

Conservation Makes \$ense at NACo



Dane County WI Supervisors Brett Hulsey and Chuck Erickson meeting with Executive Director Peg Reagan.



CLN Board of Directors member Commissioner Howard Kessler, Wakulla County FL with Commissioner Janine Burns, Mathews County VA.

Once again, the Conservation Leaders Network brought our “Conservation Makes \$ense” booth to the National Association of Counties (NACo) annual conference. This year, the conference was held in Nashville TN.

A smaller crowd than usual, attributable to the poor economy and its impact on county travel budgets, meant a quieter time in the Exhibitor’s Gallery where our booth was located. But we made more than 30 new contacts—county officials who value America’s natural resources as do our members.

We also worked with members of the Environment, Energy and Land Use committee to renew their support for clean water and with members of the Public Lands committee on a variety of public lands issues.

And we co-hosted, with Dane County Supervisor Brett Hulsey, the “Conversation on Conservation,” an informal get-together for conservation-minded county officials.



Executive Director Peg Reagan speaking at the “Conversation on Conservation” get-together held at the conference site. Other speakers included Jan Goldman-Carter of the National Wildlife Federation and Ken Brown of Climate Communities.

Commissioner of the Month Speaks— Debbie Lieberman, Montgomery County OH



Montgomery County, Ohio is the home of Madison Lakes Park— Learning and Conference Center and also hosts the Renewable Energy Demonstration Center, which features working installations of wind and solar energy. Madison Lakes Park is administered by the Montgomery County Board of County Commissioners and is located about 5 miles west of Downtown Dayton on Olive Road near the intersection of State Route 35 and State Route 49.

Close your eyes and imagine a park of over 200 acres filled with forests, prairies, wetlands and three connecting sparkling spring-fed lakes. The lakes are perfect entertainment for fishermen. They are filled with Crappies, Bluegill, Catfish, Carp and Largemouth Bass.

The scenery and cool breezes at Madison Lakes Park make it a favorite picnic spot. Two shelters may be reserved for outings. There are three volleyball courts and a children's play area to amuse the entire family. The Learning and Conference Center is also available

for groups to host meetings while enjoying the beautiful setting.

The park offers another valuable service to the community. The Montgomery County Commissioners chose Madison Lakes Park as the site for the Montgomery County Renewable Energy Demonstration Center. With its high elevation, the park has an excellent source of wind. The roof of the conference center and the surrounding area provides good access to the sun for solar energy.

The solar electric system consists of flexible thin-film amorphous silicon solar photovoltaic panels that were installed in 2005 on the existing south-facing standing-seam metal roof of the conference center. This system is net-metered with a direct grid intertie to DP&L's electric grid through an electric inverter. The system is rated at a maximum production of 2 KW and has been producing an average of 2,500 KWH of electricity per year.

The wind electric system consists of a 15 foot diameter wind turbine mounted on a 90 foot monopole tower that was installed next to a parking lot near the main entrance to the park. This system is net-metered with a direct grid intertie to DP&L's electric grid through an electric inverter. The system is rated at a maximum production of 10 KW and has been producing an average of 6,000 KWH of electricity

per year.

With the help of state funding, the solar electric system was installed in fall 2005 and the wind electric system was activated in winter 2006. The electricity generated by the wind and the sun is converted to grid voltage and added to the Dayton Power & Light Company's electricity to power the park's conference center, parking lot and restroom lights.

The purpose of the Montgomery County Renewable Energy Demonstration Center is to provide a working laboratory for the demonstration of renewable energy systems for application in the Miami Valley region. Examples of renewable energy technologies that can be applied in this region include wind electric, solar electric, solar air heating, solar water heating, biomass energy, biomethane, biodiesel, geothermal and ethanol.

Renewable energy is becoming increasingly cost-competitive with conventional energy sources, due to technological improvements and the rising cost of fossil fuels. Renewable energy is a cleaner alternative, and also provides jobs in our own community.

