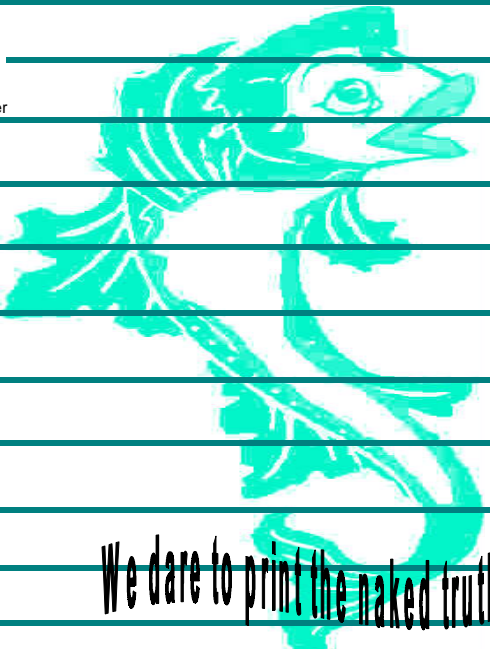




We Remember



The Naked Fish

We dare to print the naked truth!

SCIENCE: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE JUNK

By Rodney McFarland

When governments make traditional uses of private property illegal, organizations such as ours are born. These governments would like us to believe that science is on their side. Washington state RCW 36.70A.172, which is part of the Growth Management Act, requires counties and cities to consider the best available science in developing policies and regulations that deal with critical areas. It does **not** require that such science be the only substantive item used in developing those regulations. Social, economic, political, and legal considerations should carry as much or more weight than science and are in fact required by the same state law. Those other aspects are conspicuously absent in King County's currently proposed Critical Areas Ordinance.

"Real science" to most of us is the formal procedure known as the scientific method. It proceeds in an orderly fashion from observation to hypothesis to experiments. The results of the experiments lead either to a changed hypothesis or to the hypothesis becoming theory and thus a usable basis for human management or applied technology. Real science is predictive and testable and repeatable. It puts men on the moon and food on our tables.

There is simply not enough real science available to make relevant land use decisions based solely on science. There is neither the time nor the money to develop that science. The very nature of land uses and the infinite variety of variables involved make repeatability impossible. Data gained from one area under one set of circumstances may not be relevant in similar but different areas. Often the variables that cause the disconnect are obvious even to laymen and cause the original science to be labeled "junk science" when it is indiscriminately applied.

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Thinking cannot be carried on without the materials of thought; and the materials of thought are facts, or else assertions that are presented as facts. A mass of details stored up in the mind does not in itself make a thinker; but on the other hand thinking is absolutely impossible without that mass of details. And it is just this latter impossible operation of thinking without the materials of thought which is being advocated by modern pedagogy and is being put into practice only too well by modern students. In the presence of this tendency, we believe that facts and hard work ought again to be allowed to come to their rights: it is impossible to think with an empty mind.

J. Gresham Machen

The Naked Fish is published by May Valley Environmental Council (MVEC) a non-profit community group dedicated to sensible environmental management of private property. Articles in *The Naked Fish* cover subjects of concern both to local and national readers. We try to provide environmental information not commonly found in the major media. Articles with by-lines reflect the research, views and opinions of the author which may not reflect positions on the issues adopted by MVEC.

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THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT

[MAY VALLEY]

In days of old
And years that passed
There is a tale to tell at last.

Times were rough,
Their futures bleak
For a few kind people
To selflessly speak.

To save the land
That they once knew
To watch it thrive
And begin anew.

To see the water shimmering through a path
In which it was meant to do.

If not for a few good people
Who care and have to see the years pass with despair.

When will it end?
When the land is bare,
The luscious trees gone, and only concrete stairs.

Nothing is done for their pleas for help to put back what they had.

The rich man is their death.
With his money
He manages to get what he wants.
It's in his blood, the thrill of the hunt.

They pray the hard times will go away
So they may die in peace someday.
And this will be just another told, a tale that's true and very old.

