e
ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE
finding the ways that work

Solutions

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Big victory for clean air: A look behind the scenes

NEW EPA RULE TRUMPS SO-CALLED "CLEAR SKIES"

If looking for an explanation why half of Americans breathe unhealthy air, a good place to start is power plants, like the coal-fired behemoths that dot the Ohio Valley. Their smokestacks are responsible for two-thirds of the nation's sulfur dioxide and one-fifth of nitrogen oxide pollution.

Many of the dirtiest plants in the eastern half of the U.S. will now be cleaned up, thanks to EPA's new Clean Air Interstate Rule (CAIR), announced in March. "The new rule will deliver the biggest reductions of smog- and particulate-forming pollution from U.S. power plants in 15 years," says our president Fred Krupp.

Once fully implemented, CAIR will prevent 17,000 premature deaths a year, according to EPA, as well as 2.2 million missed school and work days a year. The victory culminates years of work by Environmental Defense and has taken the wind out of the misnamed "Clear Skies" bill that had been looming in Congress. Behind the smoke and mirrors, that industry-backed bill would have undermined Clean Air Act protections and postponed deadlines to restore healthy air.

Environmental Defense helped lay the groundwork in 2002, when we settled a lawsuit with EPA requiring the agency to enforce strict smog standards. To ratchet up the pressure, we bolstered state power plant clean-up laws. We also took legal action to enforce a "good neighbor" petition by North Carolina to cut power plant pollution in 13 upwind states.

Our attorney Vickie Patton, a former EPA lawyer, made the case for the agency to cut power plant pollution under the Clean Air Act using a cap-and-trade system similar to the program we pioneered in the 1990s to curb acid rain. We urged EPA to rely on existing legal authority to achieve cost-effective cuts in sulfur dioxide and oxides of nitrogen from power plants. That would achieve the pollution reductions that Clear Skies aspired to do, but without dismantling the nation's clean air laws.

Despite an attempt by Senator James Inhofe (R-OK) and his allies to thwart CAIR, the president approved the regulation—and Clear Skies stalled. EPA estimates the human health benefits will outweigh the compliance costs 25 to 1.


Jim West

Raising the bar: The new rule will cut power plant sulfur emissions 73% by 2015 in Eastern states.

Respect the science

President Lincoln founded the National Academy of Sciences as an independent body to provide objective advice. A good way to test the value of an environmental initiative is to see how the nonpartisan Academy responds to it.

EPA recently stood up to some intense political pressure and promulgated the Clean Air Interstate Rule (CAIR), a move recommended by the Academy. Score one for science.

Too often, however, politics trumps science. On EPA's defective new mercury rule *(see story below)*, an advisory group simply was disbanded. On global warming, the administration commissioned an Academy study and then disregarded the results.

Every administration occasionally succumbs to pressure to ignore scientific advice. Despite extensive evidence, for example, President Clinton failed to enact higher automobile fuel economy standards.

A heated political climate mutes the voice of science.

Admittedly, science is just one of many factors that inform public policy. Science insists on politically awkward actions; it's full of gray areas. But every day we make decisions based on uncertainties. When a hurricane is coming our way, we board up our windows even though we don't know where it will hit.

Can science rise above politics? Yes, if we tone down the rhetoric. There are some hopeful signs: Fishermen, for example, are being allowed to trade shares of the scientifically determined sustainable catch. Like CAIR, it's an example of science and markets working together. We hope Steve Johnson, the career professional chosen to head EPA, will ensure that sound, independent science is made public and forms the basis of policy.

For our part, Environmental Defense is committed to following the science, even when it leads us into difficult, unfamiliar terrain.

Fred Krupp

EPA takes the wrong course on mercury

Maxine Cass

Forty-five states have issued warnings about high mercury levels in fish.

Five days after EPA finalized a strong smog rule for power plants, the agency announced a very weak rule on mercury pollution.

The new rule, which Environmental Defense strongly opposes, reverses a decision to regulate mercury as a hazardous pollutant. Additionally, it delays significant cuts in mercury pollution from power plants for a decade and permits mercury trading, which could create toxic "hot spots" where the risks of mercury poisoning are severe. The administrative action will also allow numerous proposed coal-fired plants across the country to emit significantly more toxic mercury into the atmosphere.

The new rule puts another generation of children at risk

Environmental Defense has announced plans to sue EPA. "The trading approach is completely inappropriate for mercury because of the toxic nature of the pollutant," says our attorney Janea Scott. "EPA's rule reflects flawed science, a flawed reading of the law and a fundamental failure to protect the public from the hazards of mercury pollution."