To learn more about this exciting project, call Commissioner Debbie Lieberman, at (937) 225-4015 or David Schmenk, Montgomery County Public Works Department Energy Manager, at (937) 225-6429.

Interior Withdraws Legally Flawed Plan for Oregon Forests, Presses For Sustainable Timber Harvests

The Conservation Leaders Network worked with county commissioners from O&C counties and forest advocates in opposition to the Western Oregon Plan Revisions (WOPR) since the Bush Administration first proposed it several years ago. We are delighted that sound management of these federal forest lands has prevailed.

Following are excerpts from the Department's July 16 press release.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Because the previous Administration failed to follow established administrative procedure before leaving office, its plan to intensify logging in western Oregon – known as the Western Oregon Plan Revisions (WOPR) – is legally indefensible and must be withdrawn, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar said today.

... With the withdrawal of the WOPR, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) forests in western Oregon will again be managed under the Northwest Forest Plan, which guided BLM timber sales from 1994 until December 2008. Salazar noted that the legal problem with the Western Oregon Plan Revisions, which was finalized in late December 2008, arose from the previous Administration's decision not to complete consultation on the plan's impacts on endangered species under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. The WOPR also partially relied on spotted owl protections that have been challenged in federal court and have been called into question by Interior's Inspector General, who determined that the integrity of the decision making process was potentially



jeopardized as a result of the improper political influence of a former Bush Administration official. Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks Thomas Strickland said today that the federal government will conduct a thorough review of the 2008 Spotted Owl Recovery Plan, which informed both the WOPR and the Fish and Wildlife Service's 2008 revision of critical habitat for the spotted owl.

"We will work with the scientific community to ensure that the spotted owl recovery plan lives up to its name, by accounting for scientific and technical reviews by prominent national scientific organizations, as well as forthcoming new data on the status of the spotted owl population," said Strickland. "A solid, peer-reviewed recovery plan will provide a road map for the spotted owl's return to health, enabling us to designate critical habitat areas and help develop a forest management plan that meaningfully contributes to its recovery."

... Secretary Salazar said that despite the late actions of the previous Administration, Senator Ron Wyden, Governor Ted Kulongoski, Senator Jeff Merkley, Congressman Peter DeFazio, and others have helped build consensus around a vision for forestry on Oregon's BLM lands that

moves the region beyond the battles of the past. "There is broadening agreement that it is time to re-evaluate the logging of old growth forests on BLM lands," said Secretary Salazar. "There is also agreement that logging should not occur in areas that would put water quality at risk, and we should fully consider advances in forestry and increased knowledge of species' needs over the last two decades." ... Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management Ned Farquhar emphasized that forest restoration and timber harvest are dual, compatible goals. "We can support a strong and sustainable forest industry by focusing on thinning, forest restoration projects, and certain types of regeneration harvests," said Farquhar. "Done right, timber harvests can increase the structural complexity of stands, provide better habitat for spotted owls and other wildlife, reduce the risk of catastrophic fire, provide revenue for Western Oregon counties, and generate a reliable and robust supply of timber for local mills and biomass plants."

Last paper issue of *Networker*

This is the last paper issue of *Networker*. Recognizing both the forest resources that are consumed by the use of paper for our newsletter and the state of the economy which requires that we reduce costs wherever possible, our fall newsletter will be sent to you by email. It will also be posted on our website, though you will receive them sooner by email.

Conservation Alabama



County leaders step up on behalf of quarry warriors

by Adam R. Snyder

For seven years, citizen groups across Alabama have been trying to get legislative support for a bill that would give local governments so-say over the siting of quarry operations.

Thanks to the leadership of one county commissioner, these groups took one step closer to achieving their goal in 2009.

