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ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE
finding the ways that work

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Wildlife battles return to the courtroom

Soon the bald eagle will be removed from the endangered species list, thanks in part to the work of Environmental Defense in leading efforts to ban DDT 28 years ago. But for other endangered species, the tidings are grim. This is an age of mass extinction with animal and plant species disappearing 100 times faster than in previous centuries, chiefly through habitat destruction.

Environmental Defense is fighting to defuse the extinction bomb by investing our resources directly into on-site conservation. In California, we are installing artificial burrows for the endangered San Joaquin kit fox. In Utah, through our Safe Harbor program, we're working to let ranchers reseed native grasses for prairie dogs without fear of further regulation. Such voluntary efforts are crucial because most endangered species depend on privately owned lands for survival.

But even voluntary efforts ultimately depend on the government's ability to enforce environmental laws. And now, powerful interests are fighting the federal government's right to regulate their activities under some of our most important environmental laws. These laws stem from Washington's Constitutional power to regulate actions that affect commerce among the states. Our foes want the courts to rein in this power. In North Carolina, we recently helped persuade an appellate court to rule against a group claiming that the federal government had unjustly prohibited landowners from killing endangered red wolves.

Now these challenges have reached the Supreme Court. Several suburban Chicago cities are planning a landfill in a wetland rookery for great blue herons. The Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County claims the wetland is outside federal jurisdiction because it's not in navigable waters. We have filed an amicus brief in the case, arguing that without federal control of isolated wetlands, we could lose much of America's water bird population. "A negative ruling would do far greater damage to endangered species than any of the bills we have been fighting in Congress," says our wildlife director Michael Bean.


L.F. Van Landingham

Hope in an age of extinction: "Cattle and prairie dogs can get along," says our ecologist Dr. David Wilcove.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Smoke signals

Few of us will soon forget the images of wildfires engulfing Western forests this summer. Those images have sparked an important debate about the role of fire in America's forests.

For a century, federal agencies suppressed fires, intending to protect a vital resource. As a result, underbrush accumulated, creating a tinderbox. Despite what Smokey Bear says, fire is as vital to some forest ecosystems as rain. Longleaf pines in the Southeast need low-intensity fires to remove underbrush. The cones of California's redwoods release seeds only after they've burned.

Fire is as vital to some forests as rain.

Environmental Defense has long advocated "prescribed burns" to reduce fuel levels and restore habitat for endangered species. So I applaud the government's bold new fire-management plan, which includes prescribed fires and selective thinning of fire-prone forests. Precautions must be taken, however, to ensure that thinning is not used as an excuse to expand commercial logging and that prescribed burns do not threaten neighbors.

We also need to give serious thought to whether development should occur so close to our National Forests. By looking beyond the smoke, we have an opportunity to restore our forests to health.

—Fred Krupp

Wilson North/International Stock

The Native Hawaiian tradition of mountaintop-to-ocean conservation is being nurtured by a coalition including Environmental Defense.

Hawaii: A threatened paradise

Lush and verdant, a land of endless sun and trade winds, Hawaii is the only U.S. state routinely called a "paradise." But for environmentalists and advocates of environmental justice, there's trouble in this paradise.

Rampant, poorly controlled development and habitat loss threaten marvelous species like the happy-face spider, the Mauna Loa silver sword (which blooms once in its 20-year lifetime) and the Hawaiian hawk. Hawaii's offshore coral reefs—85% of the nation's total—are threatened by pollution, overfishing and global warming. Fresh water, a precious resource on the islands, is diverted from indigenous ecosystems and Native Hawaiian farming communities to irrigate golf courses and supply a proliferation of resort hotels and condominiums.

Hawaii's land resources are unique and its territorial waters comprise an astounding 900,000 square miles, but the state has one of the smallest budgets—48th out of the 50 states—for protecting natural resources.

Environmental Defense is helping a grassroots coalition of Native Hawaiians and local environmentalists safeguard the islands' natural resources. Kahea: The Hawaiian Environmental Alliance ("The Call" in Hawaiian) was formed in 1998 when a coalition of environmentalists and native rights activists began meeting to discuss environmental issues before the state legislature. Environmental Defense scientist Dr. Stephanie Fried is a member of the coalition.