Mercury pollution settles in lakes and streams, exposing those who eat contaminated fish. According to the estimates of an EPA toxicologist, 630,000 babies born in the U.S. each year may be exposed to dangerous levels of mercury in the womb. Says Scott: "The new rule puts another generation of children needlessly at risk."

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MAILBAG

Editor:
In " Decision Time in Congress," about reforming the Army Corps of Engineers, you write: "We've joined ranks to strengthen environmental protections, such as requiring the Corps to replace each acre of wetlands it destroys." How do you *CREATE* a wetland? We don't know enough now, and probably will never know enough, to be able to replace what we destroy.

Jace Iversen, Odessa, FL

Image State

Our water resource specialist Scott Faber responds:
As long as people live in floodplains and ship goods by barge, the nation will build dams, levees and other water projects—and inevitably destroy some wetlands. The Corps reforms we champion would limit wetland destruction by ensuring that water projects really are worth building; too many have failed to deliver promised benefits. As you note, wetland mitigation is a new, evolving science, and restored wetlands take decades to provide the benefits of natural wetlands, if they succeed at all. That's why the reforms we propose require clear success criteria for mitigation projects, careful monitoring by a separate federal agency, and contingency plans for failure. We also work to increase the understanding of decision-makers at every level about the function and importance of wetlands, so that they are preserved even on a micro scale.

PLEASE WRITE TO US!
See addresses at left.

Washington watch

Mississippi River debate muddies water bill

The fate of the nation's biggest rivers and bays is at stake in the coming months as Congress debates the Water Resources Development Act of 2005.

At center is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which wants to spend $1.7 billion over 20 years lengthening seven locks on the Mississippi and Illinois rivers. The Corps would like Congress to forget the Army inspector general's 2001 report, which found that the Corps cooked the books to justify lock expansion, and to reject a report by the National Academy of Sciences, which concludes that future river traffic isn't likely to justify the project, the most expensive waterway project ever proposed. In fact, experts predict river traffic will decline, due partly to increased rail use.

Environmental Defense opposes the costly expansion and instead backs an effort by senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Russ Feingold (D-WI) to require that big Army Corps projects be peer-reviewed by independent economists, biologists and hydrologists and that the Corps replace habitats damaged by levees and dams. The senators also would earmark $1.1 billion for restoration of Louisiana's vanishing coastal wetlands.

Tolls could reduce congestion

Congress is nearing agreement on a $280 billion Transportation bill that threatens to weaken clean air regulations, reduce protections for parks and short-circuit public input requirements.

Environmental Defense helped defeat a House provision that would have barred the use of tolls to reduce traffic and fund transit. We built a coalition of environmentalists, state officials and road builders to counter lobbying by the American Trucking Association. Unfortunately, the Senate version of the bill would limit such tolls to new roads; now the versions will be reconciled in conference.

"We're working to ensure the final bill gives states more flexibility to use market incentives to address traffic problems," says our transportation director Michael Replogle.

Ask Congress to safeguard the environment by using tolls to manage traffic. Visit environmentaldefense.org/action.

USACE

Lock up the scientists: The Army Corps wants Congress to ignore the evidence.

Building an ark for endangered species

SAFE HARBOR HELPS REVERSE THE TIDE OF EXTINCTIONS

At twilight, rancher Clay Miller likes to head out on his 33,000-acre spread in West Texas to watch northern aplomado falcons hunt. Observing them maneuver above the desert grasslands gives the 79-year-old rancher a good feeling. "I'm glad they're here," he says.

The falcons, which often hunt in pairs, can outwit most prey. Once common throughout the Southwest, the aplomado all but vanished during the 1950s, due to overgrazing, drought and the pesticide DDT. Now it is coming back, thanks to the collective efforts of conservation groups and private landowners like Miller.

Environmental Defense's success in winning a U.S. ban on DDT in 1972 set the stage for The Peregrine Fund to reintroduce captive-bred birds from Mexico two decades later. The Fund, dedicated to the recovery of birds of prey, enrolled Miller and other Texas ranchers in Safe Harbor agreements for the falcon.

Safe Harbor, pioneered by Environmental Defense and adopted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, assures landowners that their efforts to restore habitat—or in this case, welcome the new immigrants—will not lead to new restrictions on their property. There are now 40 nesting pairs of falcons in southern and western Texas, up from zero in 1995.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of Safe Harbor, which began in the Sandhills of North Carolina to restore longleaf pine habitat for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker. Since then, woodpecker populations have taken off, as has this conservation tool.