Quarries have many environmental concerns. In Alabama, citizens have complained about air quality around quarry operations and associated industries such as asphalt plants. Additionally, water quality has been threatened in some com-

munities, such as small towns near Auburn, Ala. The blasting from the quarry operations there have fragmented a nearby stream bottom, and made the creek that feeds a state park disappear underground.

Additionally, citizens have complained for years about sedimentation problems around quarries, other runoff getting into streams, and illegal stream crossings.

But the biggest problem is quality of life issues, such as noise, lights, and traffic. In many rural areas of Alabama, the revenue collected from the quarry does not cover the cost it takes to repave roads that are destroyed by heavy trucks hauling off aggregate. The promise of new jobs is usually limited to only a handful of jobs while most of the positions are staffed by employees who are moved from other quarry sites.

A coalition of citizens concerned about quarries was organized by Conservation Alabama in 2002. From those initial meetings, Conservation Alabama wrote and caused to be introduced the quarry bill in every session except two since 2002. Thanks to political maneuvering by the bill's sponsor, it got placed in a more favorable legislative committee in 2009. And late in the session, the bill received a public hearing.

The quarry and road builder lobby is quite strong in Alabama. In fact, Vulcan Materials, a Birmingham-

based firm, has grown to be larger than \$8 billion after an acquisition of Florida Rock a few years ago.

Lobbyists representing quarry operators and road builders worked hard to discourage committee members from attending the public hearing. But with several dozen constituents waiting in the hearing room, as well as a county commissioner, the committee had quorum and the hearing proceeded.

The first speaker was Commissioner Johnny Lawrence of Lee County, where Auburn is located. On behalf of many of his constituents that were present, he spoke in strong support of the bill.

Immediately following Commissioner Lawrence was the head of the County Commission Association to speak in opposition to the bill. He jokingly stated that his job may be in jeopardy because Lawrence is a member of his association's executive committee, but proceeded to deride the bill because of the possibility of an unfunded mandate should counties have to decide whether a quarry can operate or not without getting some sort of permit fee.

Citizens spoke eloquently in support of the bill afterwards. In the end, the bill received a favorable report from the committee primarily because Commissioner Lawrence spoke on behalf of his citizens and conservation issues in Alabama.

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Ballot Box Conservation



Photo courtesy of Ma'o Farm

Hawaii's character and economy are closely linked to the land, which is crucial to agriculture, tourism, and community identity. Although some of the state's most beautiful and iconic landscapes long have been threatened by development, Hawai'i had no county or

state conservation programs until 2002, when voters in Kauai County and Maui County dedicated portions of property tax revenues to purchase open space and protect cultural resources, scenic views, and agriculture. Those measures proved so successful that in 2006, the state's two other counties – Hawai'i County and Honolulu County – passed similar measures. Together, the four TPL-assisted measures created \$127 million in conservation funding. In 2005 the state legislature, noting that its Land Conservation Fund had been depleted for decades, passed the Legacy Land Act, funded by a real estate conveyance tax on high-value properties. (TPL was a key organizer of that measure as well.) The passage of these measures makes Hawai'i one of the few U.S. states in which both the state and all its counties have authorized a dedicated source of conservation funds.

"Ballot Box Conservation," Land&People Fall/Winter 2008, reprinted with permission from The Trust for Public Land. Sign up for a free subscription to Land&People magazine by visiting www.tpl.org.

Alabama *continued*

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This year's success is a testament to county commissioners who are willing to stand up on behalf of their citizens and the environment.

Next year, citizens fighting for quarry reform should be one step closer to their goals thanks to Commissioner Lawrence's leadership on this issue. More citizens across the state are working with their county commissioners to build working relationships on conservation issues, such as quarries.

Adam R. Snyder is executive director of Conservation Alabama. Conservation Alabama's mission is to make sound environmental policy a political reality in Alabama.

\$\$ for Counties

Here is an example of a recent "\$\$ for Counties" email service for CLN members.

