

Counties Share 'What Works' at NACo's First Climate Protection Forum



Commissioner Wally White, LaPlata County, Colo., and Supervisor Jane Halliburton, Story County, Iowa, participate at one of the breakout discussions during NACo's Climate Protection Forum.

By Charles Taylor

County elected officials and staff from across the country shared best practices and concerns, and heard from national experts at NACo's first Climate Protection Forum.

Billed as a "dialogue and peer-to-peer networking opportunity," the forum's goals included giving counties an opportunity to discuss current strategies, future goals and new methods to address climate change — especially regional collaboration. New Castle County (Del.) Councilmember Stephanie McClellan moderated the two-day event, Sept. 20

and 21, in Washington, D.C.

"There's a lot that we know about climate change; we know that the earth is warming," said Judi Greenwald, director of innovative solutions for the Pew Center on Global Climate Change. "Scientists are more than 90 percent sure that this is the case. That's about as sure as scientists ever get about anything."

Greenhouse gas emissions from the 10 largest U.S. cities account for 10 percent of total emissions nationwide, she said — making local action to lower

emissions an important part of the solution.

Cities and counties "have a big role to play, and there are things they can do that higher levels of government can't," Greenwald added, citing local governments' "relevant authority" in determining growth and traffic patterns through building codes, planning and zoning. "So, it is very important that local government takes climate change into account in their decisions."

Topics included: Climate Protection and the Local Role, County Climate Plans, Tools and Resources, Energy Efficiency, Green Building, Behavioral Change: Engage Your Community, Role and Support of Staff Resources, and Land Use Planning and Transportation.

The climate protection/local role discussion yielded a variety of ideas and issues, including:

- Sacramento County, Calif. joined the Chicago Climate Exchange (CCX), and a baseline inventory found it already has begun reducing emissions with a no-idling policy for trucks.
- Salt Lake County, Utah is passing an ordinance for LEED "green building" certification for libraries, community recreation centers, and other public buildings.

continued on page five

Supervisor of the Month Speaks— Sally Thomas, Albemarle County VA



Four hundred years ago, Captain John Smith said, “Heaven and earth never agreed better to frame a place for man’s habitation...” than Virginia. Virginia Governor Tim Kaine quoted this opinion last year when pledging, “In honor of our 400th anniversary, I have made it a goal to protect 400,000 acres of open space by 2010.”

Even before the Governor enunciated this goal, Virginia had created generous income tax incentives that make conservation easements attractive. In addition to the fact that the IRS allows an easement as a charitable gift and allows a federal income tax deduction, Virginia law provides for transferable income tax credit for easement donations.

However, there is a deficiency in tax incentives, at least for a county like Albemarle that has high ambitions for the number of acres permanently preserved by easement. Albemarle is a Virginia county of 726 square miles and 91,000 residents, situated in the Blue Ridge

foothills, about 70 miles west of Richmond. Its rolling hills provide the backdrop for Charlottesville, the University of Virginia, and Thomas Jefferson’s home Monticello. Albemarle developed a fairly straight-forward management strategy to handle its 2% annual growth rate. About 95% of the County is designated “Rural Areas”, with the remaining 5% encouraged to develop in compact, walkable, attractive neighborhoods and mixed-used commercial areas. The strategy has divided the county’s population fairly evenly between rural and urbanizing areas.

But the Rural Area was zoned in 1980 with a potential for 50,000 more houses, and serious farming has been losing ground to lightly-farmed estates and scattered houses. The sprawl is creating over-stressed rural roads and raising concerns about impacts on natural resources. Public opinion polls consistently show over 70% of the county residents favor protecting the rural area from sprawled development. A number of proposed strategies have failed in the political process, but one strategy has been a popular and practical success: ACE.

ACE is “Acquisition of Conservation Easements.” It fills a deficiency in Virginia’s incentives, namely the plight of the farmer without enough taxable income to find a tax incentive relevant, or in greater need than met by the transferability of tax credits.

As a voluntary, non-regulatory, incentive program, it has proven popular with politicians and landowners as it provides direct payment to cash-strapped landowners while furthering explicit objectives in the County’s adopted Comprehensive Plan. One penny of the local real estate tax rate, a portion of the lodging tax, and grants fund ACE. In 6 years, the County has ACE-protected 5,358 acres of land, which, when the voluntarily eased land and parkland is added in, means that 14% of the county’s land is permanently protected.

