



OSPREY WATCH

NEWS FROM
THE OSPREY SOCIETY
SUMMER 1998

The Osprey Society: *Taking the Long View*

THE OSPREY SOCIETY TAKES ITS NAME FROM A BIRD OF PREY THAT WAS A CATALYST IN THE LATE 1960S FOR THE CREATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND. THE CHEMICAL DDT, A LONG-LASTING POISON USED AT THE TIME IN AGRICULTURE AND PEST-CONTROL PROGRAMS, PROVED TO BE ANOTHER GALVANIZING FACTOR.

Charlie Wurster, one of EDF's founders, explains: "DDT contamination led to reproductive failure in birds of prey. The most visible species was the Osprey, which was common up and down the East Coast. They nested on top of posts, on light poles in parking lots — so people noticed when they started to disappear. They were the most severely impacted, although the effects of DDT were severe on 35 species."

Another EDF founder, Dennis Puleston, observed that Osprey reproduction in Gardiners Island, New York, a small Long Island community, had declined drastically, from two chicks per nest to less than one in every ten nests. He eventually demonstrated that DDT caused the thinning of eggshells; these weakened eggs were crushed beneath the weight of incubating birds.

Wurster and Puleston, along with Arthur Cooley and Robert Smolker, EDF's other founding members, combined scientific evidence with

legal advocacy to win a ban on DDT first in New York, and then, in 1972, the entire US. The crisis in the Osprey population became one of the defining issues in the birth of the modern environmental movement.

The Osprey Society was established to recognize individuals who, by including EDF in their estate plans, play a significant role in the long-term protection of the environment. Designating funds for EDF's future is crucial to the organization's success, says Wurster, "because EDF operates in politically sensitive areas of public interest, and the atmosphere changes from year to year. Sometimes the issues are hot with the public, sometimes not. Long-term funding evens out the cycle.

"Staff at EDF become highly specialized and end up knowing as much about an area as anyone in the world," he continues. "We can't lose these people. Environmental work is a steady effort that requires commitments of years or a lifetime to make a difference. With funding

for the years ahead, we can make long-term commitments for long-term goals."

For Charlie Wurster, a life dedicated to environmental protection has turned out to be the right choice. "Concern for the environment was ingrained in me in the 1940s," he says, "and EDF eventually became the vehicle for me to do this kind of work. That's what I wanted to do, and I still want to do it. It fits with the goals in my life."

The effect of EDF's work on behalf of Ospreys has turned out to be long-term as well: there are now three times as many Ospreys on Long Island than there were in 1970.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Osprey is one of the world's most widespread bird species, inhabiting every continent except Antarctica.

Backyard Environmentalism

ELISABETH AND PHILIP, OSPREY SOCIETY MEMBERS AND LONG-TIME EDF SUPPORTERS, ARE VERY CLEAR ABOUT THE NEED TO INTERVENE ON BEHALF OF THE DWINDLING NATURAL AREAS SURROUNDING THEIR COMMUNITY IN SUBURBAN NEW YORK. THEY UNDERSTAND TOO THAT THEIR LOCAL PROBLEM IS A GLOBAL ONE. NOW RETIRED, THE COUPLE RECENTLY CREATED A CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND — A SUPERB WAY OF ENSURING THE FUTURE OF EDF'S EFFORTS TO PROTECT THE NATURAL WORLD, WHILE PROVIDING A LIFETIME INCOME AND CHARITABLE DEDUCTION FOR THEM.

Closest to their hearts is the issue of habitat preservation. “We just see everything getting gobbled up. Over the last 20-30 years, we see this little bit gone, that little bit gone. No one believes that his or her little bit of development is going to make a difference,” says Elisabeth.

“Our children were lucky because they had a lot of access to the outdoors,” she continues. “The local Boy Scouts had a forest that they could bicycle to. The Boy Scout council eventually needed money and sold the forest — now it’s an office park.

“When it’s right in your backyard, you notice the difference. There were seals basking on rocks in the nearby Sound when we moved here. We’d swim there with the kids. Now the seals are gone and the Sound is sometimes too polluted for swimming.

“We’re happy to see that EDF is stepping in to challenge these things that we don’t have the resources to address. We want organizations like EDF to speak for us.”

Elisabeth and Philip, however, have had some success of their own — together with other concerned neighbors — in preserving beloved local habitat for their community.

“We belong to a group that pre-

served a local reservoir and the land around it,” Elisabeth says. “People can walk or sit here and just enjoy it for its natural beauty.

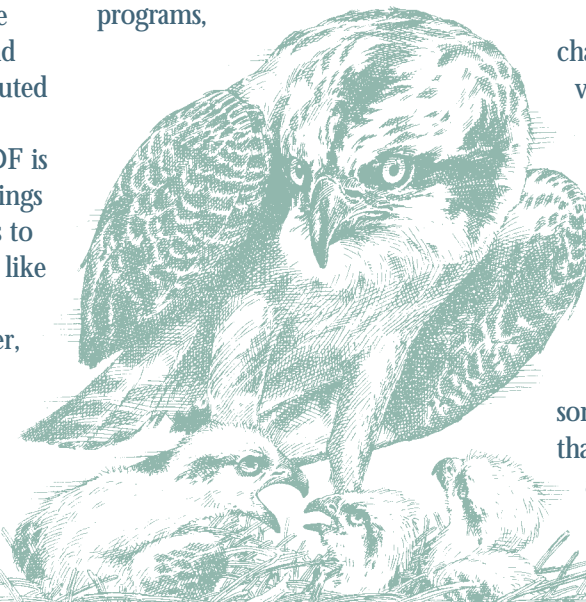
“Some years ago, there was so much development upstream from the reservoir that the water wasn’t usable anymore. So the town decided to sell the reservoir — to give buyers exclusive rights to build around it, and close it to the public. We decided, ‘Our community needs to preserve this reservoir.’ So we got a group together — some had clout and some knew how to get things done. The group was able to accomplish what we could not have done alone. We stopped the sale, and now it’s a 60-acre preserve.