—Gail Hanson 2003

**MVEC meets every
Monday at 7 PM at
Leonard's Bar and Grill
See you there!**

SCIENCE: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE JUNK

(Continued from page 1)

Since there isn't much applicable real science, land use planners are left using a second level of science based upon observational studies and surveys. Such observational studies can prove helpful but caution must be used when writing regulations based upon them as they can never be truly predictive of outcomes. King County loves studies. I have heard Pam Bissonette expound at length to the state legislature about how much money DNRP spends to commission them.

Because observational science is not good at predicting outcomes, any regulations based on that science must be reviewed regularly and modified appropriately to have any chance of success. King County is proposing massive new regulation in the Critical Areas Ordinance without even pretending to review the effects and outcomes of the current law.

I live in May Valley where the ecosystem has been totally changed for the worse by the existing sensitive areas ordinance. Our fish are gone, erosion is rampant in the lower half of the creek and we have lost the use of major portions of our properties. All that in the name of science, applied improperly and with no way to adapt the rules to reality. The proposed CAO brings more of the same. Even the regulators that understand the problem plead that they can't do anything because their hands are tied. Those same regulators are the ones that supplied the rope and put their hands behind their backs. They could just as easily have written the rules to allow the needed flexibility.

The limitations of available real science are bad enough without ignoring the good science that is available. The Washington State Office of Community Development publishes a document called "Citations of Recommended Sources of Best Available Science" for cities and counties to use when complying with the GMA. Dr. James Buell reviewed the latest edition and had this to say. "Of more than 80 annotated sources having to do with fresh water and riparian systems and wildlife habitats, including uplands, a mere handful would qualify as 'science'. However, there are many valid and applicable scientific studies 'out there', which should have been included in this annotated bibliography. This list is anything but a comprehensive collection of Best Available Science". Other credible scientists have made similar statements about the science listed as the basis for the CAO. The people who work for King County are human and have agendas of their own. They obviously have been unable to resist the temptation to wrap themselves in the cloak of scientific credibility in order to achieve their personal political agendas.

One of the traps that King County seems to have fallen into is the use of

(Continued on page 4)

Freedom Fighter No More

King County suffered a great loss this month with the sudden passing of Ninth District Councilman Kent Pullen after a short illness. As his legislative aide Senator Pam Roach stated, "he was a freedom fighter." He believed that people ran the government, not vice versa. He was a staunch believer in both the federal and state constitutions. He was very much an ally to the residents of May Valley.

MVEC would like to express our collective condolences to his wife and family. He will long be remembered.



"Mr. Pullen's passing truly has drained some of our institutional knowledge and history. It will be a monumental task to fill the many roles he played here on the Council, as the advocate for strong law and justice resources, women's and children's health care, religious freedom and property rights. I think Mr. Pullen was one of the brightest minds on the Council. He will be dearly missed by all Councilmembers and the staff. "

— Councilmember David Irons



To The Editor

It's a long way from Auburn and Enumclaw to the King County Courthouse in Seattle, where decisions are made that affect our businesses and lifestyles here on the Plateau.

The County was unable to muster any support to stop the Amphitheater project. Instead they have been working diligently to come up with a tightening of the sensitive areas regulations to be applied to the rest of us. These new rules would rival the IRS in complexity and drastically increase already restrictive keep-out buffers around low-value "sensitive areas."

Attempts to secure a building permit to expand our farm business, and provide additional employment, are thwarted by unreasonable demands that we change the title to the property and sign away significant acreage, even though the project is well distanced from any "sensitive areas" and their setback zones. The permit is held hostage unless we capitulate.

The combination of Amphitheater impacts and restrictive new environmental rules, along with punitive taxes and regulations, leads to the realization that we may be forced out of business. This is not a "significant impact," it would just be one more small business, or family farm gone under.

