



The Environmental for the

It is dawn on the morning after the inauguration. As the gray light filters through the windows of the White House, the new president of the United States will awake to a nation whose environmental health has deteriorated throughout the 1980s.

Time and environmental degradation have marched onward while the Reagan administration, with only a few notable exceptions, has marched backward. Meanwhile, the United States has entered a period of tighter limits, where the costs of growth are more clearly recognized, and this has altered the terms of the environmental debate. As a result, reversing the environmental damage of the past will be only part of the challenge facing the next president. The other part, equally difficult, will be re-creating an agenda for the environment and infusing it with a global vision even as we enter an era of more limited resources.

The thesis of this article is that two fundamental pressures will compete for the attention of the next administration—be it Republican or Democratic—as it grapples with the nation's mounting environmental problems. On one side is the pressure of the continuing degradation of air, soil, water, and wilderness. Each year 50,000 pounds of air, water, and solid waste are generated for every person in the United States.¹ Environmental survival is as important a part of the national agenda as are education, defense, health care, or the Persian Gulf. On the other side is the

pressure of the shrinking pot of available resources and cost-effective solutions. The new environmental agenda must be able to withstand hardheaded cost-benefit analysis, so that limited resources can be targeted to make the greatest impact on the most serious problems. (For a discussion of future environmental challenges, see Milton Russell, "Environmental Protection for the 1990s—and Beyond," *Environment*, September 1987.)

Because environmental goals rank very high among the priorities of Americans of all political persuasions, making progress in this area represents an enormous political opportunity for the next president. Whether he is a Republican or a Democrat, he can reap substantial political rewards from restoring the strong bipartisan consensus in favor of environmental protection that existed before 1980. Environmental issues have increasing importance for all people, liberal and conservative, both now and for the future. Every American's health can benefit from breathing clean air and drinking pure water, just as every American's spirit can soar from exploring parks and wilderness.

Fairness to future generations requires sustainable solutions to today's environmental problems, because the debts incurred today—environmental as well as economic—will at some point need to be repaid. Intelligent long-term environmental decisions made today are a gift to future generations, while ig-

Agenda

Next Administration

By Richard D. Lamm and Thomas A. Barron

norant short-term decisions constitute theft from our children and our grandchildren. Will our legacy be a nation of eroded land, despoiled wilderness, and polluted rivers with few available resources to restore them? The answer depends heavily on the ability of the next president to lead effectively.

As a result of the competing pressures of environmental needs and limited resources, the next administration will need to focus its efforts in four critical areas. These areas are establishing clear priorities; implementing a policy of cost-effective regulation; reforming our wasteful public lands policies; and promoting a global vision.

Establishing Clear Priorities

If the transition team has done its work well, the next president will wake up the day following the inauguration with a detailed, practical program to create a sustainable and healthy environment. To make this happen the transition team should seek assistance immediately after the election from experienced environmental professionals with the necessary expertise. One group of such professionals, which has dubbed itself "Project Blueprint," is now drafting a clear list of environmental policies, practices, resources, and human talent available to the next administration (see box on page 18).

Plans alone, however, are useless unless they are accompanied by strong determination on the part of the new

president to act swiftly and decisively on behalf of environmental issues. To move the nation forward, the president's early actions must include making appointments, shaping the budget, communicating the new priorities, and establishing top legislative goals.

Making Appointments

The lasting impact, for good or ill, of executive appointments is best illustrated by Ronald Reagan's appointments during his first term. Time and

hundreds of capable environmental professionals at all levels.

A few of Reagan's initial selections are worth recalling. When he was head of the Mountain States Legal Foundation, James Watt often sought, on behalf of pro-development interest groups, to weaken the enforcement of laws designed to ensure sustainable use of air, water, and wildlife. Watt's sharp tongue was eventually to be his downfall, but his former deputy, Donald P. Hodel, now runs the U.S. Department



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again the Reagan administration filled senior environmental administrative posts with representatives of the industries that stood to benefit most from weak or selective enforcement of environmental laws. The result has been frequent failure to balance environmental factors and economic considerations, as the laws require. Enforcement has been further hampered by a tangled web of financial conflicts of interest and the demoralization and replacement of

of the Interior. Hodel is guided by similar ideological goals but has an improved sense of public relations. John Crowell, former legal counsel for Louisiana Pacific Corporation, was the man

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Reagan first chose to oversee 190 million acres of national forest, just when the Forest Service was developing its harvesting plans for the next 50 years. And Anne Gorsuch Burford—certainly no advocate for the environment—was the first person Reagan selected to preside over the nation's top environmental agency.