A minimum number of points are needed to qualify for consideration. Applications are measured by already-adopted, county-wide planning objectives. Points are awarded for conservation easement proposals’ protecting open space resources, imminent threat of conversion to development, and natural, historical or scenic resources (such as mountaintops, working family farms, important viewsheds, scenic highways and rivers, watersheds, productive soils, and historically significant properties). The ranking evaluation criteria reflect the diversity of resources and conservation goals of Albemarle County.

The nearly unique part of ACE is its use of an income grid to determine what proportion of the easement’s value (as would have been given IRS tax credit) is to be paid by the County to the landowner. A family farm with

continued on page seven

The Economic Value of Fisheries in Wyoming



Photo credit: Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Years ago, the conservationist Aldo Leopold observed that, “conservation will ultimately boil down to rewarding the private landowner who conserves the public interest.” This insight holds true today. Only by exploring ways that economic incentives for landowners can be linked with habitat protection can we protect the open space and wildlife habitats that benefit all Wyoming residents. Toward this end, Trout Unlimited supports the Wyoming State Legislature’s creation of the Wildlife and Natural Resources Funding Act as an effective policy vehicle through which landowners and non-profit organizations can work together to ensure that fishery and wildlife habitats remain intact and healthy for current and future generations.

Of Wyoming’s 62.5 million

acres, public lands cover 57 percent and private land covers 43 percent. Agricultural landowners own nearly 98 percent (about 26 million acres) of the state’s private land. Healthy fishery and wildlife habitats exist on both public and private lands and depend on sound stewardship, regardless of land ownership. Terrestrial and aquatic wildlife recognize no land ownership boundaries and depend on migration corridors to cross public and private lands. These corridors have been used by fish and wildlife for thousands of years, and are similar in concept to the migration routes that domestic cattle and sheep have used to move between winter and summering areas for the past 150 years. Migration corridors for fish and wildlife, and the habitats they connect, are essential to protecting the long-term viability of these populations in our state.

Together with the open spaces that support wildlife habitats, healthy fishery and wildlife populations are crucial to Wyoming’s economy. Tourism is Wyoming’s second largest industry, contributing nearly \$1.9 billion annually to the state’s economy and providing over 28,000 jobs. Fishing, hunting and other wildlife-related recreation are key components of the state’s tourism industry, and occur on both public and private lands. The environmental and economic integrity of these recreational activities depends largely on the stewardship of private landowners, especially ranchers and farmers.

Like agricultural economies across the country, Wyoming’s agricultural industry faces a number of pressures that threaten traditional activities, as well as the fishery and wildlife habitats that agricultural lands typically provide. The ongoing health and vitality of

continued on page eight

Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club



Student volunteer from the James Jordan Boys & Girls Club cuts down the invasive European Buckthorn at LaBagh Woods Forest Preserve. This is one of the many volunteer management sites in the Cook County Preserves.

By Douglas Chien

Cook County, in northeastern Illinois, is virtually built-out from the high rise density of Chicago along Lake Michigan to the car-packed sprawl of the suburbs. Physically it is one of the largest counties in America and its government, with a budget of over \$3 billion, dwarfs some small countries with its complexity and number of services. Naturally, a county of this size and complexity can have far reaching impacts on the environment, both within the county and beyond.

One of the most confusing aspects of Cook County government is the existence of the Forest Preserve District. The importance of the Preserves cannot be overstated. Currently about 68,000-acres of the County is held as open space:

home to oak savannas (more endangered than the rainforest), tallgrass prairies, wetlands, and woodlands that all provide home to the 2nd highest number of threatened and endangered species in Illinois.

All these lands are controlled by a 17-member Board of Commissioners; each elected from single member districts that range across the county in odd configurations. Confusion arises when one considers the fact that these 17 members are also the Cook County Board. They meet in the same chambers, sit in the same chairs, yet on the first Wednesday of each month they wear their Preserve Commissioner hats and deal with a \$370 million budget and questions about land management, providing education and recreational opportunities for residents, and protecting land from improper use. Then on many more days, these 17 members are County Commissioners dealing with a \$3 billion dollar budget and questions of hospitals, jails, jobs and requests to use "vacant scrublands" to build roads, schools, steel mills, and hotels upon.