Robert R. Keever
Enumclaw Plateau

SCIENCE: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE JUNK

(Continued from page 3)

reviews and compendiums as their science instead of using the source documents of those who actually did the research. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife publishes a document entitled "Management Recommendations for Washington's Priority Habitats: Riparian" which illustrates this problem well. This document is the buffer bible. It contains a table that purports to give the buffer widths needed to accomplish various desirable outcomes and lists the source documents used. Unfortunately, it has three major problems:

1. It averages the buffer widths from the various source documents. There is no scientific or technical basis for the use of averaging. The best way to use the research is to choose one or more scientific studies which apply particularly well to the site-specific resources involved and use those studies for guidance.
2. The title of the table is "Riparian habitat buffer widths needed to retain various riparian habitat functions." But the values in the table are actually the maximum distances studied, and are nearly always significantly in excess of that required for complete or nearly complete protection of 100% of fish and wildlife needs.
3. The majority of studies relied upon in the table focused on old-growth and late successional forests, but the riparian buffer restrictions in the CAO will apply almost entirely to second- and third-growth wooded lands or agricultural, urban, or industrial areas. Even properly arrived at conclusions from such studies would only be applicable if the objective is that the regulated lands ultimately evolve into old-growth areas; the forest primeval, if you will. Is that how you envision your land ending up?

There is no science exception to the Fifth Amendment.

King County's misuse of the science is blatantly political. It does not stand up to even cursory examination by private sector experts. As Dr. Teresa Zeitler says in her technical review of the CAO: "Best Available Science' does not mean indiscriminate application of scientific studies to situations where they don't apply. That's 'Bad Science'." She further states that King County's efforts at Best Available Science "truly represent no more than the equivalent of a high school or undergraduate book report."

UW professor Dr. Robert G. Lee, in his book entitled *Broken Trust, Broken Land: Freeing Ourselves from the War over the Environment*, states the following, "This book is a search for truths about how Americans are losing

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HOW NOT TO PROTECT WILDLIFE

By Ike C. Sugg

Kings, queens, feudal lords, and dictators used to decide who, if anyone, could use which resources, for what purpose, at what price, and to what extent. That antiquated system of centralized command and control over wildlife remains throughout much of the world today, but it is weakening. The "king's game" approach to wildlife conservation, wherein government ownership and prohibitions rule, is going the way of the dodo, much like monarchy itself. But here in the United States, that transition away from the king's game is occurring at glacial speed, primarily because the U.S. environmental establishment is committed to ensuring that indigenous wildlife remains a socialized resource. Not only is this unfortunate for people, but it is counter-productive for wildlife as well.

Countless species have been extirpated from the face of the earth under public ownership and government protection; yet no species of animal that was both privately owned and commercially valued has ever gone extinct. Thus, despite what some environmentalists have argued, putting a price tag on a species does not make it disappear. As long as private rights of use and exclusion are properly defined and adequately enforced, an abundance of diverse wildlife will be supplied if it is demanded through a sufficiently free market. Without secure private property rights, however, commercially valued species are as likely to be ex-

tinguished as conserved.

When it comes to conserving wildlife, institutions matter, as do incentives. For wildlife conservation to be successful, the incentives must be either positive or neutral. In the United States, however, those incentives are almost entirely negative. This is especially true under the 1973 U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA), which penalizes landowners for having endangered species on their property. The penalty for having listed species on your property typically translates into draconian land-use restrictions, extortionate permit requirements, red tape, lost income, lost opportunities, property taxes on land that cannot be used, and cost-prohibitive legal fees. As a result, the ESA has stopped landowners from building homes, constructing roads, plowing fields, felling trees, filling ditches, and even clearing firebreaks to protect their home and family from fire hazards.

These broad constraints on U.S. agriculture have turned many farmers and ranchers against the Endangered Species Act and the species it ostensibly aims to protect. In short, the ESA has produced enemies of wildlife, not defenders of wildlife. It has encouraged habitat destruction, not conservation. As a result, the ESA has failed in its mission to recover threatened and endangered species, and it will continue to fail until Congress fundamentally reforms the law. That is why ESA reform is imperative for rural land-

owners as well as for the species that currently inhabit their property and those that might in the future.