Safe Harbor agreements now encompass about three million acres in 17 states. Thirty-five endangered and threatened species have come under the umbrella, including not just birds and mammals but also amphibians, fish, mussels, insects and plants. The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited and a host of other groups are participating in Safe Harbor agreements with landowners to help species as diverse as the Arizona desert pupfish and the Hawaiian nene goose.

"The fact that other groups have added this tool to their toolkit is gratifying," says our wildlife attorney Michael Bean. "For some, we've been informal advisors; for others, they've taken the tool and run with it."

Robert Winslow/Animals Animals

Nearly wiped out by trappers, the endangered Mexican gray wolf has returned to the Southwest.

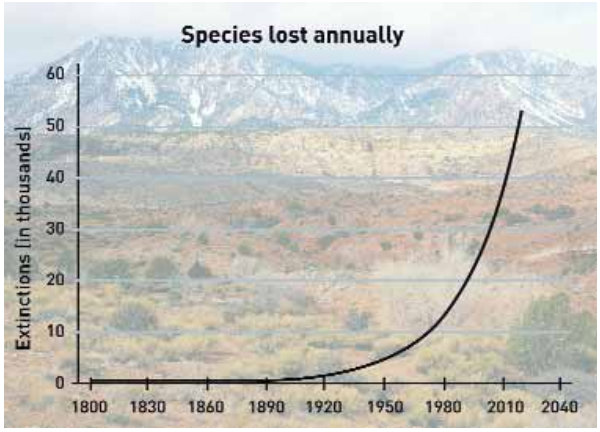
SAVING LAND WITHOUT HAVING TO BUY IT

Since most endangered species rely on private lands for survival, enlisting private landholders as allies is critical. "Safe Harbor shows that you don't always need to buy land to have effective conservation," says Bean. "It also frees up scarce dollars to go where they are needed most."

Before Safe Harbor, many ranchers and farmers were reluctant to maintain or improve wildlife habitat on their land. Some even destroyed habitat to discourage endangered species from taking up residence. "Environmental Defense secured the trust of landowners, and that was key to Safe Harbor's initial success," says Ralph Costa of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Safe Harbor has won praise from a broad spectrum of groups, ranging from the National Audubon Society to the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. "The landowners themselves are the best ambassadors for this program," says our wildlife specialist Margaret McMillan.

The age of extinction



Animal and plant species are disappearing globally 100 times faster than a century and a half ago; in America, only about 10% of endangered species are recovering. Yet even as this mass extinction has been under way, the United States has restored certain species on a scale unseen in other nations, thanks to the Endangered Species Act.

RUMBLES ON CAPITOL HILL

These new allies could help save the Endangered Species Act, now under attack in Washington. Representative Richard Pombo (R-CA) plans to move legislation through the House this year, part of a larger effort to weaken the Act.

As the debate shapes up on Capitol Hill, Environmental Defense is encouraging the Bush administration to make innovative improvements to engage landowners further in species recovery. Improvements such as cutting red tape and integrating federal and state efforts can be made administratively without overhauling the Act.

"Though often criticized as rigid, the Act has proven remarkably flexible," says Bean. "The perception that wildlife gains can only come at the expense of property rights is wrong." Safe Harbor participants offer proof. Adds Miller from his ranch: "Although some have paranoia about the Endangered Species Act, we've had no problems whatsoever. People, cattle and endangered species can all share the same turf."

Tell Congress not to undermine the Endangered Species Act. Visit environmentaldefense.org/action.

Whatever happened to the Class of 1967?

Thirty-eight years ago, the federal government released the first official list of endangered species in the United States. That list of 78 vertebrates served as the foundation for the 1973 Endangered Species Act. Today, the roll has swelled to 1,264 species. Many members of the original Class of '67 have stable or increasing populations thanks to the Act and new approaches like Safe Harbor.

Some species, like the bald eagle, have fared so well they warrant delisting. Others have been less lucky. Each has its own story. Here are a few:

LIKELY TO SUCEED: Whooping crane
Conservation efforts began in the 1930s; in recent years, the population has grown nearly tenfold, to 468 birds. Recently reintroduced to Florida, its prospects are promising. The lesson: Species do well when they get attention and funding, but it takes time.

NEEDS WORK: Kirkland's warbler
This bird's prime habitat, Michigan jack pine forest, is disappearing. Population has tripled in the last 50 years, but active management such as cowbird control is essential for its survival. The warbler's fate also hinges on what happens to its winter grounds in the Caribbean.