Even when the Reagan administration did appoint environmentally conscious administrators, they were often rendered ineffective. For example, William Penn Mott was effectively paralyzed as head of the National Park Service by a bureaucratic reorganization that put him directly under the watchful eye of William Horn, one of the most anti-environmental officials at the Interior Department. To prevent such political interference from happening in the future, the National Parks and Con-

servation Association recently called for transforming the Park Service into an independent agency.²

Few actions taken by the next president will have more lasting impact than immediately removing most Reagan appointees from their posts and replacing them with capable individuals who are as sympathetic to the environmental challenges faced by the nation as they are to the economic realities faced by private corporations. Development of a list of strong appointments should be a top priority for the new administration, and their swift confirmation should be pursued vigorously.

In seeking to remove the ideologues of the Reagan years, however, the administration should avoid selecting ideologues of the opposite extreme. Individuals such as William Ruckelshaus have proved it is possible to work with

a broad spectrum of people on environmental issues while maintaining their respect. Appointees should share the following qualities:

- Substantial knowledge about the key issues to be addressed;
- Commitment to improving the nation's environmental health;
- Nonideological, nonpolarizing personalities and the ability to work effectively with Congress and interest groups of all political persuasions;
- Ability to gain the attention, interest, and enthusiasm of the new president. The surest way to keep environmental issues at the top of the administration's agenda is to fill the leadership positions of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Interior Department, the Department of Energy, the Department of Agriculture, and other important agencies with inspiring people who hold the confidence of the Oval Office.

The president must clearly direct his appointees to exercise their existing powers vigorously and imaginatively to achieve his administration's primary environmental goals. This will include making strong sub-Cabinet and career appointments and reprogramming funds to achieve the new goals effectively. Such a new direction will require a major shifting of gears for the existing bureaucracy, which has too often been used in recent years to hinder rather than to advance environmental protection. For example, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is currently being sued for its violations of the planning, public participation, and congressional notification provisions of the 1976 Federal Land Policy and Management Act and other statutes in its rush to remove secretly the restrictions on land use for more than 200 million acres of federal lands.

Shaping the Budget

Unless some action is taken immediately, the new administration will be operating under a Reagan-designed budget until October 1990. Far too much is at stake for this critical period of time to be lost. Areas of special con-

BLUEPRINT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Shortly after election day the next U.S. president will be handed a "Blueprint for the Environment," designed to guide him and his administration on a steady course of sound environmental policymaking. The non-partisan blueprint project is billed by its designers as the broadest, most concerted effort ever made by environmental groups to influence an incoming president on an array of national and global environmental issues.

The project is led by a steering committee representing 18 organizations that include the Natural Resources Defense Council, National Audubon Society, Environmental Policy Institute, Union of Concerned Scientists, Wilderness Society, and Sierra Club. Staff members from these organizations are assigned to 35 task forces that address global warming, tropical deforestation, genetic engineering, groundwater, oceans and coasts, energy, pesticides, environmental education, and other subjects. The task forces will develop recommendations indicating what actions must be taken in these areas and why, how to proceed, and the budgetary implications of these recommended actions.

Each recommendation will be summarized for inclusion in approximately 15 different "green books" to be distributed to Cabinet and sub-Cabinet

officials. Each version of the green book will be specially tailored to contain those recommendations most relevant to the authority and jurisdiction of the targeted official. In addition to the green books, a "talent bank" will be assembled that lists highly qualified individuals for appointment to key environmental positions in the new administration.

After the blueprint is presented to the next president and his transition team, it will be up to the project's participating organizations to encourage the adoption of the recommendations by the new administration. Participation in the project is open to all environmental organizations sharing its underlying objectives. For more information, contact Clay E. Peters, executive director, Blueprint for the Environment, 1412 16th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036 (202-637-3793).

In another effort the presidential candidates have been graded for their performance on issues involving energy and the environment in a report from the League of Conservation Voters, "The Presidential Profiles." To order the \$20 report, contact the League of Conservation Voters, 2000 L Street, NW, Suite 804, Washington, D.C. 20036 (202-785-VOTE).

