how frogs are endangered? Many species of frogs are fewer in number, and others are deformed. There have been several articles about this, with questions concerning why.

The Associated Press reports that researchers in California have discovered that the most common weed killer contains a chemical that may be the cause of these problems. It is called atrazine. It is found now in rainwater, snow runoff, and ground water.

Stanley I. Dodson of the University of Wisconsin, asked if people should be worried, said, "We don't know. It's like a canary in the mine shaft sort of thing."

Is it time to start a move to ban atrazine now?

Eloquent Statement by Genevieve Robins

Our membership chair, Genevieve Robins, sent us the following statement:

"The natural world in the year 2002 is everywhere disappearing before our eyes – cut to pieces, mowed down, plowed under, gobbled up, replaced by human artifacts.

The race is not on between the techno scientific forces that are destroying the living environment and those that can be harnessed to save it. Overpopulation and wasteful consumption are evident everywhere.

A civilization able to envision God and to embark on the colonization of space will surely find a way to save the integrity of this planet and the magnificent life it harbors."

These are quotations of the noted naturalist, botanist, and environmentalist Edward O. Wilson, whose book; The Future of Life, has captivated the world and is a must to read.

"Atlantic Chapter" cont'd from pg.1

We are honored that the Chapter will meet here and become better acquainted with issues in our area.

Do You Have an American Chestnut Memory?

If you have photos or memories of the great American chestnut trees that existed in this country before the blight destroyed them, The American Chestnut Foundation would like for you to send them to chestnut@act.org or mail them to 469 Main St., Suite 1, PO Box 4044, Bennington, VT 05201.

Fast Developments: Read the Following Two Articles!

Clean Water Act Changed For the Worse

The Environmental Protection Agency has changed the Clean Water Act rules, permitting the Army Corps of Engineers to permit mining companies to dump wastes into rivers and streams. This is the first time in 25 years this type of damage has been permitted. Christine Todd Whitman signed the change order, according to a May 3 news release from the Ecology Fund.

Federal Court Overturns Rule Change

We were pleased to learn on May 9 that a Federal Court in West Virginia has declared the proposed rule change mentioned above illegal, and voided permits issued by the Army Corps of Engineers as mentioned in the article just above! (Sometimes there is good news!)

Grant Money for Klydel Wetland Announced

Governor George E. Pataki announced that six projects in Niagara and Erie Counties will receive \$1.2 million in funding through the Clean Water, Clean Air Bond Act and federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, to preserve historic resources, enhance recreation opportunities and conserve open space.

By Genevieve F. Robins

Praise for Paul MacClennon

Kudos and praises to Mr. Paul MacClennon, famed environmental reporter for the Buffalo News, now retired, but finding the time and effort to write an enflamed article on environmental issues troubling the Sierra Club today. In his most prolific days, he always found the time to come to our backyard suppers and enrich our minds on environmental issues. May he enjoy good health and happiness always.

Canada Reconsidering Kyoto Because of US Refusal to Ratify

Canadian Industry Minister Alan Rock is urging ministers to consider a made-in-Canada plan for fighting climate change rather than the Kyoto Protocol. He fears that Canadian business will suffer in competition if Canada abides by Kyoto while the U.S. does not. The U.S. reluctance to sign evidently is having ramifications elsewhere. "We must find ways to stay competitive..." Mr. Rock said.

(The Globe and Mail, 5/7/02)

Panda Pins Hulk Hogan

According to The Globe and Mail newspaper, the World Wildlife Fund has forced the World Wrestling Federation to change its name. The World Wildlife Fund had the WWF initials first. The wrestling federation, in the future, will be known as World Wrestling Entertainment!



Scientists Support Ending Logging in National Forests

The Sierra Club, National Forest Protection Alliance, and the US Public Interest Group released a letter on April 16 in which 200 scientists from every state in the nation urge an end to commercial logging in national forests.

The letter states that there are great benefits to the economy, water quality, wildlife, and recreation if the forests are protected. They call for a renewal of the Forest Service's original vision of forest protection.

The letter may be found at <http://www.sierraclub.org/logging/letter>.

Now We Have Co-Editors!

Did you notice that this newsletter is in a more attractive format? That's because Gretchen White has joined Charles Lamb as co-editor of the Trailblazer!

Charles will continue to receive, edit, and write copy, but Gretchen will put it together for the printer, using her expertise as a graphic artist. Thanks, Gretchen!

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