A SLICE OF LIFE

Kahea advocates a traditional integrated approach to natural resource management. In many ways, this approach is more sophisticated than that found in modern ecology textbooks. For centuries before mainlanders reached their shores, Hawaiians tended parcels called *ahupua`a*, slices of land that reached from a mountaintop down through forests and fields to teeming coral reefs. An *ahupua`a* usually encompassed an entire valley watershed with a stream at its center.

Kahea member Victoria Holt Takamine, a *kumu hula*, or teacher of Hawaiian dance, chant, culture and history, says the *ahupua`a* system "provided pretty much all the natural resources our ancestors needed for survival, from timber for canoes, to ferns and flowers, to the most important thing, fresh water

for drinking and irrigating crops." The community that tended each *ahupua`a* regarded the health of each part as crucial to the health of the whole. Lush mountaintops that collect fresh water and feed it to the land below were sacred, and no human disturbance was allowed. Certain fish could not be taken during their spawning seasons.

Environmental Defense is supporting Kahea efforts with targeted grants and training to set up a local email Action Network to influence decision makers over the Internet. This summer, we helped fund a Kahea-sponsored two-day workshop to respond to a White House request for proposals for a marine protected area off Hawaii's remote Northwest Islands, home to the endangered southern monk seal. Drafted by a Maui fisherman, the Kahea proposal calls for a large area to be closed to fishing and would protect the age-old Native Hawaiian cultural practices.

Takamine says that the traditional ways, coupled with the new technology supplied by Environmental Defense, will help redress Hawaii's environmental woes. "The help from Environmental Defense has been just great," she says. "Being able to hook up to the Action Network was especially useful. We're a collection of islands. We can't just drive to get together for a meeting."

Bishop Museum

Traditional methods safeguarded a fishery's long-term health.

Hank Oppenheimer

Photographing a rare Greensword plant in West Maui may help save the species.

On a remote Hawaiian mountaintop, a fight against extinction

You ease onto the helicopter's landing skid, balance your pack, then leap onto a foot-wide trail. The trail runs along a razorback ridge with nearly vertical drops on either side. You crouch down so the prop wind doesn't push you over the edge and you get your equipment ready.

Commando raid or high-peaks rescue? No, the mission here is to capture a tiny, extremely rare Hawaiian plant. High on the cloud-draped ridge, two photographers, Susan Middleton and David Liittschwager, are struggling to set up a small portable studio. Bad weather could keep the helicopter from returning for days and leave them stranded, but the sacrifice is worth it. They hope their pictures will help the plant survive.

Middleton and Liittschwager have been photographing endangered species for 15 years. In partnership with Environmental Defense, they have lately concentrated on Hawaii, where 25% of America's endangered species cling to life. Next year their Hawaiian photographs will be the subject of a monumental National Geographic book.

"We've been privileged to have personal encounters with all these wondrous creatures, more than most biologists," Middleton explains. "Our job is to bring the wonder to light."

In many ways, theirs is a race against extinction. Facing an onslaught of habitat loss and competition from non-native species, fragile plants and animals are fast disappearing.

The photographers recently came face-to-face with extinction. They photographed the last known *clermontia peleana*, a small Hawaiian plant. It was dying, and they were able to photograph only a single leaf. Later, another single plant was found, and they photographed it under the rain. When they returned in better weather to shoot it again, it was gone.

Clermontia peleana had apparently become extinct.

"Hawaii is the crown jewel of our national biodiversity," Liittschwager says. "What's disappearing there is more than a national story. It's a planetary story."

Victory on diesel emissions

The South Bronx, a part of New York City with substantial minority populations, has some of the most polluted air of any urban area, due in large part to the diesel trucks that rumble down its streets carrying waste to transfer stations. Diesel emissions contain fine particulates suspected of causing cancer and respiratory ailments.