—J. G.

cern include expanding EPA's budget, which has been slashed to 1976 levels in real terms; revitalizing the Land and Water Conservation Fund, created in 1965 to expand and protect the nation's parks and open lands; massively reducing or eliminating the Forest Service's subsidies for road building and other wasteful activities; and establishing new programs to protect groundwater and to encourage energy efficiency.

Communicating the New Priorities

The importance of effective communication to the American people, to Congress, and to new appointees cannot be underestimated. The new president should make extensive use of the bully pulpit. He should revive the idea from the early 1970s of an annual, substantive environmental message to Congress, delivering his first one in February 1989. Additional public addresses by the president and his team provide an important opportunity for the new administration to communicate the urgency and severity of our environmental problems and its initiatives to translate these problems into opportunities for sustainable economic development and strengthened national security.

The next resident of the White House should order immediate reviews of existing rules and regulations on the full range of environmental statutes. Many of these regulations, drafted during the past eight years, will need to be replaced with language that upholds the spirit of the underlying laws. In order to give the new president a running start, his transition team should, immediately following the election, create working groups to examine all existing rules and regulations. The task of these working groups should be to develop a comprehensive list of all regulatory changes that the appointees of the new administration can readily put into effect.

Through such an effort, many of the laws that the Reagan administration has tried to cripple, such as the Surface Mining Reclamation and Control Act, can be rejuvenated. Other laws, such as the National Environmental Policy Act, can

be simplified and strengthened as tools for effective decision making.

Establishing Top Legislative Goals

An administration sensitive to the needs of the environment will have no difficulty identifying the key problem areas that require immediate corrective action. Regaining momentum on these issues is, however, a tall order. Both the magnitude of the problems and the weight of the federal deficit that the next

other management techniques and market mechanisms."³

The public lands policies of the past eight years need to be completely overhauled. The time has come for a bold nationwide program to acquire threatened open space and to complete the protection of parks and wilderness areas. Much of the money spent on preserving these resources can be offset by the savings gained from eliminating costly subsidies.



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administration will inherit are staggering. Legislative goals, therefore, must be established with the limitations of both political and economic capital in mind.

Four of the most important areas requiring legislative action are air and water, public lands, energy efficiency, and global issues. Amendments to strengthen the Clean Air Act are needed that will require realistic assessment of the hazards of various pollutants as well as strict enforcement timetables. Groundwater pollution is an increasing threat to public health and requires strong action both to prevent further degradation and to encourage efficient use of our limited supplies. In addition, immensely inefficient institutions have evolved in the West to allocate scarce water resources, and innovations are badly needed. David H. Getches, a professor at the University of Colorado School of Law, has described in detail the Western Governors' Association 1986 conclusion that "water use efficiency in the West could be greatly increased through conservation measures,

Also needed are comprehensive policies to encourage energy efficiency, which can help to reduce the balance of trade deficit, abate harmful emissions into the atmosphere, reduce acid rain, and lessen dependence on unstable foreign petroleum sources. Finally, global environmental issues including ozone depletion, global warming, population pressures, biological diversity, and ocean pollution require strong leadership and new initiatives from the United States and from other nations.


Cost-Effective Regulation

A major objective of the new administration should be cost-effective environmental protection. Costs as well as benefits must be defined in terms that are broader than purely economic, but the American people must still allocate scarce economic resources to solve environmental problems.

The United States has become a spawning ground for dysfunctional institutions. No nation in the world spends more money on health care; yet

it ranks 15th among other nations in the life expectancy of its male population and 8th in the life expectancy of its female population. No nation spends more money on education; yet many American children are not able to write a clear paragraph, let alone understand their own history or literature. No nation spends more money on law enforce-

ment and crime control; yet the United States endures more violent crime than any country in the industrialized world. The United States can do better in the arena of environmental protection only if the new administration takes the lead in educating the public about the nature and degree of environmental risks and about the various options.



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Such an approach to environmental problems requires better data than are now available. Paul Portney, director of the Center for Risk Management at Resources for the Future, has suggested establishing a quasi-independent Bureau of Environmental Statistics within EPA.⁴ This bureau would manage the collection, analysis, and publication of important measures related to environmental quality. As Portney points out, "We currently do a disgraceful job of collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information about environmental conditions and trends." Environmental health is certainly as important as economic health. Yet we keep ample statistics about one and know comparatively very little about the other. Environmental human health factors such as morbidity and mortality, crop and forest damage, air and water pollution, soil erosion, wildlife populations, and aesthetic degradation are

highly relevant issues to policymakers, and the next administration should do everything possible to inject them into the debate concerning environmental quality.