ONE THAT NEVER GAVE UP: Black-footed ferret
Once common in the western Great Plains, America's only native ferret was believed extinct in 1979. Discovery of a small population in Wyoming gave the ferret a second chance. A captive breeding program has succeeded, but keeping ferrets alive in the wild has proven challenging. Prairie dogs, their principal food source, have been decimated by plague.

ON THE BRINK: Florida panther
With the Florida population down to 30-50 panthers, closely related panthers from Texas were released in Florida, increasing the gene pool and the chances for survival. While panthers prefer upland forest, restoration of the Everglades may be their best hope for survival. Sadly, encroaching development may doom the panther.

TOO POPULAR: Blue pike

EXTINCT

Once a highly valued commercial species in the Great Lakes, with an annual catch exceeding 20 million pounds, the blue pike was declared extinct in 1974. By the time it was listed as endangered in 1967, the population was already so low it stood no chance of survival.

Clockwise from left: Tom Bean/Corbis; David Cahlander; Jeff Vanuga/Corbis; Google; Steve Kaufman/Corbis

Forgotten no more: Water trust replenishes the Rio Grande

Eighty-five-year-old Edmundo Nieto remembers when the whole town of Presidio, TX, would gather on the banks of the Rio Grande to swim and eat catfish. Today, that free-flowing river is no more, its water gone to irrigate crops and quench the thirst of fast-growing Albuquerque and El Paso. Now, residents along this 180-mile stretch near Big Bend National Park, known as the Forgotten River, are doing something about it.

Environmental Defense helped create the Trans-Pecos Water Trust to acquire water rights and return water to the Rio Grande. The trust is controlled by local landowners; our attorney Mary Kelly serves on its board to provide expertise in water law. Says Kelly: "The Trust will revive the river as well as the rural economy."

Local landowners revive the river

We've also helped lead workshops on the U.S. and Mexican sides of the river to discuss what to do next. The meetings "had 100% agreement on one point," says our water analyst Karen Chapman. "Get rid of salt cedar!"

Salt cedar, or tamarisk, is a Eurasian tree introduced in the 1940s to control erosion. It has driven out willows and cottonwoods and dominates the riverbanks with thick stands of salt-exuding trees that ruin the soil. The state of Texas and the Army Corps of Engineers are studying how best to restore the river.

Mark Gibson Photography

One salt cedar can consume up to 200 gallons of water a day.

Rhoda Sidney/PhotoEdit

Relics of bygone bounty: Can oysters come back in North Carolina?

In North Carolina, healthy oysters mean healthy bays and estuaries

North Carolina's once-legendary oyster harvests have declined 97% from their peak a century ago. Overfishing, loss of habitat and declining water quality from coastal development are to blame. Solutions, coastal advocates say, must be ecosystem-wide.

"Oysters are the canaries of the sea," explains Environmental Defense biologist Dr. Michelle Duval. "Their health is a good indicator of the health of the larger system." Duval is one of the prime movers of a five-year oyster restoration and protection plan recently agreed on by state officials, scientists and fishermen.

The plan focuses on the North Carolina oyster, a famous local delicacy that is hardier than imported species. It filters dirty water and builds up "reefs" that benefit dozens of other species.

To protect the oyster, the plan expands oyster sanctuaries, areas off-limits to shellfishing. It also promotes recycling programs in which empty shells are collected from restaurants and traditional oyster roasts and deposited in estuaries. The recycled shells are preferred surfaces to which floating larvae attach themselves, aiding oyster reproduction.

Oysters filter water for dozens of species, including us

Stormwater runoff from coastal development can contaminate large shellfishing areas with coliform bacteria. Duval and her colleagues say a combination of regulations and incentives could help prevent people from "loving the coast to death." Adds Duval: "What's good for oysters is good for people."

Tragedy prompts government action in Amazonia

Paulo Santos/AP Photo

In Pará, deaths are announced in advance.

An anguished cry for justice followed the murder of a 73-year-old American nun who had fought for human rights and environmental protection in Brazil for more than two decades. When Sister Dorothy Stang was killed by two gunmen in February, it was a message sent by illegal loggers and ranchers, saying that they were in control.

Fortunately, Brazil's government sent an even louder message back. It stepped up security by deploying 2,000 troops in the state of Pará and took important steps to protect forest communities living under the cloud of death threats. With the help of Environmental Defense and local groups, President Luiz Ignacio Lula da Silva finalized two new forest reserves where all extractive activities are banned.