The ESA in Action: All Pain and No Gain

If one assumes that feeding, clothing, and sheltering human beings constitute legitimate economic pursuits, then one might also assume that government should and will continue to allow private landowners to produce such products. And yet the ESA can be used as a brake on commodity production, as it has been in the past. Thus, the potential for conflict is obvious, as the General Accounting Office discovered in 1994 when it reported that more than 75 percent of all threatened and endangered species in the United States depend on private land for all or some of their habitat needs. Given that the primary use of rural land continues to be agriculture, agriculture is on a collision course with the ESA. Given that some biologists estimate that as many as 250,000 species living in the United States have yet to be identified by science and that they almost surely will be "listed" under the ESA if and when they are identified, the train wreck ahead is clearly visible.

For some, the train has already wrecked.

Andy and Cindy Domenigoni (of western Riverside County, California) fallowed 800 acres of farmland, to rest and rejuvenate their

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SCIENCE

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themselves in their attempt to solve environmental problems...I want to show how values and beliefs are embedded in much that passes as ecology, environmental science, or social science. I also want my readers to understand that conflicts over the environment are primarily moral and political issues..."

Environmental land use regulation is about governmental abuse of our property rights, not science. Forbidding our use of 65% of our land is not science, it is government gone crazy. There is no science exception to the Fifth Amendment.

If you want government to intervene domestically, you're a liberal.

If you want government to intervene overseas, you're a conservative.

If you want government to intervene everywhere, you're a moderate.

If you don't want government to intervene anywhere, you're an extremist.

—Joseph Sobran (1995)

No man's life, liberty, or property are safe while the legislature is in session

—Mark Twain (1866)

HOW NOT TO PROTECT WILDLIFE

(Continued from page 5)

soil, just as the family has done for five generations. When the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) listed the Stephens' kangaroo rat as an endangered subspecies in 1988, the Domenigonis were told they could no longer farm their fields. Their land was "frozen." By fallowing their fields, the Domenigonis had allowed kangaroo rats to take up residence on their land, and for this they were punished. In addition to costing several hundred thousand dollars in lost income and attorneys' fees, the family's 800 acres of rat habitat also provided the bulk of the fuel for a fire that burned down 29 homes on October 27, 1993.

The FWS had prohibited "disking" fire-breaks and farming in designated rat habitat, and the Domenigonis had allowed rat habitat to grow by fallowing their fields. As a result, their fields were overgrown with brush and thus became a tinderbox, which fueled the destruction of property owned by close neighbors. After the fire, ironically, the FWS told the Domenigonis they could begin farming again. In fact, the FWS informed the Domenigonis that before the fire their fields had become too overgrown with brush to provide good rat habitat anyway. Thus, because of rat habitat that the FWS later claimed did not exist during much of the time the federal government was regulating it, the family lost approximately \$400,000 in farming income, and many of their neighbors lost their homes.

Another egregious example from California involved Tang Ming-Lin, a Taiwanese immigrant who bought 723 acres of undeveloped farmland in Kern County, all of which was zoned for agriculture. One day in 1994, when his foreman was plowing a new field, some 20 government agents (6 of whom were armed) raided his farm and confiscated his tractor. His crime? Tang Ming-Lin had allowed his foreman to plow land inhabited by endangered species, a federal crime. Specifically, the FWS claimed that Ming-Lin's foreman had killed two (possibly five) Tipton kangaroo rats and "taken" the habitat of blunt-nosed leopard lizards and San Joaquin kit foxes. The FWS never provided any evidence, but it did demand 363 of Ming-Lin's 723 acres, \$300,000 in fines, and \$172,425 to maintain the ex-



Courtesy: NPS



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HOW NOT TO PROTECT WILDLIFE

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propriated land as a wildlife preserve.