“We raise funds for nature programs,

maple-sugaring, spring and fall festivals, and for our young people to have summer jobs maintaining and improving the trails. It’s become a place that we support as a community.”

Concern for the environment is also working its way through successive generations of their family. Says Elisabeth: “All of our children are interested in wildlife and conservation. One of our sons — a great lover of birds since he was about 10 — now contributes articles to several birding magazines and edits birding books. Another son lives on the west coast where he often hikes and camps in the Sierras with his family. We’re happy to be able to perpetuate this love for the natural world.”

For Elisabeth and Philip, a charitable gift annuity was the ideal way to help EDF while maintaining financial independence. “We inherited some stock from our parents,” says Elisabeth. “We can’t simply give it to our children, because they’d have to pay substantial taxes on the capital appreciation. With the charitable gift annuity, we receive some income and support a cause that means a lot to us. We and EDF are concerned about the same things.”



A CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY:

Carrying on EDF's Work, and Gaining an Income for Life

Because major environmental problems are long-term by nature, EDF's ability to sustain its efforts on behalf of the environment requires the assurance of support well into the future. One way of giving for the long term — which benefits the donor as well as EDF — is the charitable gift annuity.

To arrange this type of annuity, a donor first makes a gift to EDF of cash, stock, bonds, or other securities. EDF, in turn, reinvests these assets and guarantees to pay the donor (and/or another chosen beneficiary) a set dollar amount each year for the rest of his or her life. The annuity rate, or set dollar amount, depends on the donor's age when the gift is made.

In addition to providing a lifetime income for the donor or other beneficiaries, a charitable gift annuity offers numerous tax advantages:

CHARITABLE DEDUCTION:

The part of the gift considered a charitable contribution, usually 30-50%, is immediately deductible from one's income. If the donor cannot take the full deduction in the year of the gift, he or she may carry over the excess amount for the following five years.

INCOME TAX SAVINGS:

A portion of the annuity that the donor receives is considered a tax-free return of capital, excluding it from income for most or all of one's lifetime.

CAPITAL GAINS TAX ADVANTAGES:

With a gift of appreciated securities that have been held for more than one year, the donor owes no tax at the time the securities are transferred to EDF. The capital gains tax for a portion of the gift's value is then spread over the life of the annuity.

ESTATE TAX SAVINGS:

If the donor and spouse are the only beneficiaries, the value of the annuity may qualify as a marital deduction, and thereby avoid estate taxes.

SUPPLEMENTING RETIREMENT INCOME — AND INCREASING BENEFITS

A donor also can supplement future retirement income by deferring annuity payments until a chosen date, such as when one reaches 65. Delaying payments increases the initial income tax charitable contribution — resulting in greater tax savings — and improves the annuity rate that will ultimately be paid, due to the growth of the invested gift throughout the deferral period.

For those who want to make a gift to EDF but would like to maintain an income from their holdings, the charitable gift annuity may be an easy solution. Such a gift guarantees income with no investment worries or responsibilities, and is an excellent way to help ensure EDF's ability to address the environmental issues that arise well beyond the foreseeable future. Those who wish to know more about how a charitable gift annuity to EDF may fit into their philanthropic and financial planning may contact Anne B. Doyle, Director of Planned Giving at EDF, at 212-505-2100.

A Bequest for EDF: *Creating an Environmental Legacy*

A DONOR CAN INVEST IN THE FUTURE OF EDF'S MISSION — AND IN THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF THE WORLD THAT COMING GENERATIONS WILL INHERIT — BY ESTABLISHING A BEQUEST TO EDF IN HIS OR HER WILL.

EDF's Endowment — What Bequests Help To Accomplish

Bequests, unless otherwise directed by the donor, go toward strengthening EDF's endowment. By creating a permanent financial base, these funds enable EDF to lessen its reliance on fluctuating annual support, and to take action on complex long-term issues that promise to continue well into the 21st Century.

Our priorities for the coming years include

- *protecting wildlife habitat and the earth's natural biodiversity;*
- *stabilizing climate by preventing major new sources of greenhouse gas and air pollution;*
- *safeguarding the world's oceans from pollution and overfishing;*
- *reducing risks to human health from exposure to untested chemicals; and*
- *creating effective, flexible, and lasting environmental regulations.*

Choosing the Environmental Defense Fund as a Beneficiary

A donor who wishes to include EDF in his or her Will may bequeath a specific dollar amount, a particular asset (or assets), a percentage of the estate, or of the residual estate after all expenses and other bequests have been paid.

Because bequests to EDF are fully deductible, they may significantly reduce estate taxes; there is no limit to the amount that can be deducted from an estate for charitable purposes. It is also possible to name EDF as a contingent beneficiary of part of an estate in the event that a named beneficiary is no longer alive at the time of a donor's death.

An Enduring Expression

A bequest to EDF may serve as a lasting expression of a donor's deep respect for nature, and help to ensure that all of our descendants have the

opportunity to breathe clean air, drink clean water, and live among the earth's rich and diverse ecosystems. With such support, EDF can continue to build a sturdy foundation to which future generations can add their own innovations for a cleaner, healthier world.

To include EDF in one's will, we suggest the following designation:

Environmental Defense Fund, a not-for-profit membership organization incorporated by the laws of the State of New York, having as its principal address 257 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10010.

For more information about how you can support EDF and become a member of EDF's Osprey Society, please call or write Anne B. Doyle, Director of Planned Giving, Environmental Defense Fund, 257 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10010, (212) 505-2100.