Endangered Species – Recovery Implementation

Deadline September 30, 2009

Fish and Wildlife Service: This Recovery Implementation funding opportunity is for projects that will contribute to the recovery of endangered and threatened species, particularly for projects carrying out actions described in the implementation schedule of a species' approved recovery plan,

or actions recommended in a completed 5-year status review of the species.

For more information, go to: www.grants.gov/search/announce.do?jsessionid=pWT4KNCOGJ1QdMrpmDsVbT9cgHx6LmPYrCNRhgCddGyLCXQfhFyF!361947375.

This is your last paper issue of *Networker*.

Your next issue, November 2009, will arrive in your email inbox.



Cool Counties and Climate Change

Below is an abbreviated version of the Cool Counties Climate Stabilization Declaration.

WHEREAS, there is a consensus among the world's leading scientists that global warming caused by human emission of greenhouse gases is among the most significant problems facing the world today;

WHEREAS, documented impacts of global warming include but are not limited to increased occurrences of extreme weather events (i.e., droughts and floods), adverse impacts on plants and wild-life habitats, threats to global food and water supplies – all of which have an economic impact on communities and their local governments;

WHEREAS, leading scientists have projected that stabilization of climate change in time to minimize such impacts will require a reduction of global warming emissions to 80 percent below current levels by the year 2050;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Conference of Mayors has endorsed the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, which commits cities to reduction of global warming emissions to 7 percent below 1990 levels by 2012, and calls for a federal limit on emissions;

WHEREAS, counties have a unique role to play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for the impacts of climate change through their regional jurisdiction over policy

areas such as air quality, land use planning, transportation, zoning, forest preservation, water conservation, and wastewater and solid waste management;

WHEREAS, the economic arguments for implementing climate solutions are compelling, from the near-term economic gains of energy efficiency to the long-term climate stabilization that can prevent irreparable harm from catastrophic climate change impacts;

WHEREAS, many counties throughout the nation, both large and small, are reducing global warming pollutants through programs that provide economic and quality of life benefits such as reducing energy bills, preserving green space, implementing better land use policies, improving air quality, promoting waste-to-energy programs, expanding transportation and work choices to reduce traffic congestion, and fostering more economic development and job creation through energy conservation and new technologies;

NOW, THEREFORE WE DECLARE,

We as Cool Counties will take immediate steps to help the federal, state, and our governments within our county to achieve the 2050 climate stabilization goal by making the following commitments:

i. Create an inventory of our county government (operational) greenhouse gas (“GHG”) emissions and implement policies, programs and operations to achieve significant, measurable and sustainable reduction;

ii. Work closely with local, state, and federal governments and other leaders to reduce county geographical GHG emissions to 80 percent below current levels by 2050, by developing a GHG emissions inventory and regional plan . . . with recommended goals to stop increasing emissions by 2010, and to achieve a 10 percent reduction every five years thereafter through to 2050.

iii. Urge Congress and the Administration to enact a multi-sector national program of requirements, market-based limits, and incentives for reducing GHG emissions to 80 percent below current levels by 2050.

More than 40 counties across the country have endorsed the Cool Counties Climate Stabilization Declaration. The latest include: Broward County FL, Lackawanna County PA, San Miguel County CO, Orange County NC, Wakulla County FL, and Benton County OR. CLN has been working to inform counties and to gain their endorsement.

Go to our website for more information at:
www.cconservationleaders.org/global.warming.htm

From the Director . . .



Executive Director Peg Reagan

Now that I am back in the office after a productive trip to the National Association of Counties annual conference in Nashville TN, there is finally time to take a deep breath and express my appreciation for the county commissioners who worked with me to staff our “Conservation Makes Sense” booth: Wakulla County FL Commissioner Howard Kessler, Mathews County VA Commissioner Janine Burns, St. Louis County MN Commissioner Steve O’Neil, Leon County FL Commissioner Bob Rackleff, Lewis & Clark County MT Commissioner Mike Murray, Dane County WI Supervisor Brett Hulsey, and Dane County WI Supervisor Chuck Erickson. It is always great to work with these good folks as we meet new commissioners and spread the word that conserving America’s natural resources makes good economic sense.

