

The environment needs all the help it gets

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Although most environmentally-concerned Americans would hesitate to come right out and admit it, probably the best things that have happened to such organizations as the Sierra Club, the Wilderness Foundation, and other groups dedicated to the preservation of ecology, are the widely publicized behaviors of Anne Gorsuch Burford and Secretary of the Interior James Watt.

Whatever their intentions may have been, these two members of the Reagan administration have given new impetus to a movement which swept the nation several years ago but was threatened with obscurity when the curtain of economic recession descended in front of the national stage. We have the media, always in search of controversy to arouse the public, to thank for pumping new life into the issue.

Many moons ago (and long before either Watt or Burford was appointed), a description of a newly-formed agency designed to integrate the efforts of the many environmental splinter-groups which were all competing for donations to supplement the efforts of the federally-funded Environmental Protection Agency, appeared in the Village Advertiser.

This agency, the Environmental Task Force (ETF), was formed specifically to provide small and large organizations, as well as the country's citizenry, with information and assistance needed to solve crucial environmental problems.

ETF's Information, Resource, and Referral Center provides individuals and groups with "case studies" about ecological problems. It also organizes conferences where top leaders and key staffs of such groups share valuable information and strategies. Its national legal defense fund acts as a central coordinating source of information and assistance for local groups, large and small, across the nation.

ETF programs provide a link between and strengthen the chain that connects the many groups and organizations working to protect our environment. To assist individuals and small neighborhood groups, ETF advises what to do to prevent or stop environmental damage. ETF answers such questions as **who** has authority to act, **how** coordinated and

responsible efforts can be developed to respond effectively to crises, and **where**, **what**, and **how** other communities solved similar problems.

ETF eliminates the need to keep "reinventing the wheel" each time a critical issue or problem arises.

Former Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, in a recent letter to environmental leaders, says, "Of the numerous efforts I have seen over the years, I can think of **none** which has offered more creative and practical ways to strengthen environmental organizations at every level than the Environmental Task Force."

No foundation support or federal funds are available to the Environmental Task Force; it is supported solely through donations from concerned individuals. More than 35,000 citizens are participating in maintaining the task forces and making effective its efforts to fight for a safer and healthier environment for us all.

Mr. Udall believes that only a strengthened, unified approach can win the battle against the current administration's anti-environmental approach. Despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of Americans wants stronger environmental protection, many grass roots groups are too fragmented and uncoordinated to battle successfully mounting anti-environmental opposition. Policies being pursued in the decade of the '80s threaten to wipe out the gains made in the last twenty years.

If you believe public parks, wildlife refuges, and wilderness areas should be protected from exploitation by private oil, gas and mineral interests, you may wish to support ETF.

If you think the administration's political appointees care more about protecting firms that are violating the anti-pollution laws than they do about enforcing the laws on the books, you may wish to help ETF continue its work.

If you feel that Secretary of the Interior James Watt should be more responsive to the need for environmental and wildlife protection, you may want to make a donation to ETF.

If you feel that greater safeguards should be used in the

storage, transportation and disposal of toxic and nuclear wastes, you may want to throw your weight behind the ETF.

If you'd like to see stronger conservation measures and increased use of safe alternative sources of energy, such as solar power, to preserve finite sources of fossil fuels, to help our country deal more effectively with diminishing energy supplies, and to strengthen our economic position by further decreasing the quantity of oil we now import to the tune of billions of dollars a year, ETF will use your dollars to help achieve those goals.

If you worry about political manipulation of the federally-administered Environmental Protection Agency, even though a new director has been appointed to replace Burford, and if you are convinced that the agency's independence must be insured, you may wish to mail a check to ETF.

If you consider poisons dumped in landfills and on village streets, pumped into the air we breathe, and spewed into underground water supplies, rivers, streams, and the ocean, are a threat to your health and that of your family-- not to mention generations to follow-- you may feel impelled to support the Environmental Task Force with a tax-deductible contribution.

Love Canal and Times Beach are but two of the best-publicized examples of communities rendered uninhabitable to their residents. Those communities are as much a part of our United States as Sagamore, Santuit, Centerville, South Harwich, or Nantucket's Siasconset area. What has happened in those places could have happened here.

What's to stop it?

The Environmental Task Force asks your help and support in the challenging work of doing just that. Before mailing a check to the Environmental Task Force at 1346 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 918, Washington, D.C. 20036, you may wish to obtain the opinion of your local environmental protection group. If you are unfamiliar with a particular one, contact the Association for the Preservation of Cape Cod, in Orleans, 255-4142.

— A. Leonard