

County Commissioners Protecting
America's Natural Resources

Conservation
Leaders Network

Networker

August 2011 The monthly newsletter of the Conservation Leaders Network

IN THIS ISSUE:

This is the first issue of your new monthly “*Networker*,” the Conservation Leaders Network’s members’ newsletter.

We hope that it will be easier for you to read shorter and more frequent newsletters, rather than the longer, quarterly one you’ve been receiving. Let us know what you think!

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\$\$ for Counties

Conservation Leaders Network: “Conservation Makes \$ense” at the NACo conference

2011 NACo Conference
Portland OR

CONSERVATION MAKES \$ENSE



Rebecca Guay, Chief Executive of Anaconda-Deer Lodge County MT, checks out the materials at our "Conservation Makes \$ense" booth, with Story County IA Supervisor Wayne Clinton and Jefferson County WA Commissioner John Austin.



Washington County OR Commissioner Greg Malinowski working the booth in Portland.



Jeff Shrenck, Cost Control Associates, Washington County OR Commissioner Dick Schouten, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Conservation Leaders Network Orange County NC Commissioner Barry Jacobs, and Executive Director Peg Reagan sharing information at our "Conservation Makes \$ense" booth at the National Association of Counties' annual conference in Portland OR in July.



Story County IA Supervisor Wayne Clinton, Executive Director Peg Reagan, and Jefferson County WA Commissioner John Austin working the Conservation Makes \$ense booth.

This year's "Conservation Makes \$ense" booth co-sponsors were:

The Wilderness Society

Exergy Integrated Systems

Executive Director Peg Reagan was assisted at the booth by Orange County NC Commissioner Barry Jacobs, Calaveras County CA Supervisor Steve Wilensky, Washington County OR Commissioner Dick Schouten, Jefferson County WA Commissioner John Austin, Story County IA Supervisor Wayne Clinton, Washington County OR Commissioner Greg Malinowski, and Benton County OR Commissioner Linda Modrell.

The Conservation Leaders Network distributed a variety of materials that show the economic benefits of natural resource conservation and protection. [Click here](#) if you'd like to see the titles, along with links to many of the documents. To see this year's Conservation Contacts, [click here](#).

The Conservation Leaders Network also hosted, with Local Officials for Clean Water, a reception for pro-environment county officials during the conference. Snohomish County WA Council Member Dave Somers and Ramsey County MN Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt spoke about the EPA's clean water guidance and the Conservation Leaders Network's efforts to communicate with county officials.



Ramsey County MN
Commissioner Victoria
Reinhardt addressing
the gathering at the



Snohomish County WA Council Member Dave Somers speaking
to the county officials gathered at the
Local Officials for Clean Water Reception held during the National
Association of Counties' annual conference in Portland OR.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF WILDERNESS



— THE —
WILDERNESS
— S O C I E T Y —

Fishermen from all over the country come here to fish for salmon in the waters of the Elk River. This brings a vital economic boost during the lull in our tourism driven economy. Restaurants, Motels, R.V. Parks, Grocery Stores, Hardware Stores, Art Galleries, Advertisers and Fishing Guides benefit from this eco-based winter tourist industry. There is not a business in this community that does not receive a beneficial dollar during the hardest months of their economic year.

—Port Orford/North Curry County Chamber of Commerce, in supporting the Copper-Salmon Wilderness Act.

WILDERNESS SUPPORTS THE NEW RURAL ECONOMY

Across America, rural economies are changing. The role of extractive industries like logging and mining has diminished considerably. Tourism, recreation, and the natural amenities that flow from protected wildlands are now the dominant economic drivers in many rural areas. This new economy is driven by healthy landscapes. By providing new opportunities for recreation and tourism, protecting healthy landscapes where people can live and work, and increasing property values, wilderness designation provides a strong economic base in rural regions.

WILDERNESS PROVIDES DOLLARS AND JOBS TO LOCAL ECONOMIES

The Outdoor Industry Association found in its comprehensive study that outdoor recreation contributes \$730 billion to the American economy, while supporting 6.5 million jobs. In a ten-year retrospective study of the economic impacts of the California Desert Protection Act, economist Robert Richardson found that each year the areas protected by the Act generate \$31.9 million in personal income, \$50.2 million in sales revenue, and 882 jobs. These jobs are sustainable, long-lasting, and provide essential opportunities in many rural economies throughout the United States. Many people are drawn to rural areas so that they can live near intact natural landscapes.

FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Wilderness and other protective designations have been shown to increase local tourism and to attract new residents who treasure the quality of life that preserved lands provide. This preservation is crucial for maintaining a healthy economy...As local Chambers of Commerce, we are dedicated to achieving business growth and prosperity while maintaining our unique quality of life. By attracting tourists and new residents, providing recreational opportunities for our communities, and protecting scenic vistas, this legislation aids us in achieving that mission.

—Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce, in supporting the California Desert and Mountain Heritage Act.



Increased employment, property values, and local spending as well as healthy landscapes are important reasons why numerous local businesses and Chambers of Commerce support wilderness. In West Virginia, for example, over 100 local businesses support the Wild Monongahela Act. It's no wonder: One estimate found that the Act would provide 85 new jobs and generate \$2.4 million in annual income. The California Desert and Mountains Heritage

Act would add 120 jobs and \$3.6 million in annual personal income in southern California's Riverside County. The president of the local Idyllwild Chamber of Commerce sees the Act as key to the region's economic future: "Safeguarding these special places will ensure that visitors continue to seek out these lands, and help keep the cash registers of area businesses and inns ringing." Nature-based tourism provides a strong economic foundation in many rural areas.

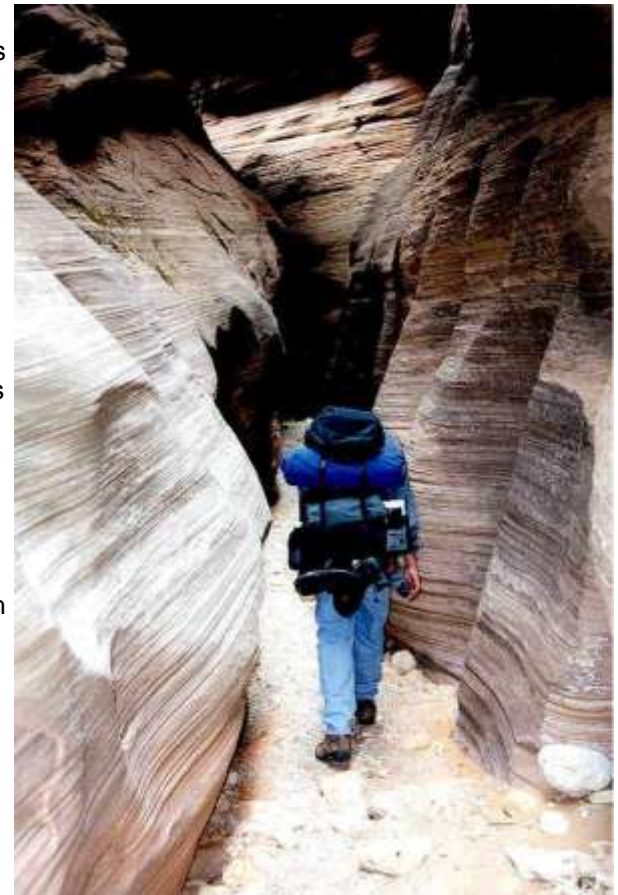
Reprinted with permission, The Wilderness Society.

Public Lands Committee Minority Reports

The Conservation Leaders Network is pleased to report that there is now an active pro-environment minority on the National Association of Counties' (NACo) Public Lands Committee now. With NACo's recent establishment of a procedure allowing for minority reports. Three issues generated minority reports at the Annual Conference in Portland in July.

Special thanks to Commissioner Rachel Richards of Pitkin County CO and Commissioner Lynn Padgett of Ouray County CO for taking the lead on preparing these reports.

Although members of the Committee were told to keep the minority reports to one page or less, which they did, the Chair of the Public Lands Committee did not read the reports (*printed below*). Instead, he chose to give short shrift to the minority opinions so the good work done by minority view points was not shared. Staff of the Public Lands Committee told Conservation Leaders Network's Executive Director, Peg Reagan, and Public Lands Committee member Calaveras County CA Supervisor Steve Wilensky that the Chair told Commissioners Richards and Padgett that the minority reports were actually to be a paragraph or less in length. Commissioner Padgett wrote, "I don't recall hearing this. If this is true, then it is a bad policy, given the length of the background that goes with resolutions and the length of the policy statement in many resolutions. I'd like to know where this is written. Obviously, there is subjectivity, having seen the NACo Board take lengthy testimony and discussion from Minority Reports [from other committees] on other Resolutions the same day."