Portney has also proposed reorienting EPA's so-called bubble and offset policies from the realm of emissions to that of risk.⁵ Such a reform might be

an acceptable means of allowing regulated entities to increase pollution controls at one point and to relax pollution controls at another, but only if it can be demonstrated beyond any doubt that an overall improvement in environmental quality will occur as a result of the change, and only if such maneuvering is limited to specific localities and media.

Such proposals will, no doubt, produce wide debate. Their importance, however, lies less in their specific merits or problems than in their underlying philosophy of accurately comparing risks, costs, and benefits. Whereas American public policy usually greases only the squeakiest wheels, policymakers need to reevaluate where the grease is actually most needed. Gargantuan amounts of money are spent on unlikely risks, leaving less resources available for truly dangerous hazards. Such allocation decisions are often made in the courtroom rather than in administrative agencies that are equipped to evaluate and manage environmental problems.

In seeking to assess hazards accurately to help us allocate our resources more effectively, we should not overlook the long-term economic benefits that can arise from tough environmen-

tal regulation. Although the affected polluters will undoubtedly point out that new regulation may result in increased costs in the short run, there is ample evidence that sound environmental management can avoid economic catastrophes. The United States incurred enormous human and economic costs because of the persistent soil abuse that caused the Dust Bowl of the 1930s. More recently we have endured the closing of fisheries in Virginia because of kepone pollution; the abandonment of communities such as Love Canal, New York, and Times Beach, Missouri, because of hazardous waste; the worsening pollution of beaches on both coasts with all of the associated costs to fisheries and tourism; and the recent spills of oil in Puget Sound and of chemicals in Pennsylvania. Meanwhile, the problems caused by acid rain have been mounting, and the economic costs of correcting these problems have increased because of governmental inaction.

Environmental degradation makes sustainable economic development impossible. While it inevitably costs us something today to address our most serious environmental problems, we must also ask what it will cost future generations if we do nothing. One of the benefits of tough environmental regulations is that they provide strong economic incentives for industry to develop more-efficient and less-costly manufacturing processes that also protect the world in which we live. If our goal is long-term economic health, we cannot neglect our long-term environmental health: the two are inescapably intertwined.

Reforming Public Lands Policies

The new administration can make major gains, both economic and environmental, through eliminating some of the costly subsidies embedded in the federal budget. Nowhere are these subsidies more ripe for significant reform than in our public lands management policies.

For example, the Forest Service under
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Reagan has proposed increasing its sales of timber from the national forests over the next 50 years despite the uneconomic harvesting that now occurs in many of our national forests. A study by the General Accounting Office, based on the Forest Service's own figures, shows that the federal government lost more than \$1.2 billion on its timber sales program in the national forests between 1982 and 1986. A top candidate for elimination is the Tongass National Forest timber fund, on which the Forest Service spent \$50 million last year to subsidize the logging of 450 million board feet while receiving only \$1 million in fees; this was achieved

public lands to the extractive industries, with its enormous long-term costs and environmental damage, must be overhauled. A glaring example of the failure of this policy is Interior Secretary Hodel's outer continental shelf oil- and gas-leasing program, which has dumped many areas of low hydrocarbon potential and high environmental sensitivity onto the marketplace during a time of depressed oil prices. The Interior Department's own estimates⁶ show that these leases will generate a total of no more than 41 days' worth of oil at current levels of consumption (even assuming oil prices of \$32 per barrel). Moreover, Hodel's program rejected the joint recommendation of industry and conservationists to exclude from the leasing program 33.5 million acres of the Bering Sea. As a result five coastal states have filed suit to set aside the program.