For many years the Forest Preserve District was the hidden government but a proposal to sell Preserve land for development galvanized the environmental community. Although the proposal was successful, the subsequent years have seen the majority of new proposals defeated.

Sierra Club's involvement in County politics preceded this land sale with the endorsement and successful election of Mike Quigley to the Cook County and Preserve Boards in 1998. Since then several more reformers have joined the Board and the situation has dramatically improved for the Preserves.

Sierra Club volunteers were also some of the founding members of the Volunteer Stewardship Network, a network of volunteers working to restore the ecological health of the prairies, woodlands, savannas, and wetlands held by the Preserves. This direct, on-the-ground contribution is one of the most tangible examples of the environmental community working with the County to protect a world class resource. The Preserves require direct and active management due to the interruption of historical fire patterns and the introduction of exotic invasive species like European buckthorn and garlic mustard.

While most of our efforts have been focused on the Forest Preserve District, Sierra Club has recently become more involved with the County side of things. This summer Cook County became one of the first to join our "Cool Counties" program. Cool Counties pledge to reduce global warming emissions 80 percent by 2050, an achievable

continued on page five

Counties Share ‘What Works’ at NACo’s First Climate Protection Forum, *continued*

Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club, *continued*

continued from page one

- Arlington Co., Va. found that commercial buildings account for 40 percent of greenhouse gas emissions.

Tina Hill, a McHenry County, Ill. commissioner was, perhaps, an unlikely table discussion leader. “I have not bought into the whole global warming thing,” she said during a break. “So when this came up, I said let’s go see what I can learn.

“I’ve already moved dramatically,” she added. “I was a naysayer, and now I do understand that we have to protect the environment and there are things we can do.”

Hill said she finds an economic argument for “going green” more convincing with colleagues — saving energy or money, or creating new business opportunities. “Even at the table, I said, ‘Guys, I need another word for climate action plan; it’s not going to fly, and they gave me clean energy plan.”

Supervisor Jeff Morris from Trinity County, Calif. found the sessions “very collaborative.” His most important take-away from the forum: “That there are counties and organizations who have already created many of the tools needed for someone who is just starting out to get moving quickly.”

Other forum speakers represented such organizations as

well as representatives of several counties that are ahead of the curve in addressing climate change. They included Whatcom County, Wash., Westchester County, N.Y. and Alameda County, Calif.

Garrett Fitzgerald, director of programs, ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, provided guidance on how counties can develop their own climate action plans.

The steps include assessing baseline greenhouse gas emissions from all sources, including county government operations, businesses and the community at large; setting emissions-reduction targets and creating an action plan, and monitoring and re-evaluating goals.

ICLEI offers free clean air and climate protection software to its members and the technical assistance to use it, Fitzgerald said.

More than 35 counties are ICLEI members, including Orange County, Fla., Washtenaw County, Mich., Chittenden County, Vt., Arlington County, Va. and Multnomah County, Ore.

To continue the dialogue, NACo has established an Online County Climate Discussion Forum at www.naco.org/climatediscussion.

PDF files of forum speakers’ PowerPoint presentations are available online at www.naco.org/climateprotection.

Reprinted with permission, the National Association of Counties.

continued from page four

average annual reduction of 2 percent. The Cool Counties Climate Stabilization Declaration also urges the federal government to adopt legislation requiring an 80 percent emissions reduction by 2050 and calls for fuel economy standards to be raised to 35 miles per gallon within a decade.

Most recently one of our favorite Commissioners, Mike Quigley, introduced an ordinance that would eliminate the purchase of plastic water bottles by the County. As of mid-October it passed committee and will be soon heard by the full County Board.

We expect more good things to happen at both the County and Forest Preserve District in the years to come.

CLN Wish List

As a very lean non-profit, the Conservation Leaders Network always needs more than we have the funding to cover. Right now, we can use the following:

- new or used paper cutter
- new or used typewriter
- a file cabinet
- a long folding table.

If you would like to donate any of these items, please let us know. We can be reached by email at info@conservationleaders.org.

From the Director . . .



Executive Director Peg Reagan

We've been swamped lately generating letters from county commissioners in three states urging their Senators and Members of Congress to support environmentally sound mining practices on federal lands.