1. Minority Report Proposed Resolution to Oppose Executive Branch Efforts to Create New "Defacto" Wilderness Areas Issue: Providing accountability in the designation of national monuments and wilderness areas

Minority Report: The Public Lands steering committee vote was 33 in favor and 11 opposed. The reasons for opposing this resolution vary but most dissenters have indicated that they do not believe that Secretarial Order 3310 created "defacto wilderness areas." The Minority believes that Secretarial Order 3310 could have led to appropriate management for non-impairment of certain natural characteristics on public lands, while ALLOWING uses such as roads, motorized vehicles, and others to occur in areas being managed as Wild Lands. Another important difference is that wilderness areas are Wilderness, unless action is taken by Congress. Areas that would have been managed as Wild Lands would have been reevaluated in each Regional Management Plan cycle. In any case, there is common ground among counties that there must be local input on any process of true wilderness designation and any designation under the Antiquities Act.

Simply leaving out the reference to the now rescinded Order 3310 allows most of the Minority to support the resolution.

- The National Association of Counties opposes Executive Branch efforts (~~such as Secretary Salazar's Secretarial Order 3310~~) which call for the designation
- of defacto wilderness without congressional approval. NACo also supports legislation to amend the Antiquities Act (~~such as the National Monument Designation~~)
- ~~Transparency and Accountability Act~~ to provide transparency and accountability in the designation of national monuments, and to require Federal consultation
- with state, county, and tribal government ~~should be required~~ prior to the development and designation of any national monument.

The goal of the Minority is to make sure that NACo, which is THE VOICE OF COUNTIES, recognizes that we must enhance our relationships with our federal and state partners, and that this starts with the tone of our Resolutions. Being able to ensure our federal and state partners that we have found common ground among our diverse Counties, will in turn make NACo not just the voice of some extreme counties but an important voice for us all.

The Minority believes that local governments and stakeholders must be at the table with Federal land agencies during planning and designation processes, however local control considerations must be balanced with the greater public's ownership of public lands. Counties need cooperation and consultation with Federal land agencies, and Counties also need to respect other stakeholders as well as evolving science on federal public lands.

2. Minority Report Proposed Resolution to Rescind Bureau of Land Management's "Master Leasing Plan" Oil and Gas Reform Leasing Reform

Issue: Rescind the BLM Master Leasing Plan Instruction Memorandum and Related Guidance

Minority Report: The Public Lands steering committee vote was 28 in favor and 11 opposed.

Dissenter from the proposed resolution had several reasons for opposing the resolution as listed below.

- 1) The Bureau of Land Management has an obligation to protect the greater public health. Increasing concerns about the impact of Oil and Gas leasing on air quality and air sheds which extend well beyond Resource Management Plan (RMP) boundaries are significant. Health damaging levels of ground level ozone, benzene and other pollutants are increasing associated with oil and gas production areas. The Master Leasing guidance allows the BLM to look at cumulative impacts on an impacted area to protect the public health.
- 2) Watershed and ground water impacts of hydraulic fracturing processes (known as 'fracking') to extract natural gas are a significant and growing public concern. It is important that the BLM be able to protect the public's drinking water and water quality both within and outside of any given RMP's boundaries. Reviewing older RMP's for adequacy protecting water resources from long term contamination is in the public interest.
- 3) Precipitous declines in wildlife populations in existing oil and gas drilling areas have not been addressed by older RMP's. The Green River basin's declining populations of elk and deer are well known. Cumulative impacts from oil and gas operations across multiple adjacent RMP's have not been considered. Endangered species listing for Sage Grouse is a real potential. Allowing the BLM to address these concerns through master-leasing review will help address previously over-looked cumulative impacts on wildlife habitat and allow for successful management of species of

concern to avoid federal Endangered Species listings.

- 4) Many older RMP's were developed with one expected drilling level and number of wells in mind. Amendments to increase the well count by hundreds of times over original numbers anticipated are not uncommon. New reviews under the master leasing program are appropriate and in the long-term public interest to protect watershed, air quality, other community economic interest and wildlife populations.

This minority report respectfully requests that the Public Lands sub-committee's resolution requesting the rescission of the BLM's Master Leasing Plan Reform be TABLED by the NACO board so that the proposed resolution can be further refined to support elements of the BLM master leasing reform that protect the public health, safety and general welfare.