Deforestation in Pará largely comes from "land grabbing," where speculators *(grileiros)* illegally move onto public land, evict tenants, clear-cut trees and then pay off officials to gain property titles. Deadly land conflicts and their ecological fallout had already prompted the government to suspend all logging within a 19,000-square-mile range and to cancel many property claims.

PROTECTING PEOPLE AND THEIR FORESTS

Local mafias had retaliated against these measures, destroying property and closing ports, and the government wavered. But within a week of the murder of Sister Dorothy, President Lula restored the restrictions and formalized the new reserves.

With a grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, Environmental Defense is supporting these forest communities under pressure and threats from armed gangs. We organized several expeditions to proposed reserves and helped design the Riozinho do Anfrisio reserve near Altamira. We also documented cases of intimidation and violence from *grileiros*, providing a report to the federal police.

But success in the chaotic state of Pará can only be assured if the government is consistent in its enforcement of the law, says our scientist Dr. Stephan Schwartzman.

Time to harness the wind

While Congress wrangles over the future of U.S. energy policy, the future already has arrived at a rock-strewn mesa east of Fort Sumner, NM, where 136 turbines churn out electricity for Albuquerque at one of the nation's largest wind farms.

Record fuel prices and tight supplies have helped make wind the world's fastest growing source of electricity. Europe leads the market, but U.S. capacity is growing about 30% a year. "Wind offers a hedge against rising natural gas prices," says Don Brown of Public Service New Mexico. Wind also reduces dependence on fossil fuels and relieves the pressure to drill in pristine places.

Beyond short-term tax breaks, however, Congress has done nothing to mandate clean power. "In the absence of federal policy, states are setting their own standards," says our energy policy specialist Scott Anderson. Nineteen states and Washington, DC require a certain amount of power to come from renewable sources.

One leader is Texas, where wind power is booming thanks to a 1999 renewable requirement Environmental Defense helped craft, which uses market incentives to lower costs. Texas now is second only to California in wind production and is set to meet its 2,000 megawatt renewable mandate four years early.

Our Texas program served as the model for a national renewable requirement proposed for last year's energy bill. That didn't pass, but we're again pressing Congress for a strong renewable energy standard. "Politicians talk about energy independence. It's time for them to do something about it," says our energy expert Mark MacLeod.

PNM

Memo to Congress: You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows.

Down on the farm—reform at last?

During the worst years of the Great Depression, Congress created farm subsidies to help small farmers survive. Now, the system has run amok and is "driving many family farmers off the farm." That's the opinion of Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA), one of the Senate's few farmers.

Despite costing $20 billion a year, today's farm programs do not provide a safety net for most farmers. Two-thirds of farmers don't get a dime—and 80% of the rest get less than $2,000 a year. Meanwhile, America is losing roughly 15,000 farms annually.

Stephanie Maze/Corbis

How long can he hang on? The vast majority of conservation-minded farmers are shut out from green payments.

President Bush raised the issue in February when he proposed reforming farm subsidies to help farmers and reduce the deficit. Senators Grassley and Byron Dorgan (D-ND) introduced legislation—backed by Environmental Defense—that would lower the ceiling on government payments from $360,000 to $250,000 a year per farmer and would close loopholes that let some farmers get more than a million dollars a year.

A left-right alliance could help save the family farm

"This would be the first step toward meaningful reform," says our farm policy analyst Scott Faber. Since farmers manage more than half of America's land, farm policy has a dramatic impact on water quality and wildlife habitat.

Rather than help the small family farm, as many in Congress claim, subsidies for feed grains, rice and cotton actually hurt most farmers. Developing nations can't afford subsidies, so they use retaliatory tariffs to protect their farmers. The U.S. farmers hit by these trade barriers are often those who produce fruits, vegetables, nuts and livestock—the same farmers who are denied subsidies.

Commodity subsidies also harm the environment by driving many farmers to grow crops on sensitive wetlands and grasslands, and to convert rangeland and pastureland to row crops that require more water and chemicals.

When the 2002 Farm Bill was debated, Environmental Defense helped win increases in funding to farmers who volunteer to be good stewards of the land, such as by planting grasses and trees along sensitive waterways or restoring habitat for wildlife. Because these green payments do not count against treaty limits on "trade distorting" subsidies, they help farmers avoid retaliatory tariffs and can pave the way for new accords that will open markets to American products.

Unfortunately, four out of five farmers who opt to participate in these conservation programs are turned away. Why? Because most federal farm funding is soaked up by subsidies for cotton, rice and feed grains.