Now American Marine Rail is seeking state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) permits to construct a 5,200-ton-per-day transfer station in the South Bronx. While this facility will rely on water and rail transportation, an improvement over trucking, it could still increase the already unacceptable level of fine particulate pollution in the Bronx.

In the DEC proceeding to approve the facility, Environmental Defense general counsel James T.B. Tripp argued that DEC should consider existing levels of diesel emissions in assessing how the new facility will contribute to local pollution. DEC data shows that emissions are already at a level that can cause measurable health effects.

A judge agreed with Environmental Defense, ruling that DEC had not adequately addressed health concerns. "We intend to press DEC to recognize fine particulates as a critical air pollutant that should be considered in evaluating future waste facilities everywhere," said Tripp.

The Point CDC

Local groups were instrumental in our legal victory.

Gary Hubbell/Photonica

Good news for anglers: The decline of acid rain has brought many lakes back to life.

Building on acid rain successes

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According to the study, power plants cut more than seven million tons of SO_2 pollution beyond the required level of reductions. The dirtiest plants made the greatest reductions. "The acid rain program proves that economies can grow while pollution shrinks," says our business liaison Andrew Aulisi. "This program is good for business and good for the planet."

In the weeks ahead, negotiators will meet in the Netherlands to finalize the Kyoto Protocol, an international treaty to curb global warming. "The success of the U.S. acid rain program offers a roadmap for the international negotiators as they design pollution reduction strategies," says Aulisi.

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Global corporations join us to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

PARTNERSHIP FOR CLIMATE ACTION CUTS ACROSS NATIONAL AND INDUSTRY BOUNDARIES

Some of the world's largest corporations have announced a new partnership with Environmental Defense to take direct action against global warming. Representing a number of industries and nations, the seven companies made firm commitments to reduce emissions of heat-trapping greenhouse gases. The initiative is called the Partnership for Climate Action.

Never before has such a wide cross section of industry—from energy and oil to chemicals and aluminum joined forces with an environmental organization to institute major cuts in global pollution.

The partners include two petroleum and petrochemical companies (BP and Royal Dutch/Shell), an oil company (Suncor), a power company (Ontario Power Generation), a chemical company (Dupont), and the world's second and third largest aluminum companies (Alcan of Canada and Pechiney of France).

"These companies are heavyweights," said Dirk Forrister, director of our energy program. "We purposely sought to work with companies that have major emissions, because they will have to be a major part of the solution."

The companies will report their emissions publicly, and each has set a firm target for emissions reductions. The reductions represent, in aggregate, a 15% decrease below 1990 levels, amounting to 80 millions tons of CO_2 equivalent reductions per year by 2010.

Environmental Defense is working with each company to devise programs to limit greenhouse gases, including measures to improve energy efficiency, tap renewable energy sources and improve manufacturing processes. The programs are expected to include emissions trading among companies, a practice pioneered by Environmental Defense when we helped write the 1990 Clean Air Act.

"We're in at the ground level," said our project coordinator, Sarah Wade, "and we will help design safeguards that ensure the environmental integrity of these efforts."

The idea for the partnership took root three years ago, when BP stepped forward and acknowledged that global warming is a threat to human health and the environmental threat. Working with us, the global energy company developed a program to dramatically cut its greenhouse gas emissions. Based on this success, we approached other companies.

BP Solarex

Here comes the sun: Solar panels will enable our partner companies to meet emissions reduction targets.

"It is my hope that the Partnership for Climate Action will send a clear message that it's possible for companies to address climate change and still meet the economic and social expectations of stakeholders," said Rick George, president and CEO of Suncor.

By extending our partnership to a wide array of companies in the petroleum, aluminum, chemical and electric power sectors, we are building a market for international and cross-sector emissions trading. "This partnership will provide a forum for emissions trading and sharing of best practices among members," said Paul Tebo, Dupont's vice president of safety, health and environment.

Many nations are contemplating programs to address climate change, and governments are convening in The Hague, Netherlands, to set rules for greenhouse gas reductions they agreed to make in Kyoto, Japan, in 1998.