3. Minority Report Proposed Resolution Opposing Proposed Forest Service Planning Rule

Issue: Withholding Support for the U.S. Forest Service Proposed Planning Rule as Published in 76 Federal Register 8480.

Minority Report: The Public Lands steering committee vote was 25 in favor and 10 opposed. The reasons for opposing this resolution vary but dissenters have indicated that while some of the goals stated in the Proposed Policy are fine, the tone and content of the Proposed Policy are impediments to getting counties and the USFS a workable Forest Planning Rule. The Proposed Policy and Background provided in this Resolution are viewed as "disappointingly incomplete" and "needlessly inflammatory".

The Proposed Policy Resolution makes references to "de facto wilderness management". We do not understand this terminology. Is managing for healthy forest or special habitat, which might put limitations on some types of use (such as new roads, forestry, mineral extraction, etc.) never appropriate? Is conservation of a high functioning ecosystem not a kind of "use". Does every type of forest use need to occur on every square foot of forest?

The Public Lands Steering Committee seems to apply the terminology "de facto wilderness" to any management policy that puts limitations or stipulations on public land, even when roads, forestry, motorized vehicles, fire treatments, etc. are still allowed (thus being different from true wilderness). The minority finds the use of this terminology in situations where "wilderness" is clearly not the case to be needlessly inflammatory and misleading. There needs to be a place for allowing management for natural characteristics as a use.

The Proposed Policy Resolution demand (1) is redundant under FLPMA and NEPA . Demand (4) -- withholding support until "sound discretion and practical judgment on the part of local supervisors" is meaningless. A forest rule can't mandate these types of subjective things, but through working together (USFS, local governments and stakeholders) better outcomes from the perspective of local governments are more likely.

Demand (5) in the Proposed Policy states that NACo withholds support of the Proposed Planning Rule until it provides "active management to reduce fire regime condition class to local government desired levels." Does every county with public lands know the correct level of fire regime condition? Is the local desire balanced with other federal requirements? Is it science-based? Does it consider a watershed or landscape scale in addition to the local political boundaries? Clearly, the USFS does not have the money or resources to reduce the FRCC to local government desired levels. Should the whole Planning Rule thus be opposed?

Demands (8) and (9) of the Proposed Policy state that NACo will not support a Planning Rule unless it emphasizes everywhere habitat management over

species management and emphasizes multiple use management and commodity production. Simply changing this to "Balancing" habitat management and species management; and "Balancing" multiple use and commodity production would go far in changing the tone of the resolution and finding common ground for most public lands counties.

Proposed improvements to Proposed Policy in the Resolution --

- The National Association of Counties urges the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Forest Service to not adopt the Forest Service Proposed Planning Rule in its current version (see 76 FR 8480 (36 CFR Part 219)), until it is substantially revised to prohibit ~~de facto wilderness management and instead~~ provides for (1) ~~coordination and cooperation with elected county officials,~~ (2) consistency with local government plans and policies, (3) forest planning and decision making at the most local level of the Forest Service agency structure, (4) ~~sound discretion and practical judgment on the part of local unit forest supervisors,~~ (5) active management to reduce fire regime condition class to local government desired levels, (6) active management to reduce invasive species and insect infestation, (7) enhanced economic and social sustainability, (8) balances emphasis on habitat management and over species management and (9) emphasis on balances multiple use, and commodity production, and conservation.



Funding Available for Forest and Water Climate Adaptation Plans

Application Deadline:

5:00 PM PST, Monday, September 19th, 2011



The [Model Forest Policy Program \(MFPP\)](#) is now accepting applications for [2012 Climate Solutions University: Forest and Water Strategies \(CSU\)](#).

This program offers rural U.S. communities the opportunity to be part of climate adaptation solutions urgently needed across the country. This educational opportunity is being conducted in collaboration with the [Cumberland River Compact](#).

Local communities are on the front line making key land use decisions in regards to climate change. Through a peer learning network that links underserved rural communities across the U.S., Climate Solutions University (CSU) provides training, expertise, and support to communities engaged in climate adaptation planning.

Climate Solutions University (CSU) helps rural communities design and implement climate adaptation plans that protect local forest and water resources and support viable rural economies. CSU strengthens local leadership and public engagement and promotes the following outcomes: protection of forests, streams, human and ecological health; preservation of natural resource based economies; and builds broad public support.