With the Farm Bill up for reauthorization in 2007, Environmental Defense is building a left-right alliance of fiscal conservatives like the Cato Institute, international development groups like Oxfam, environmental organizations like the Environmental Working Group and farm groups like American Farmland Trust to develop and advocate sensible reforms that help farmers and the environment.

"America's system for helping the farmer is broken," says Faber. "Congress has the opportunity to reshape farm policy to help more farmers, expand markets and reward good stewardship. We need to work with groups from across the political spectrum to seize it."

Help farmers help the environment. Tell Congress to fix farm subsidies at environmentaldefense.org/action.

GrantHeilman Photos

Out of control commodity subsidies are bad for the federal budget and for the environment.

Hetch Hetchy editorials win Pulitzer

"Here's the best-kept secret of Yosemite Valley: It has a twin." That's how Tom Philp of the *Sacramento Bee* began his series of editorials about restoring Hetch Hetchy Valley, which was flooded to provide water storage for San Francisco in 1913. The series won the Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing this spring.

Philp said our water expert Spreck Rosekrans piqued his interest with models showing water could be stored outside the valley. A UC-Davis study confirmed those findings. "When I read the UC-Davis report, I could see there was a critical mass of evidence from both respected third parties and the environmental community and that an editorial series advancing this idea would be legitimate," said Philp.

Philp's series and studies like the one by Environmental Defense helped convince Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's administration to analyze restoration options. "Philp was the first to publicly address the valley's restoration, and his analysis added clarity and insight to the debate," says our president Fred Krupp.

Greg Richardson/Level Par

Coulld a river run through it? This composite photograph shows what a restored Hetch Hetchy might look like.

Reviving Manhattan's shoreline

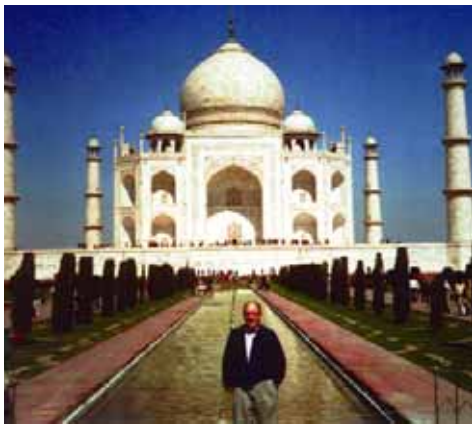
Manhattan's original planners left no room for parks, believing the city's waterfront, "embraced by the arms of the sea," would provide sufficient open space. But New York soon became one of the world's busiest ports, and industrial warehouses choked off access to the water.

Tony Perrottet/Ambient Images

In 2003, the first section of the new park opened in Greenwich Village. Five other sections are planned.

Now, thanks in part to Environmental Defense, Manhattanites can once again enjoy their shore. We worked with Friends of Hudson River Park to secure $30 million from the city and state to complete a central section of the 550-acre green space stretching from Battery Park in lower Manhattan to 59th Street. "This funding makes it possible for the park to go forward," says our Living Cities director Andrew Darrell.

The achievement is the latest in seven years of work to open broad public access to the waterfront for the first time in a century. We helped found a coalition promoting the park and helped write the legislation authorizing it. Now rotting piers are giving way to grass, boat ramps and a five-mile bike path. Notes Darrell: "New Yorkers can once again appreciate one of the world's great rivers."



courtesy Tom Graff

Graff found a ready audience for his knowledge gained over 30 years.

In India, our water expert shares California's lessons

What can a densely populated, rapidly industrializing nation like India, struggling with issues of water ownership and use, learn from California's long, sometimes tortuous water history? Hopefully, a lot. Our California regional director Tom Graff has dedicated his career to water issues. Recently, he was invited to present his views to Indian water experts in Jaipur. Graff's presentation outlined 30 years of wrangling and compromise in the Golden State—from stopping ill-advised projects like the Auburn Dam and the Peripheral Canal to helping craft what he called "the most important and far-reaching water policy reform act ever enacted in the United States, the Central Valley Project Improvement Act of 1992."

During his stay, Graff also met with river advocates who have been opposing such large dam projects as the Narmada complex and were eager to hear about similar U.S. grassroots efforts. He then addressed the Rajasthan High Court Bar Association on groundwater law. A good measure of his diplomatic success was a report in New Delhi's *Hindustan Times,* which ended: "Graff's prescription does not favor Western solutions to Eastern problems. Said he: 'Solutions—instead of emerging out of somewhere—should reflect local aspirations and experiences.' "

Owner training

To learn more about finding and raising pets in a way that's good for the animals, the environment and you, try these resources:

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) is a good general source. 424 East 92nd Street, New York, NY 10128; 212-876-7700; aspca.org.