The FWS raided Ming-Lin's offices and slandered his family in the media. Among other outrages, the FWS threatened to deport his family and implicated them in tax fraud and other nefarious schemes, all of which turned out to be untrue. One FWS official even managed to convince local authorities to suspend the immigrant's driver's license. In the end, however, the FWS backed down when faced with a jury trial. Tang Ming-Lin's persecution had sparked a property-rights backlash. Although he admitted to no wrongdoing, Ming-Lin did agree to donate \$5,000 to a habitat conservation fund and to stop farming his land until he obtained an ESA permit. This episode awakened people to what the ESA could do to farmers and ranchers.

A Dismal Failure

As we have seen, the bulk of the ESA's costs and burdens are borne by the unlucky people who own or lease the wrong pieces of land. As Jim Huffman, dean of the Northwestern School of Law at Lewis and Clark College, has written: "The pervasive notion that society can avoid the costs of public action if government can avoid compensating for property affected is simple self-deception. The costs of government action will be borne by someone. The compensation requirement, like a rule of liability, simply determines who that someone is."

There is no doubt that the ESA has run roughshod over the lives and liberties of some people, a fact that some environmentalists still try to deny. Nor is there any doubt that, after 25 years of regulation, the ESA has been a complete and utter failure.

Although the act's statutory objective is to recover listed species, none have recovered due to the ESA. Not a single one.

Although the act's statutory objective is to recover listed species, none have recovered due to the ESA. *Not a single one.* As of September 1999, only 27 species (out of more than 1,150 currently on the list) have been removed from the ESA's list of protected species. Seven of those species were "delisted" because they went extinct. Nine of them, according to the FWS, were "data errors," which means they never should have been listed in the first place. The FWS, the Interior Department agency charged with implementing and enforcing the act, only claims to have "recovered" the remaining 11 (of 27) delisted species, but not one of them was saved by the ESA.

Thus, based on the record to date, a species is more likely to go extinct under the ESA than it is to recover (11 extinctions versus 0 recoveries). This is sad but true, much like the reasons for the

ESA's abysmal failure.

Solving the Problem

If society wants more of something, it would do well to reward those who provide it, not punish them. Instead, the ESA has turned wildlife assets into regulatory liabilities. People tend to protect assets and eliminate liabilities, which is largely why the ESA has failed so miserably. Solving this problem, however, is easier on paper than it is in practice. It is all but a foregone conclusion that we will be stuck with some sort of federal ESA for the foreseeable future. Thus, if repeal is not a viable option, reform is imperative.

In the absence of punitive regulations, most landowners would gladly host threatened and endangered species on their property. Some would even go out of their way to ensure that rare wildlife had every chance to recover on their land. In many cases, landowners would need no other incentive than the assurance that they will not be regulated for having such species on their property. In other cases, positive incentives might be necessary. With minor clarifications, the ESA's land acquisition provision could provide all the authority needed by the secretary of the interior to pursue all manner of positive inducements. And, of course, there is no law barring private environmental groups from purchasing habitat or easements or otherwise putting their money where their values are.

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HOW NOT TO PROTECT WILDLIFE

(Continued from page 7)

For many people in the agricultural community and elsewhere, ESA reform is a simple matter of justice. Surely, the cost of satisfying the public's desire to protect publicly owned wildlife would qualify as a public burden that should not be foisted on certain people who happen to own the last remnants of certain habitats.

After all, the people who own that land are those who refrained from modifying endangered species habitat; that is why they still *have* such habitat. While everyone else was busy building homes, office buildings, malls, and restaurants, those landowners were busy growing habitat. Now we have the temerity to tell them that they owe us. We make our demands as we sit in the same homes and office buildings that destroyed previous habitat, oblivious to the fact that the owners of today's habitat are literally, almost by definition, the last people who deserve to be blamed or punished.

Thus, solving this problem of publicly owned wildlife residing on privately owned habitat is the main goal of true ESA reform. The trick is to do it without treating private land as if it were legally owned or controlled by the government.

Ike C. Sugg is Executive Director of the Exotic Wildlife Association. This article is from the Hoover Digest website at <http://www-hoover.stanford.edu/>.