The New York Times recently wrote that our current mining law "is among the last statutory survivors of the boisterous era of westward expansion. Essentially unchanged since Ulysses S. Grant signed it into law, it sets the basic rules for mining hard-rock minerals like gold, copper and uranium on public lands. Useful in its day, it is a disaster now. It requires no royalties from the mining companies and contains no environmental safeguards, allowing mines to wreak havoc on water supplies and landscapes."

Our nation's current mining law is bad for several reasons.

It makes mining the dominant use of federal lands, for courts have interpreted the Act to mean that mining "trumps" all other uses of these public lands. It offers "miners" the right to buy

public lands—even when there is an overriding public need to maintain those lands for public uses, including forestry, watershed protection, recreation, and other uses.

It short changes American taxpayers. Taxpayers for Common Sense points out that our current mining law "robs taxpayers by allowing companies to "patent"—take title of—public lands for the rock bottom price of \$5 an acre . . . Once they have purchased this practically free land, mining companies are allowed to extract metals and minerals—an estimated \$245 billion worth over the years—without paying a dime in royalties." Other industries which extract resources from our federal lands (coal, oil and gas, for example) pay royalties from 8% to 12.5%.

It doesn't require the mining companies to clean up their toxic mess. "Adding insult to injury is that taxpayers foot the bill for billions of dollars in cleanup costs when mines are stripped bare and abandoned. One estimate puts the total cleanup cost at between \$32 billion and \$72 billion," wrote Taxpayers for Common Sense. They also point out that, "The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's roster of the nation's worst industrial contamination hot spots, the so-called Superfund list, includes more than 25 mines. Cleaning them up will cost billions of dollars."

It risks public health. While the

West was sparsely settled when this law was enacted, that is not the case now. Mines have impacted many Western towns, destroyed drinking water supplies, and contaminated children's bodies with lead and other toxics. Hardrock mining has polluted an estimated 40 percent of western waterways with cyanide, lead, arsenic, mercury and other toxics, and has left a legacy of a half million abandoned mine sites.

It lacks any environmental protection requirements. It fails to protect water quality, wildlife habitat, and other natural resources from the often devastating impacts of poorly managed mineral activities.

On another issue, we succeeded in pulling together a great Global Warming Committee to help shape our work. Now we are working to raise the necessary foundation support. The Committee is:

- Brett Hulsey, Supervisor, Dane County WI
- Byng Hunt, Supervisor, Mono County CA
- Jim Lopez, Deputy Chief of Staff Global Warming Action Team, King County WA
- Paul Newman, Supervisor, Cochise County AZ
- Dave Somers, Councilmember, Snohomish County WA
- Cheryl Thorp, former Commissioner, Curry County OR
- Will Toor, Commissioner, Boulder County CO
- John Woolley, Supervisor, Humboldt County CA

Peg Reagan

Americans Invest in Parks & Conservation: LandVote 2006

**Supervisor of the Month,
Sally Thomas**
continued

Voter-approved funding for land conservation reached record levels in 2006. At the November 7th midterm elections, voters in 23 states approved 104 ballot measures, which will provide \$6.4 billion in new funding for land conservation. This eclipses the previous record, set in the November 1998 election, of \$5.68 billion. Voter-approved funding for the entire year also reached an all-time high of \$6.7 billion, compared to \$5.86 billion in 1998. Furthermore, the 80 percent approval rate for the November election outpaced the 75 percent approval rate that has been common over the past decade.

Beyond the record setting levels of funding created, 2006 was a notable year because of the wide variety of communities that approved conservation finance ballot measures. Conservation finance reached mainstream America in 2006 when voters united to support ballot measures in large urban counties, small blue-collar cities, and rural ranching communities, in addition to the affluent suburbs and resort communities where the local conservation finance movement began decades ago.

Among the notable counties that approved ballot measures in 2006 were:

Cobb County, GA, a fiscally conservative county outside Atlanta, where voters approved a

\$40 million bond for land conservation with 72 percent support.

Salt Lake County, UT, where voters endorsed a \$48 million bond with 71 percent “yes”.

Ravalli County, MT, a fast-growing ranching community, which approved a \$10 million bond with 58 percent support.

Hawaii and Honolulu Counties, which both approved property tax measures by wide margins, so that now every county in Hawaii has a dedicated fund for land conservation.

Washington County, MN voters were successful in passing a \$20 million bond for parks and other natural areas with 61 percent support.