"With credible programs, companies can earn a place at the table as the carbon market takes shape," said Forrister. "Our goal is to encourage even more companies to step forward and reduce greenhouse gas emissions."

BP Solarex

By using renewable energy, factories of the future will curb global warming.

What's brewing?

Ask your coffee seller for certified shade-grown coffee. Or contact the following retail and mail-order sources:

Café Canopy shade-grown coffees are also certified organic and fair trade*. FMZ International, 7966 Arjons Drive, San Diego, CA 92126; 888-716-4966.

Sanctuary Coffees' shade-grown blends also include decaf. Counter Culture Coffee, 4823 Meadow Drive, Durham, NC 27713; 888-238-JAVA.

Song Bird Coffees are offered in a joint venture with the American Birding Association. Thanksgiving Coffee, P.O. Box 1918, Fort Bragg, CA 95437; 800-462-1999.

Starbucks shade-grown, fair-trade* coffee is available seasonally from Conservation International's program site in Chiapas, Mexico. P.O. Box 3717, Seattle, WA 98124; 800-STARBUC.

For general information, contact the pioneer in establishing the shade tree-songbird connection. Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, National Zoological Park, Washington, DC 20008; 202-673-4908.

*A "fair trade" label means coffee growers in Latin America are guaranteed a living wage for their work. TransFair certifies brands that pay growers at least $1.26 a pound. TransFair USA, 52 Ninth Street, Oakland, CA 94607; 510-663-5260.

For more information on these- and other distributors, visit www.environmentaldefense.org/more/10526.

Robert Holmes/Corbis

The search for a perch: If you were a forest bird, would you stop here?

Grounds for concern

THE CASE FOR BUYING SHADE-GROWN COFFEE

It's just a beverage, right? While coffee is still the indispensable pick-me-up, we now know much more about how java is produced, and it's not all easy to swallow. Some coffee-growing methods pollute land and water, intensify cutting of rainforests and devastate already-stressed populations of migratory songbirds. These problems occur on a large scale, because coffee is the second-largest export of developing countries (after oil). What can an environmentally minded coffee drinker do?

The controversy over coffee began in the early 1990's. That's when 40% of the beans grown in Colombia, Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean were switched from traditional farming in the shade of tall canopy trees to more intensive "full-sun" production. The U.S. Agency for International Development financed the tree cutting in hopes of increasing farmers' incomes. Unfortunately, what was good for farm profits was bad for the songbirds that depended on the old-growth canopy trees that were cut down. Researchers from the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center studied shade-coffee farms in Chiapas, Mexico, from 1990 to 1994 and found healthy populations of more than 150 bird species. But researchers who visited the sun farms found a "green desert," with only one-tenth as many species.

These findings galvanized environmentalists to work with coffee growers, importers and roasters to produce a "bird friendly" cup of joe. This shade-grown coffee is 20-25% more expensive than the common sun-grown variety, but it's much better tasting because the beans mature slowly.

PESTICIDE FREE

Some environmentally-conscious consumers demand certified organic coffee, which is grown without the use of

This guest article is one of a series by the editors of E Magazine (for subscription information: 800-967-6572 or www.emagazine.com). Opinions are the author's and not necessarily those of Environmental Defense staff.

chemical fertilizers or pesticides that pollute land and water. Not all organic is necessarily shade-grown, or vice versa. But there is a natural connection. Traditional small-farm shade-growing methods require few or no chemical fertilizers, because the forest trees fix nitrogen in the soil, and the numerous birds control insects, eliminating the need for pesticides.

Full-sun or "techno" coffee, on the other hand, requires large infusions of chemicals and year-round labor, so it is generally cultivated by large landholders. According to the Smithsonian center, conversion to sun coffee "appears to lead to greater soil erosion, acidification and higher amounts of toxic runoff."

Organic coffee, with U.S. imports estimated at $60 to $90 million annually, makes up most of the environmentally preferable market. This dwarfs the approximately $3 to $5 million in certified shade-grown coffee. Together with other organizations, Environmental Defense is working toward a single certification of bird-friendly, shade-grown organic coffee that's produced under fair labor practices.