DARYL GRIGSBY MEETS WITH MVEC

Daryl Grigsby, the Director of the Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD) of the Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP), attended the April 14, 2003, meeting of the May Valley Environmental Council. He had been invited in an attempt to reestablish communication with his department. In the fall of 2002 WLRD stopped honoring a pledge to involve MVEC in all project planning for May Valley. Because of that lack of communication, the announcement early this year that the Crane/Hansen project was being put off indefinitely came as a great shock to the community.

MVEC circulated a petition that was signed by all but two of the property owners in May Valley. When County Executive Ron Sims received that petition he directed Mr. Grigsby to respond. He did so in a recent four-page letter to May Valley residents. He was invited to the MVEC meeting so that he could clarify and explain his stand on issues raised in the letter. Members also had the chance to give their insights at length.

While most attendees felt the meeting was a positive step, there were no formal commitments from either side. Mr. Grigsby expressed a desire for some time to think about the issues and explore some suggestions made at the meeting. We would hope that, if nothing else comes of the meeting, Mr. Grigsby will honor the request for more open communication and involvement by MVEC.



Government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it.

— Ronald Reagan (1986)

EAST OF OZ

By Reggie Hopper

One day a May Valley child and a teacher were walking along the ditch near Leonard's restaurant in downtown Coalfield.

"Teacher!?! Teacher?" asked the child.

"Is there a blessing for King County?"

"Why, yes, of course, my child," answered the teacher.

"May the Lord bless and keep King county far away from us."

They both chuckled to themselves as they walked past the county's open lands, the people's land . . . land with the "No Trespassing" signs. The teacher sighed and said, "Now, this is evil."

"What is evil?" asked the child.

Then the teacher told this story. "Once upon a time in a land east of Oz and under the rainbow there lived a simple man, not too rich, not too poor. He lived with his wife on a small piece of land, a farm that he loved and had owned and lived on all his life. The land was good to the man and the woman. It yielded up its riches in the form of vegetables, fruit, hay, milk, and eggs. In fact, the land was so productive that the man and the woman could sell a little extra to the folks living in the concrete warrens of Asphalt City. Life was good, the sun was warm and the air soft. Fish swam in the ditch that ran through the small farm, and it added to the bounty of the place when children from Asphalt City came and caught the fish with willow poles and worms.

"But sadly, nothing seems to last. Evil people moved into Asphalt City—evil, jealous people. They saw the bounty of the land where the man and the woman lived, and they wanted it for themselves. Now, the wanting was not bad in itself, but the people of Asphalt City wanted the land for free. In fact, they wanted the man and the woman to give the land to them but still pay taxes on it. Now, this is evil," said the teacher.

The May valley child nodded in agreement, and then they both recited the blessing for the county and continued their journey down the valley past the Rodeo Ranch to the Red Barn with their hearts full of hope for justice.

DEVIL DOG MOON



LAST NIGHT I DREAMT
OF A DEVIL DOG MOON
A COUPLE OF GIRLS
AND A GUY NAMED SPOON

AND THEY DANCED
IN THE LIGHT
OF THE DEVIL DOG MOON
HOWLING LIKE WOLVES;
LUTING LIKE LOONS

THE DEVIL'S OWN CHILD
DANCED WITH THEM THERE
THE CHILD WITH EYES OF FIRE
AND COAL BLACK CURLY HAIR

THE MOON ROSE HIGH INTO
THE NIGHT
AND COMMON THINGS
CHANGED
IN IT'S PALE MAGIC LIGHT
TO WOLVES AND SHAPES OF
HIDEOUS SIGHT

YET I WAS NOT SHY
THEY WERE, AFTER ALL,
MY FRIENDS FROM THE BY
AND BY

THEN I WOKE UP TO
THE COCKS'S CROWING SONG
AND ALL WAS GONE

SAVE THE DREAM IN MY HEAD
AND THE COAL BLACK CURLS
SCATTERED ACROSS MY BED

Reggie Hopper 2003

ENDANGERED SPECIES

By Terry L. Anderson

When the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently rejected a petition to list the prairie dog as an endangered species, 12 million prairie dogs must have heaved a collective sigh of relief.