Voters in **Beaufort County, SC** passed a \$50 million bond with 75 percent support. The bond will help continue the county’s land preservation program.

LandVote 2006, excerpted and reprinted with permission from The Trust for Public Land. For more information about TPL, please visit www.tpl.org or call (415) 495-4014.



Want to contact us? We can be reached by phone at 541 247-8079 or by email at info@conservationleaders.org

continued from page two

little adjusted gross income, the scenario most often under development pressure, can receive 100% of that value; landowners with high income, who find the tax incentives attractive, won't find a pennies-on-the-dollar offer from the County attractive.

A side effect of the grid is that taxpayers don't see their dollars going into coffers of wealthy landowners. They can relate to the family farm and take pride in saving farmland for future generations.

Volunteers needed!

Can you give us a few hours of your time???

We need your help, and you can choose what you want to help us with—online research, phone calls, typing articles for our newsletter, fundraising, help with mailings and a variety of other tasks.

If you have internet access, you can work at home or you can work in our office in Oregon.

Call Peg at 541 247-8079 or email us at: info@conservationleaders.org

The Economic Value of Fisheries in Wyoming, *continued*

continued from page three

agricultural communities depends on decision makers' willingness to support policies that bolster the interwoven and mutually dependent relationship between healthy habitats, healthy economic development and a healthy agricultural industry.

Key Facts

Healthy fisheries

Healthy fisheries consist of the upstream and downstream waters of a flowing river; lands adjacent to the river, which include floodplains, riparian and upland areas; and groundwater.

Ranches comprise the largest blocks of private land in Wyoming and contain many of the tributaries that provide the spawning areas and migration corridors that support diverse and thriving fish populations in Wyoming's main stem rivers.

Over half of Wyoming's 21,600 stream miles are on private land. Healthy fisheries in Wyoming depend, not only on the agencies that manage fishery and wildlife habitats on public land, but on the ability and willingness of private landowners to protect the quality of fisheries on their land.

Healthy Economic Development

Over 4 million tourists visit Wyoming annually and contribute nearly \$1.9 billion to the state's economy. Fishing, river rafting

and hunting are among the top seven outdoor activities visitors participate in most frequently during their stay in Wyoming.

Nearly one-third of Wyoming's residents are anglers who spend over 90 percent of their fishing days in Wyoming.

Anglers spent approximately \$423 million in Wyoming in 2002. The sportfishing industry creates 3,500 jobs in the state.

Healthy fisheries that support thriving fish populations on rivers are essential to keeping anglers, and their dollars, in Wyoming.

The long-term health of tourism in Wyoming depends on the willingness and ability of private landowners to enhance fishery and wildlife habitats on their land.

Healthy agricultural communities

Most of Wyoming's population growth, especially in counties with open space and amenities such as fishery and wildlife habitats, has been in rural areas that have traditionally been used for agricultural production.

Between 1992 and 2002, ranchette developments in Wyoming increased 40 percent. During this time, ranches and farms with 180 acres or

more fell by 5 percent.

Economic and demographic trends have largely decoupled the value of agricultural products from the value of agricultural land. Increasingly, open space and amenity values, rather than productive capacity, are setting agricultural land prices.

Agricultural landowners face strong incentives to shift their land away from agricultural production to development use. This fragments open spaces and destroys the fishery and wildlife habitats associated with agricultural lands.

Reprinted with permission from The Economic Value of Healthy Fisheries in Wyoming—A Trout Unlimited Wyoming Water Project report.

Do you have a success story you'd like to share?

Have you applied for and received one of the many funding opportunities we provided to members?

We'd like to hear from you. Call us at 541 247-8079.



New Funding Expands Coastal Grants

County Programs Awarded NACo Five Star Restoration Grants

By Eric Johnston

NACo has been awarded a \$500,000 grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to expand the Coastal Counties Restoration Initiative (CCRI).

The initiative will provide financial assistance (\$50,000 to \$100,000 per award) on a competitive basis to innovative, county-led projects for coastal river or marine habitat restoration. These projects can be implemented by all counties located within coastal watersheds, including the Great Lakes' watersheds. During the pilot year in 2006, five county projects received more than \$300,000 in funding.