Thanks also goes to this year’s booth co-sponsors: The Wilderness Society, the Pew Environment Group, Climate Communi-

ties, and Defenders of Wildlife. The Wilderness Society has co-sponsored our “Conservation Makes Sense” booth since we started it in 1998 and always has valuable materials for us to share. One that we hope to reprint in a future newsletter is “*Dollars and Sense: Five ways that protected wilderness boosts community, personal pocket-books.*” Defenders of Wildlife was a new booth co-sponsor this year. We’d worked with them earlier in the year in support of HR 7151, America’s Wildlife Heritage Act. They offered a relevant portion of “*Your Lands, Your Wildlife, Restoring Balance to the Management of Our Public Lands,*” dealing with the many public benefits of healthy public lands and healthy wildlife, particularly the social and economic benefits.

We are working to get many of the handouts up on our website, so even if you weren’t in Nashville, you will be able to have access to this important material.

This is your last paper issue of *Networker*. We’ve struggled with the idea of just having an email version, knowing that some of our members don’t have easy internet access and others prefer reading from a paper version. But given the amount of resources that go into a paper version—the pa-

per, the ink, the staff time, the postage—and the fact that our printer is on its last legs, it seems the time is right to make the break and go to email and website newsletters. We will be contacting those members whose email addresses we don’t have in hopes of getting the newsletter to everyone in a timely manner. If that is not possible, all members will be able to access all our newsletters on our website.

Speaking of our website, we are in the process of redesigning it, incorporating our new logo and simplifying the layout. We’ve added brand new pages on clean water, America’s Wildlife Heritage Act, this year’s Conservation Contacts and updated several others.

The Conservation Leaders Network office needs a new computer desk. If you have one in Oregon that you’d be willing to donate, let us know and we will come pick it up. One of our staff is suffering from carpal tunnel syndrome and needs the lower desktop a computer desk offers.

Summer’s almost over; now we look forward to a productive fall. There are lots of changes in the air; keep in touch with us and keep working to protect America’s natural resources!

Peg Reagan

**Check out our redesigned website at
www.conservationleaders.org.**

Clean Water at NACo??



The National Association of Counties' (NACo) Environment, Energy and Land Use (EELU) Committee is the committee charged with dealing with water quality issues.

At the annual conference in Nashville in July, EELU voted overwhelmingly (54 to 1) in support of the Resolution in Support of Clean Water for All. This resolution was a compromise effort which sought to bridge the divide at NACo, drafted after NACo staff asserted that the original Clean Water for All resolution was in conflict with the NACo platform (something resolutions are not supposed to do).

The Committee also voted down, for the second year in a row, the existing Waters of the US resolution, which seeks to shrink the number of American waterways which enjoy clean water protections.

In a repeat of last year's actions, the NACo Board of Directors chose to disregard the recommendations of the EELU Committee, even though this is the committee that is responsible for "**All matters pertaining to air, water, and noise pollution control**; solid and hazardous waste management and dis-

posal; **the preservation and proper utilization of water resources**; energy; and the use of land resources, including comprehensive planning, coastal zone management, growth management, energy facilities siting, and recreation." The Board rejected the Resolution in Support of Clean Water for All and approved the Waters of the US resolution, exactly the opposite of the committee's recommendations.

See our website for the original Clean Water for All Resolution, the compromise Resolution in Support of Clean Water for All, and the fact sheets demonstrating that



the resolution is consistent with the NACo platform and showing how the Waters of the US resolution is actually in conflict with the NACo platform.

Could it be only resolutions NACo leadership doesn't like that have to be consistent with the American County Platform? Could it be that a different standard applies to those resolutions they agree with?

Many of those involved with the process were truly shocked by the behavior they observed at the NACo conference.