The Humane Society of the U.S. crusades against cruelty to wild animals and pets. 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037; 202-452-1100; hsus.org/home.html.

To find animals up for adoption in your area contact: PETS911, 7301 East Helm Drive, Building D, Scottsdale, AZ 85260; 480-889-2640; pets911.com.

Information about "no-kill" shelters can be found at Maddie's Fund, 2223 Santa Clara Avenue, #B, Alameda, CA 94501; 510-337-8989; maddiesfund.org.

To take action against puppy mills and other irresponsible breeding practices, visit: stoppuppymills.org.

BOOKSHELF

Veterinarian and syndicated columnist Dr. Michael Fox is a reliable advisor on the care and feeding of your pet. His books include: *Understanding Your Dog, Understanding Your Cat* and *You Can Save The Animals: 50 Things You Can Do Right Now* (all St. Martin's Press).

David Samuel Robbins/Corbis

Friends for life

HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT PET FOR YOU AND THE PLANET

"A dog is the only thing on Earth that loves you more than he loves himself," wrote humorist Josh Billings. Such unconditional affection helps explain why 65 million dogs share homes with U.S. families. There must be another, more complicated, explanation for cats, who as one wag put it, "regard people as warm-blooded furniture" yet deign to live in one-third of our homes.

The truth is, we're hopelessly in love with our pets. Millions have happy relationships with horses, birds, fish, reptiles, rodents and other creatures. But pet ownership can also be fraught with difficulties. If you're thinking of getting a pet, here are a few basic guidelines:

Choose the appropriate pet. Do your homework. If you've decided to get a dog, for instance, there's a big difference in the amount of care different breeds require. How much space do you have, and how much time is available? Do you travel a lot? Are allergies a problem? Are you ready for what could turn out to be a 20-year commitment? Is money an issue? (The ASPCA notes that the average cat costs about $400 a year for food and medical care; the average dog, $500.) Children may not be ready to care for their own pets until they're six years old.

Avoid exotics. Because exotic and wild animals require special expertise, can be dangerous and are usually miserable in captivity (90% die in the first two years), the Humane Society takes a principled stand against keeping them as pets. The illegal pet trade disrupts ecosystems in the animal's native country and kills a shocking number as they are transported to market. On the receiving end, humans can pick up serious diseases from wild animals, including rabies, tuberculosis, Herpes B-virus, salmonella and ringworm. As "invasive species," those animals can also damage their new environments. Former pet Burmese pythons released in the Everglades, for instance,

Guest columnist Jim Motavalli is editor of E/The Environmental Magazine (for subscription information: 800-967-6572 or www.emagazine.com). Opinions are the author's and not those of Environmental Defense staff.

now pose a threat to local snake species. Twenty-four rabbits casually introduced to Australia in 1859 have multiplied into hundreds of millions, causing native species extinctions and millions of dollars of damage to agriculture every year.

Say no to puppy mills. That "doggie in the window" may be adorable, but you don't see the filthy, uncaring conditions that produced him. Dogs raised in "puppy mills" for pet shop and Internet sales may be a few dollars cheaper, but they often develop physical and behavioral problems that fail to surface until after the owner has forged a bond with the pet. These problems can lead to huge veterinary bills and emotional anguish.

Support your shelter. A better source for your next pet could be your local animal shelter. Shelters are forced to euthanize five million cats and dogs every year. The ones they put up for adoption have been medically checked, given basic immunizations and neutered. In addition, a small but growing number of "no-kill" shelters are able to save the lives of healthy and treatable animals, reserving euthanasia only for those that can't be rehabilitated. Currently, only 20% of the dogs in American homes came from shelters.

Pets make bad gifts. Some four million cats and dogs are returned to shelters every year as the result of failed adoptions. Every pet should be wanted, and people need to make that determination on their own. A kitten may make an adorable Christmas gift for a three-year-old, but your thoughtful present could burden the recipient with decades of unwanted responsibility.

By Jim Motavalli

A gift to the future

Join the Environmental Defense charitable gift annuity program or create a charitable remainder trust and receive immediate income and capital gains tax savings. In addition, you will be entitled to lifetime income from your gift.

To learn more about how your gift can help you and the environment, call toll-free 1-877-677-7397 or write: Anne B. Doyle, Environmental Defense, 257 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10010.

Is your fish oil fishy?