The 48 counties that applied for the pilot-year funding demonstrated the demand for county-led coastal restoration projects. The five pilot projects have already demonstrated success in restoring critical habitat to marine species such as sea turtles and Pacific Salmon. In addition, grantees and their partners have engaged community volunteers, protected economic assets and created infrastructure that is improving public safety.

The \$500,000 in new funding will help match the in-kind and cash match of a new group of 2008 grantees. This 2008 funding is just a portion of a new partnership with NOAA that is designed to continue for three years with available grant funds increasing to \$1.5 million in year three if NOAA funding is available.

These sizeable grants are designed

to enhance the capacity of counties to restore their valuable coastal resources in cooperation with NOAA's Community-based Restoration Program and Open Rivers Initiative.

CCRI's pilot-year grantees were solely funded through NOAA's Community-based Restoration Program, which supports wetland, riparian and coastal habitat restoration projects. The addition of NOAA's Open Rivers Initiative funding to CCRI will ensure that a portion of new projects will focus on community-driven small dam and river barrier removal projects.

These projects are in great need because more than 2 million small dams across the U.S. — many of which are obsolete — block the passage of economically and culturally important migratory fish species. Other barriers such as perched culverts also create barriers to passage of important species such as striped bass, sturgeon, Atlantic and Pacific salmon, American eel and river herring.

CCRI complements NACo's long-standing Five Star Restoration Program, which provides funding for community-based wetland and streambank restoration projects across the country. However, the Coastal Counties Restoration Initiative differs in several aspects, most notably by its emphasis on marine habitat restoration and the larger size of the grant awards.

Reprinted with permission, the National Association of Counties.

By Eric Johnston

NACo recently announced the recipients of the 2007 Five Star Restoration Challenge Grant Program. This year, as a part of the Five Star Partnership, NACo will award \$132,291 in grants that will support 10 projects, located in 12 counties throughout the country to help implement locally driven wetland and watershed restoration projects.

The 2007 NACo-awarded Five Star grantees (and their county partners) are:

Charles County, Md.
Trout Unlimited (Pendleton and Grant counties, W.Va.)
City of Lawrenceburg (Anderson County, Ky.)
Mobile County, Ala.
City of Gulf Breeze (Okaloosa and Escambia counties, Fla.)
BP St. Clair LPG Terminal/
Dome Petroleum Corporation
(St. Clair County, Mich.)
Caddo Parish, La.
Mitchell County Conservation Board, Iowa
Solano Resource Conservation Board (Solano County, Calif.)
Ted TrueBlood Chapter of Trout Unlimited (Ada County, Idaho.)

Five Star Restoration projects involve a high degree of cooperation with local governmental agencies, elected officials, community groups, businesses, schools and environmental organizations working together to improve local water quality and restore important fish and wildlife habitats.

Reprinted with permission, the National Association of Counties.

What's New with Marine Reserves

On November 1, Governor Kulongoski addressed coastal fishermen and made the following commitments:

“I am encouraging OPAC [Ocean Policy Advisory Council] to limit its recommendations for reserves to less than 10 reserve sites that are large enough to provide for scientifically testing the ecological benefits they might produce, but small enough to avoid economic or social impacts, such as loss of significant fishing opportunities.”

He also said, “While I am eager for OPAC to provide its recommendations on reserves, I will assure you that I will not advocate for implementation of those recommendations until funding has been identified to address monitoring, enforcement and scientific research required to properly implement a system of reserves.” Addressing concerns about wave energy as well, he said he was asking the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, which has jurisdiction here, to “limit the permitting of wave energy to 5 to 7 sites.”

The Ocean Policy Advisory Council and its Marine Reserves Working Group will be holding their next meetings in Gold Beach at the end of November. Although their agendas are not yet available, they allow a short public comment period during each meeting. The Marine Reserves Working Group's meeting will be on Thursday November 29 with



the full OPAC convening on Friday November 30. They need to hear from coastal residents that you support marine reserves and the Governor's process. Contact us near the end of the month and we will provide you with meeting times, agendas and location.

Green Fire Productions will screen their documentary, *Common Ground: Oregon's Ocean*, in Gold Beach on Tuesday evening, November 20, 2007.

A reception starts the evening off at 6 pm and the film screens at 7 pm. The 30-minute film will be followed by a Q & A discussion with scientists, commercial and sport fishermen, a member of Oregon's Ocean Policy Advisory Council and the audience.