Tom Bean/Corbis

He's got it made in the shade: Americans are waking up to the environmental implications of our coffee habit.

Helen Ross of Seattle Audubon reports that the Northwest Shade Coffee Campaign has quickly grown to include 40 coffee companies. "Our campaign focuses on shade coffee to protect songbirds," says Ross, "but we realize the various campaigns are interrelated and help each other." For migratory birds, rainforests and coffee workers, that's a very good thing. And doesn't a morning cup of coffee taste even better with songbirds chirping outside the kitchen window?

By Jim Motavalli

A reprieve for turtles and shrimp in the Gulf of Mexico

The South Texas coast is an important breeding ground for the Kemp's ridley, the world's most endangered sea turtle. It also happens to be precious spawning habitat for shrimp. Trawlers regularly ply the coastline scooping up shrimp by the millions to satisfy a hungry market. This practice has taken a heavy toll on the turtles and recent studies show that shrimp, too, are now in trouble, putting a $600 million industry at risk.

Faced with these complementary problems and spurred by Environmental Defense, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission recently adopted strict regulations that prohibit shrimp fishing within five miles of the South Texas coast during the turtle mating and nesting season. "We would have preferred a year-round closure, but this is an important advance," says our biologist Pamela Baker. "The commission deserves credit for taking proactive steps to protect shrimp before they reach a crisis." Baker worked closely with state regulators, shrimpers, and seafood processors to build support for the new rules. In the long run, these conservation measures will help shrimpers by helping spawning stocks recover.

The commission also put critical nursery bays and estuaries off-limits to shrimping and expanded the use of bycatch-reduction devices that allow other species to escape from shrimp nets. State scientists estimate that for every pound of shrimp caught in the Gulf of Mexico, two to three pounds of unwanted fish and crabs are killed. The new regulations should reduce this bycatch by about 20%.

"By moving shrimp boats to deep water, regulators have added a measure of protection for both turtles and spawning shrimp," notes Baker. "But we won't know if the state went far enough until we have new data." The next step is a year-round closure, which will prevent shrimpers from overfishing during the shortened season.

Raymond Gray

A step in the right direction: With our help, these Kemp's ridley hatchlings now face a less perilous future.

Battle of the bugs heats up

Recently in the Midwest, 200 people were sickened by a strain of *Staphylococcus aureus*, a normally harmless bacterium found everywhere. Four children died, sending a warning to the public: some strains of bacteria are now resistant to all antibiotics.

Deadly bacteria have gained a foothold because antibiotics are routinely misused. Patients demand antibiotics for colds, where they are ineffective. Another serious problem is the overuse of antibiotics in farming, which accounts for 40% of all antibiotics sold in the U.S.

Together with other groups, Environmental Defense is planning a national campaign to spur public awareness and federal action. "The government's business-as-usual approach to antibiotic resistance does not reflect the severity of this public health crisis," says our attorney Karen Florini. We recently helped craft a legislative proposal in Congress that would ban non-therapeutic use of critical antibiotics such as penicillin and tetracycline in agriculture.

Ron Sanford/International Stock

Livestock feed is treated with antibiotics to make animals gain weight faster.

Federal Express Corp.

How fast can FedEx and the Alliance deliver a cleaner truck?

Helping FedEx develop cleaner vehicles

If you could cut delivery truck emissions by 90 per cent and fuel costs by 50 percent, what would you have?

The likely answer is a diesel-electric hybrid truck, and a big win for both the environment and the corporation bold enough to take on such a task.

FedEx Express and Environmental Defense have committed to work together to develop the environmental standards for such a delivery vehicle. FedEx, the world's largest express transportation company, runs a fleet of 45,000 trucks.

"Together, we want to see a truck on the road that will set the standard for environmental efficiency," says Elizabeth Sturcken, project manager for the Alliance for Environmental Innovation, a project of Environmental Defense and The Pew Charitable Trusts. "We have announced an aggressive goal." Is creating such a low-polluting truck feasible? "Difficult, yes, but achievable," says Jim Steffen, FedEx's chief engineer for vehicles. "We're very enthusiastic."