Since 1998, health conscious Americans have tripled their consumption of fish oil supplements containing heart-friendly omega-3 fatty acids. Yet some studies have shown that unpurified fish oil can contain carcinogens like dioxins and PCBs as well as mercury, a neurological toxin. Environmental Defense surveyed 54 major producers and suppliers of the supplements to see how they address these environmental contaminants. We've now published the results.

More than two-thirds of the companies surveyed verified that they meet the strictest U.S. standards, as set by EPA and the state of California. These companies use highly effective purification processes to separate pollutants from the beneficial omega-3s. Nine companies' responses were incomplete and eight companies did not respond. Only one company, Omega Protein, said they adhere to the least stringent standards (FDA's) for contaminant levels.

Dennis Mac Donald/Corbis

Sales of fish oil supplements reached $190 million in 2003.

Among those that didn't respond are some of the nation's biggest and best-known retailers, including Duane Reade, Kmart, Rite Aid, the Vitamin Shoppe and Walgreens. It is our policy to classify these companies' fish oil products as "Worst Choice" until they present data that shows if and how they test for contaminants.

"We were pleased to find out how many companies take their responsibility to the public seriously," said our scientist Tim Fitzgerald. "We urge consumers to choose the healthy products of companies that are doing the right thing."

What are these fish oil suppliers hiding?

COMPANY	PRODUCT	RATING
Duane Reade	Fish Oil	Worst Choice
Kmart	Kmart	Worst Choice
Rite Aid	Cod Liver Oil, Fish Oil, Natural Fish Oil	Worst Choice
Solaray	Salmon Oil, Super purEPA	Worst Choice
The Vitamin Shoppe	EPA-DHA Omega-3 Fish Oil, Omega-3 Fish Oil	Worst Choice
Twinlab	Emulsified Cod Liver Oil, MEGA Twin EPA, Omega-3 Fish Oil, Plain Cod Liver Oil Liquid	Worst Choice
Walgreens	Finest Natural, Cod Liver Oil	Worst Choice

Get the skinny on seafood health issues at oceansalive.org/eat.cfm.

What's nature done for you lately? Scientists take stock

Torlief Svenson/Corbis

Society places a value on just about everything these days. But what is the price of fresh water and clean air? A United Nations-commissioned report finds humans are exacting a heavy toll on the planet, and we could end up the losers.

Chuck Kutik raises bees in northern New York, but you're as likely to find him in a South Carolina cucumber patch. Kutik follows the growing seasons, bringing truckloads of bees to pollinate crops where habitat loss and pesticides have wiped out natural pollinators. In the U.S. each year $20 billion worth of crops are pollinated by honeybees, many of them leased. "Wild bees are essentially gone from some places," says Dr. Kimberly Winter of the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign.

The loss of natural pollinators is just one example of how nature's bountiful capacity to do things for people has been diminished. A recent UN-commissioned report, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, concludes that 60% of life-supporting functions—from fisheries to fresh water—are in decline. Produced over four years by 1,300 scientists in 95 countries, it calls on societies to account fully for the services provided by nature.

Environmental Defense advisory trustee Dr. Harold Mooney served as a scientific director of the assessment, and our trustee Dr. Jane Lubchenco was a lead author. "This is the first scientific audit of the state of the planet, and how it affects human well-being," says Lubchenco.

The study concludes that people have changed ecosystems more profoundly in the past 50 years than at any previous time, but argues that governments and businesses can reverse the trend with policies that fully value ecosystem services. "The services a forest provides in clean water, watershed management and carbon storage are worth much more than its lumber. Yet we cut down our forests for timber; it's often a poor economic choice," says our chief scientist Dr. Bill Chameides.

Environmental Defense has long worked to get the market to reflect the economic value of healthy ecosystems. In the Pacific Northwest, for example, well-managed farmland has added value because of an agreement we orchestrated with Entergy. The electric utility pays farmers who avoid plowing; this holds carbon in the soil, letting Entergy offset its global warming emissions. It also reduces fertilizer use and polluted runoff. We're using the success of such projects to press for a national carbon cap-and-trade program with incentives for farms and forests.

The UN report calls for employing such market mechanisms so nature's services won't be seen as "free and limitless." Business is getting the message, says Lubchenco, who presented the UN assessment at a recent World Economic Forum in Davos. "Afterward, I was swamped by CEOs looking for guidance," she says. "Environmental Defense, with its market experience, will be key to helping businesses be part of the solution."

A. Ishokon/UNEP/PeterArnold

Too often ecosystems assume value only once they're gone.

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