The showing will be held in the Showcase Room at the Curry County Fairgrounds, on Highway 101. It is free and open to the public.

This groundbreaking film features stunning views of Oregon's underwater world and weaves leading marine science with perspectives from those who rely on the ocean for their livelihood. The program provides essential information for the discussion about the future of Oregon's marine environment.

The Conservation Leaders Network attended the last Marine Reserves Working Group meeting in Salem in October. We are seeing marine reserves opponents back away from outright opposition to marine reserves and take a different tack by protesting that the Governor's current process is too short and moving much too quickly.

This change on their part may be due to the recent overwhelming scientific data demonstrating the value of marine reserves in temperate waters such as we have off the Oregon coast.

What's New with the WOPR?

Thanks, in part, to the many county commissioners who requested an extension of the public comment period, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) responded to the public's outcry for more time to review and evaluate their 1,650 page Draft Environmental Statement for their Western Oregon Plan Revisions (WOPR).

BLM State Director Ed Shepherd wrote to Multnomah County Commissioner Jeff Cogen that, "While I have received requests from other counties for similar extensions, I have also received a statement from the Association of O&C Counties expressing their belief that the original 90-day extension [it is unclear whether he means the original 30-day extension or the original 90-day public comment period] was sufficient." He did, however, agree to a second 30-day extension, for a total of a 120-day public comment period. Now comments are due January 11, 2008.

You can access the entire Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the BLM's website at www.blm.gov/or/plans/wopr/DEIS.php. You can also submit your comments online. It's important to make your voice heard. Even if you don't have time to read the entire three volumes, let BLM know that you don't want these 2.5 million acres of federal forest lands to be turned into tree farms.

Some talking points we will be using in the Conservation Leaders Network's comments:

1. The settlement which led to the WOPR was contrived to benefit the timber industry at the expense of the American public and wildlife. The industry repeatedly lost in court yet the Bush administration decided to "settle" by requiring BLM to revise its resource management plans on O&C lands and to consider one alternative that made timber the dominant use of these lands, along with a range of other alternatives.

Instead, BLM reviewed only alternatives that make timber the dominant use.

2. The WOPR will take these lands out of the Northwest Forest Plan, which was found to be only minimally legal.

This will throw the Pacific Northwest back into the timber wars of the early 90's and will eliminate the gains we've made on water quality as shown in the recent EPA report.

3. The DEIS includes an extensive analysis of the socio-economic impacts of timber jobs but does not for fishing, hunting, recreation, impacts on drinking water and other societal benefits of these lands.

4. The preferred Alternative 2 in the DEIS is predicated upon a

60% increase in BLM's budget.

While we don't support Alternative 2, nor any of the alternatives except the no-action alternative, we think it is folly to invest this much time, resources and public energy in developing a plan that will not be supported—not by the public and not by federal dollars.

5. They don't address climate change. In August, 2007, the non-partisan federal General Accounting Office released a report highlighting the need for federal land management agencies to consider the impacts of climate change in their management actions.

The DEIS does not give the public a chance to see how increased logging on O&C lands will damage our ability to control global warming, nor does it show how global warming is likely to impact the health of the forests.

It is important to protect old growth forests for a variety of reasons; perhaps the most pressing is climate change. As the Pacific Forest Trust writes, "Forests of all ages store carbon, but older forests store more net carbon annually than younger forests. Although younger forests can grow and store more carbon at a faster rate than older forests, the total amount of carbon—the carbon stocks—grown annually in older forests is greater.



Conservation Leaders Network
PO Box 46
Wedderburn OR 97491

YES! I want to join the Conservation Leaders Network, the only nonprofit organization in the country which focuses on providing support to and forging ties between county commissioners and environmental leaders to protect America's natural resources. Together we work to encourage ethically and economically responsible decisions that will help protect the natural treasures that complement and complete our communities. *Individual and county memberships are now available. Individual memberships start at \$45/year; county memberships start at \$250/yr.*

With my membership, I will get:

- * email notice of conservation and restoration funding opportunities for counties
- * four issues of the Conservation Leaders Network's quarterly newsletter "Networker"
- * priority access to the Conservation Leaders Staff for information and support.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip code: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email address: _____

Membership contribution

Please make your check payable to the \$45

**Conservation
Leaders
Network** \$100

PO Box 46 \$250
Wedderburn OR 97491