Much of the hybrid technology is already in hand (while fuel-cell power, though promising, won't be practical for another decade). Hybrid diesel-electric buses using regenerative braking—which recaptures the energy that conventional vehicles lose in braking—are running with great success in Boston and New York City.

Drawbacks? For drivers, none. "They won't notice the difference," says Steffen. But manufacturing costs will be higher, especially at first. Innovations will be tested in prototypes. Then, says Steffen, "I fully expect pre-production hybrids to be on the road within four years." After that, if all goes as expected, the hybrids will become standard, not just for FedEx, but for the entire delivery industry.

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Fighting sprawl in Colorado

Colorado brings to mind images of open lands and a pristine environment. But surveys of Colorado residents reveal there's widespread concern that sprawl may be destroying a way of life. "Whether you talk to a rancher in Western Colorado or a web site developer in the Denver Technology Center, you'll hear about sprawl threatening quality of life," said William Riebsame, a geographer at the University of Colorado.

While Coloradans agree about rampant growth, they disagree on how to control it. Environmental Defense is supporting anti-sprawl bills in the state legislature. We are also endorsing the Citizens' Management of Growth initiative that will come before voters in November. The initiative prohibits growth beyond certain agreed-on boundaries unless approved by local citizens.

We have also compiled a report, *Sprawl in the Denver Region*, which provides citizens with information about growth planning, traffic problems and environmental protection at the local level.

"Local governments control important decisions about growth," says our resource analyst Jennifer Pitt. "Our report shows broad differences in how governments set policy and in how these policies affect communities." For a copy of the report, see: www.environmentaldefense.org/more/15027 or call our Rocky Mountain office at (303) 440-4901.

Mark Gibson/Corbis

People think of sprawl in different ways, as overcrowded schools, lost open space or increased traffic congestion.

Mark Bolster/International Stock

A heap of trouble: Junked cars are a health hazard.

Car campaign targets toxics

When automobiles die, their toxic components can poison the air and water. Our Clean Car Campaign is pressing automakers to clean up the vehicles they make and how they make them. "Consumers can, and should, ask more from automakers," says Kevin Mills, director of our Pollution Prevention Alliance. Mills recently met with top auto executives to present our challenge. As an immediate step, we request elimination of three highly toxic substances from new vehicles:

Mercury: Used in "convenience" switches that automatically turn on trunk or hood lights, mercury harms the nervous system and is particularly dangerous to children. Despite an available alternative, some automakers will continue using mercury switches until 2002.

Polyvinyl chloride (PVC): The manufacture and disposal of this plastic, which is used in dashboards and other interior parts, can create dioxins, the most toxic chemical compounds known to science and linked to cancer and developmental defects in children. Some automakers are phasing out PVC, but most continue to use about 30 pounds per vehicle.

Lead: Environmental Defense led the fight to eliminate lead from gasoline in the 1980's but most automakers still use it in their painting process. Lead interferes with child development.

Please get involved by joining the Clean Car Campaign at: www.environmentaldefense.org/more/10528.

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Gary Hubbell/Photonica

Less acid rain translates into healthier lakes and ponds.

Mark Bolster/International Stock

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Turning back the tide: But at what price?

During hurricane season, talk on the Southeast coast turns to beach erosion. In Dare County, NC, the Army Corps of Engineers is proposing a beach "renourishment" project that will deposit some 80 million cubic yards of sand a year (equal to 160,000 dump truck loads) for the next half century. The price: $952 million. Similar dredge-and-fill projects are envisaged for almost every developed beach in North Carolina and a dozen more in Florida.

While U.S. taxpayers shell out millions of dollars fighting the forces of wind and tide, the environment pays a far higher price. Projects are evaluated piecemeal, with scant regard to cumulative environmental impact. "These projects threaten essential habitats for grouper, striped bass, flounder and other species," says Environmental Defense scientist Dr. Michelle Duval.