Each community develops and implements a Forest and Water Climate Adaptation Plan and Case Study by participating in a four-step multi-year process.

Scholarships Available: Six communities will be provided \$10,000 scholarships.

Application Deadline: 5:00 PM, Monday, September 19, 2011

Apply Here: www.mfpp.org

From the Director . . .



Executive Director Peg Reagan

The Conservation Leaders Network's busy and productive summer saw us taking our "Conservation Makes \$ense" booth to the National Association of Counties' Annual Conference in Portland OR, where we worked with pro-environment members of NACo's Environment, Energy and Land Use Committee and its Public Lands Committee, hosted a reception for Local Officials for Clean Water, and met more than 30 new pro-environment county officials.

We also helped generate almost 100 letters from county officials in support of the Environmental Protection Agency's clean water guidance, all of which were submitted during the Agency's public comment period. Someone once told me that a letter from a county commissioner was worth 1,000 letters from the average citizen—that means our work was equal to 100,000 letters! And actually, each county officials represents many more than 1,000 citizens, so I think those letters are even more valuable!

We held our annual volunteer appreciation lunch in early July. As a small and lean charity, we count on our volunteers help with a variety of jobs—mailings, faxing, proofreading, research and calligraphy to name a few.



Staff and volunteers at our Volunteer Appreciation lunch (l to r): Executive Director Peg Reagan, Kay Jenson, staff Mary Spini, Laura Greathead, Karim Shumaker, Maryann Barnhart, staff Jan Short.

As you know, we are moving to a shorter, more succinct newsletter that will come to you every month. Let me know what you think of the new, shorter and more timely newsletter schedule!

\$\$ for Counties

1. ConocoPhillips SPIRIT of Conservation Migratory Bird Program

Deadline: September 30th 2011 – Pre-Proposal

The Spirit of Conservation Migratory Bird Program is a partnership between ConocoPhillips and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to provide grants for bird habitat conservation projects in areas where ConocoPhillips has an operating presence.

For more information go to:

http://www.nfwf.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Charter_Programs_List&CONTENTID=17135&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm

2. Fish and Wildlife Service: Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Program

Deadline: November 1, 2011

Description: This program provides support to public-private partnerships carrying out projects in the United States, Canada, Latin America, and the Caribbean that promote the long-term conservation of Neotropical migratory birds and their habitats. Focus areas include perpetuating healthy populations of these birds, providing financial resources for bird conservation initiatives, and fostering international cooperation for such initiatives.

For more information go to: <http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/Grants/NMBCA/index.shtm>

3. Fish and Wildlife Service: Partners for Fish and Wildlife Service

Deadline: September 30, 2011

Description: This program provides support to private landowners, local governments and Tribes in addition to helping landowners find other sources of funding and help them through the permitting process, as necessary. Priority will be given to projects that meet the following objectives: promote and implement habitat improvement projects that benefit Federal Trust Species; provide conservation leadership and promote partnerships; encourage public understanding and participation; and, work with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to implement conservation programs.

For more information go to:

<http://www07.grants.gov/search/search.do;jsessionid=rjnpM1hTbv2LNIGNgHp5LJJZ7t5rJJGyR2Lv61P0QJth9kQ6STJL!695228645?opId=58450&mode=VIEW>

4. Fish and Wildlife Service: National Fish Passage Program

Deadline: September 30, 2011

Description: This program provides support to remove or bypass artificial barriers that impede the movement of fish and other aquatic species and contribute to their decline. Priority will be given to fish passage improvement-based, cost-shared projects to protect, restore, or enhance habitats that support fish and other aquatic species and their populations.

For more information go to: <http://www07.grants.gov/search/search.do?&mode=VIEW&opId=58661>

5. Fish and Wildlife Service: Coastal Program

Deadline: September 30, 2011

Description: This program integrates all Service activities in high priority coastal ecosystems to accomplish the following: identify the most important natural resource problems and solutions; influence the planning and decision-making processes of other agencies and organizations with the Service's living resource capabilities; implement solutions on-the-ground in partnership with others; and, instill a stewardship ethic, and catalyze the public to help solve problems, change behaviors, and promote ecologically sound decisions.

For more information go to:

<http://www07.grants.gov/search/search.do;jsessionid=rjnpM1hTbv2LNIGNgHp5LJJZ7t5rJJGyR2Lv61P0QJth9kQ6STJL!695228645?opId=58453&mode=VIEW>