Why of relief, you ask. After all, isn't listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) supposed to protect species from extinction?

The evidence suggests that it is not working. For example, statistics show that only 30 species have been removed from a list of thousands since the act was passed in

bate extinction. In an effort to protect endangered species, the ESA makes it illegal to "take" a listed species, meaning "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct." In other words, if a landowner's actions are interpreted as a "take," land uses may be strictly regulated. This might encourage landowners to "shoot, shovel, and shut up."

But landowners don't have to go this far; they can take perfectly legal preemptive action to keep the species off private property. A famous North Carolina case shows

the new book *Political Environmentalism* shows systematic evidence to the contrary. Examining hundreds of logging operations in North Carolina, Dean Lueck and Jeffrey Michael find that the average age of harvest falls from nearly 60 years if there are no red-cockaded woodpecker colonies nearby to 36 years if there are 25 colonies within 25 miles of the logging site. They conclude that their "finding validates the concerns of some environmentalists who have noted that red-cockaded woodpecker populations have been declining on private land during the 28 years the red-cockaded woodpecker has been regulated by the



1973. Of these, 7 were removed because they went extinct and 11 because additional data showed they were not really endangered in the first place. The remaining 12 delisted species were either located outside the United States (and hence not affected by the ESA) or recovered for reasons unrelated to the ESA such as the banning of DDT.

Even worse than the dismal recovery rates is the fact that regulation under the ESA can actually exacer-

how this worked with the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker, which lives in old-growth pines. After Ben Cone was prevented from harvesting 1,500 acres of his 7,200-acre property because it was home to red-cockaded woodpeckers, he started cutting his trees at 40 years of age instead of 80, thus eliminating the old-growth trees in which the woodpeckers might live.

Environmentalists contend that such cases are isolated acts carried out by lawbreakers, but a study in

ESA." In short, the ESA makes endangered species the enemy of landowners.

With the ESA up for renewal, it is time to consider using carrots rather than sticks to save species. If the federal government would spend a fraction of what it spends on ESA regulation to actually compensate landowners who provide habitat, we could be removing species from the list rather than adding bureaucrats to the federal payroll.

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A DNRP supervisor welcomes his latest Basin Steward

FROM THE PRESIDENT

(Continued from page 12)

budget. It would return all habitats back to what they once were and all of this could be viewed as mitigation.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

JIM OSBORNE



Every time we sit down for a meeting with someone from the county to talk about cleaning the ditch they always talk about habitat. We can't just clean the ditch, we have to create habitat. Habitat for what? It's not the people, they're taking that away. It's not the fish, they don't like silted-up streams and beating through marsh to get around willows. So what is this habitat for?

I have a theory (the county loves theory, as science generally doesn't support their ideas) that they are creating habitat to support bureaucrats. If they came in and actually cleaned the ditch then the people of the valley would get their land back, erosion in the canyon would

decrease, and the salmon would come back. To me that is creating habitat, but that would not support bureaucrats. There would be no problems for them to study, engineer, have public meetings about, then go back and restudy, reengineer and have another meeting. See, when you're trying to grow a monster of a bureaucracy there has to be at least a few problems to justify the 385 employees and beautiful building you're trying to support. If they just went and did the projects in a sensible way, there would be no need for a big building and they would have to get rid of a good portion of the staff and that, my friend, is not good habitat for bureaucrats.

Another word they love is mitiga-

tion. If we clean the ditch we have to mitigate. I and many others feel that cleaning the ditch is its own mitigation. Take care of one problem and it automatically fixes another; could it be any sweeter. But the county tells us if we dig there must be mitigation, as in planting trees and shrubs. Excuse me but trees and shrubs are part of the problem here.

I do have an idea of how we can get this done. First we tear down the buildings at DDES and DNRP and return the property to the wet land it once was. This will accomplish several things. The money we save not having to support these bureaucracies will clean the ditch and probably balance the county

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