"The dredging would bury reefs used by 500 marine species," adds our scientist Dr. Ken Lindeman, who has delivered a letter of concern to the Corps signed by 70 Ph.D. scientists.

We are asking the Corps to delay the dredging until a comprehensive analysis of impacts and alternatives is conducted. We have also helped North Carolina draft a coastal plan that calls for stricter environmental guidelines and greater setbacks for development in the coastal zone.

Will & Deni McIntyre/Picturesque

Building on the beach can be an invitation to disaster.

Laurence Parent

Air in the Great Smokey Mountains is worse than in many cities.

North Carolina gets cleaner air, with our help

Accompanied by her asthmatic daughter, Ena Foster stepped up to the microphone at a public hearing recently and made the case why North Carolina should adopt tougher air quality standards proposed by Environmental Defense.

"I would like to see my daughter play outside just like any other child," she testified.

Foster might get her wish. With North Carolina's smog problems the worst in the Southeast, Governor Jim Hunt proposed a 65% reduction in nitrogen oxide emissions from electric utilities responsible for much of the pollution. The utilities argued for a 50% reduction.

Environmental Defense objected to both, spearheading an effort to reduce the pollution by 80%. "The state needed to make a more concerted effort," said our Southeast air quality manager Michael Shore. We helped bring citizens to public hearings and our proposal was on the table when a Washington, DC, district court ruled that EPA has authority to require tough nitrogen oxide caps, virtually forcing the state to reconsider.

The final ruling for a 68% reduction represents a partial victory. "With so much public support for an 80% reduction, it's just a matter of time before North Carolina locks in a stricter standard," says Shore.

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Oregon Indians tackle warming

The Kyoto Protocol creates incentives to "sequester carbon"—a fancy term for growing vegetation that absorbs atmospheric carbon dioxide. Seeking partners for such a project, Environmental Defense economist Dr. Zach Willey has partnered with several Northwest groups, including Oregon's Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

"The first time I went before the tribal council and said 'carbon sequestration,' they burst out laughing," Willey recalls. But by selling carbon credits, the tribes could wind up laughing all the way to the bank.

In partnership with us, the tribes are planting trees and restoring overgrazed grasslands, which lock up huge amounts of carbon. Our grasslands project also helps endangered salmon and steelhead that spawn in the John Day River by reducing soil runoff. "We try to pick projects with multiple environmental benefits," says Willey.

Throughout the area, Willey is working with farmers to adopt no-till agriculture, which reduces erosion and improves water quality. Some one million acres are now covered by our carbon-sequestration agreements. "We're showing how carbon-sink projects work on the ground," Willey says. Experience gained through these projects will be used to educate negotiators and influence policy.

T.Charles Erickson

Dr. Zach Willey (right) and Ken Smith, a Wasco Indian, have a plan to protect endangered steelhead trout and salmon.

Mark Bolster/International Stock

A heap of trouble: Junked cars are a health hazard.

Car campaign targets toxics

When automobiles die, their toxic components can poison the air and water. Our Clean Car Campaign is pressing automakers to clean up the vehicles they make and how they make them. "Consumers can, and should, ask more from automakers," says Kevin Mills, director of our Pollution Prevention Alliance. Mills recently met with top auto executives to present our challenge. As an immediate step, we request elimination of three highly toxic substances from new vehicles:

Mercury: Used in "convenience" switches that automatically turn on trunk or hood lights, mercury harms the nervous system and is particularly dangerous to children. Despite an available alternative, some automakers will continue using mercury switches until 2002.

Polyvinyl chloride (PVC): The manufacture and disposal of this plastic, which is used in dashboards and other interior parts, can create dioxins, the most toxic chemical compounds known to science and linked to cancer and developmental defects in children. Some automakers are phasing out PVC, but most continue to use about 30 pounds per vehicle.

Lead: Environmental Defense lead the fight to eliminate led from gasoline in the 1980's but most automakers still use it in their painting process. Lead interferes with child development.

Please get involved by joining the Clean Car Campaign at: www.environmentaldefense.org/more/10528.

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