Go to www.conservationleaders.org/clean.water to see the resolutions and Fact Sheets.

You can learn more about the importance of clean water—for drinking, for swimming, for fishing, for agriculture, for wildlife—by checking out the National Wildlife Federation's website at <http://www.nwf.org/news/story.cfm?pageId=F3DB6FE2-972E-4C8F-AB368E5E8B22FF6F>.

And you can visit the Earthjustice website to find a variety of materials about clean water, including a letter from its president at <http://unearthed.earthjustice.org/blog/2009-february/fixing-broken-clean-water-act>.

The Conservation Leaders Network will continue to work with county officials to protect America's waters.



Oregon marine reserves get a boost from *Science* Magazine study

Science magazine recently released a study led by Dr. Boris Worm of Dalhousie University and Dr. Ray Hilborn of the University of Washington, which finds that exploited fisheries are recovering in some areas of the ocean thanks to marine reserves and protected areas.



We know marine reserves work—scientists are in agreement that they're a key tool if we want to conserve and rebuild our ocean habitats and fisheries. In Oregon, fish populations like rockfish, smelt and salmon are suffering dramatic declines, and we have lost close to 70 percent of our estuaries and wetlands. We need protected areas to turn this around and keep recovery on track.

Marine reserves are part of a long-term ocean conservation strategy. Recoveries are being seen elsewhere in the world due to better management, but Oregon is still seeing serious losses. We must protect our ocean against future threats with smart protection through marine reserves. There are numerous examples up and down the West Coast that marine reserves have worked, and will work in Oregon, to restore our ocean to its previous bounty.

Synopsis of the research findings:

- This study is a groundbreaking assessment on the status of marine fisheries and ecosystems. The two-year study led by Dr. Boris Worm and Dr. Ray Hilborn included an international team of 19 co-authors.
- Steps taken to curb overfishing, including marine protected areas and reserves, gear re-

strictions and reduced catch are beginning to succeed in five of the ten large marine ecosystems examined.

- According to the authors' analysis, Alaska and New Zealand have led the world in terms of management success by not waiting until drastic measures are needed to conserve, restore and rebuild marine resources.
- The authors emphasize that a range of management solutions is available to help rebuild fish stocks. They found that a combination of approaches, such as catch quotas and community management coupled with strategically placed marine protected areas and reserves, ocean zoning, selective fishing gear and economic incentives, offer promise for restoring fisheries and ecosystems.
- "Across all regions we are still seeing a troubling trend of increasing stock collapse," says Worm. "But this paper shows that our oceans are not a lost cause. The encouraging result is that exploitation rate – the ultimate driver of depletion and collapse – is decreasing in half of the ten systems examined in detail. This means that

management in those areas is setting the stage for ecological and economic recovery.

- The study is good news for several regions in the U.S., Iceland and New Zealand. "These highly managed ecosystems are improving" says Hilborn. "Yet there is still a long way to go: of all fish stocks that we examined sixty-three percent remained below target and still needed to be rebuilt."
- "We know that more fish can be harvested with less fishing effort and less impact on the environment, if we first slow down and allow overfished populations to rebuild," says coauthor Jeremy Collie from the University of Rhode Island. "Scientists and managers in places as different as Iceland and Kenya have been able to reduce overfishing and rebuild fish populations despite serious challenges."
- While the study suggests that these tools have long-term benefits, they also come with short term costs to fishers. "Some places have chosen to end overfishing," says Trevor Branch, a co-author from the University of Washington. "That choice can be painful for fishermen in the short term, but in the long term it benefits fish, fishermen, and our ocean ecosystems as a whole."

See a copy of the study here: http://www.fmap.ca/ramweb/media/rebuilding_fisheries/home.php.



PO Box 46
Wedderburn OR 97491

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YES!

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

With my membership, I will get:

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip code: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email address: _____

Membership contribution

Please make your check payable to the \$45

**Conservation
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