The money saved by eliminating these wasteful subsidies and programs should be allocated to the acquisition of additional lands in critical areas. The new president should mount a 12-year program to acquire and protect threatened natural lands, so that by the year 2000 areas such as the Yellowstone ecosystem will be safe for future generations to enjoy. The recommendations of President Reagan's own Commission on Americans Outdoors, which calls for the protection of green belts and open lands across the country, should be fully implemented. Another recent proposal, this one to add 86 new natural and historical parks and to expand existing parks by 10 million acres, has received strong support on Capitol Hill.⁷

Leadership and Global Vision

Above all, the next president will have an opportunity to change the terms of the debate to affect the way Americans perceive environmental problems. Polls conducted by CBS News/*New York Times*, Roper, Harris, Cambridge Reports, and others have documented that the American people have shown increasing levels of support for environmental protection over the past 15 years (see, for example, Riley E. Dunlap, "Polls, Pollution, and Politics Revisited: Public Opinion on the Environment in the Reagan Era," *Environment*, July/August 1987). The rapid increase in membership in national environmental organizations during the same period (especially in the past five years) supports this trend.

The great challenge facing the new administration will be to tap this base of support, and to keep it in place even if it means raising the costs of certain goods and services or cutting government spending in other areas. How deeply do Americans really care about environmental protection? The answer will depend partly on how effectively the next president can make the case for a healthy environment.

The next administration should do everything possible to harness the power of the private sector for the cause of environmental protection. The private



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while hastening the destruction of the only largely intact rain forest left in the world's temperate zones. The Forest Service road-building budget, which has averaged more than \$180 million annually over the past five years, encourages uneconomic timber management policies, especially in remote and fragile wildlife habitats. Not only does this policy increase soil erosion and damage riparian zones, it effectively prevents many of these areas from ever being protected as wilderness in the future.

But merely reducing subsidies—whether in timber, grazing, mining, or water projects—is not sufficient. The entire policy of massive giveaways of

This is not the way to maximize either the economic value or the environmental quality of public lands, which comprise more than 25 percent—almost a million square miles—of the land base. The overall management goals of the Forest Service, BLM, and Interior Department should be reoriented from "multiple use" to long-term resource stewardship. Such stewardship would encompass recreation and forms of economic activity that are compatible with the sustainable use and enjoyment of these areas. As a first step toward this goal, the next administration should implement strict land-use planning provisions in the government's system for leasing public lands.

sector could play a greater role in developing energy-efficient products and services, new pollution control technologies, waste disposal and recycling mechanisms, and alternative sources of energy.

Leadership also requires vision. The next administration, unlike its predecessor, must have a vision of environmental issues that sees the Earth as a single biosphere. At the top of the list should be the formulation of a U.S. policy on global climate change, including legislation and regulations to reduce emissions of synthetic chemicals that are rapidly altering the atmosphere. Tropical deforestation and the resulting loss of uncounted thousands of species is another crisis that will have an enormous impact on the planet's ability to sustain life over the long run. As the world population swells, all of these problems become more pressing.

The new president must make it clear

that these are not "somebody else's problems." Consideration should be given to new treaties and programs to encourage sustainable development around the globe, and this principle should be translated into firm criteria for such international lending agencies as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The United States has plenty of clout with these agencies—and should use it to make progress toward environmental goals. New institutions, such as a World Conservation Bank, may need to be created to address these problems effectively.

The next administration must be willing to lead, to use the traditional presidential powers of persuasion and appointment effectively. But to preserve the planet we inhabit for future generations, courage, candor, and creativity will also be required. In the era of economic limits, a new administration will need the vision to see beyond today's boundaries—both political and

geographic—to create lasting solutions. America still possesses the time and the resources necessary to regain the initiative against our burgeoning environmental problems. The major question is: Do we also possess the will?

NOTES

1. Conservation Foundation, *State of the Environment: A View Toward the Nineties* (Washington, D.C.: Conservation Foundation, 1987), 407.
2. Philip Shabecoff, "Conservationists Offer Park System 'Blueprint,'" *New York Times*, 19 February 1988.
3. David H. Getches, "Water Use Efficiency: The Value Of Water In The West," *The Public Land Law Review* 8(1987):4.
4. Paul R. Portney, "Reforming Environmental Regulation: Three Modest Proposals," *Issues in Science & Technology* 4(1988):75.
5. *Ibid.*, 77-9.
6. Department of the Interior, *Proposed Final Five-Year Leasing Program, Mid-1987 to Mid-1992, Decision and Summary* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior Minerals Management Service, 1987), 22.
7. Shabecoff, note 2 above.

No Wild, No Wildlife.



Erwin and Peggy Bauer

Life in the wild can be pretty tough these days. Without the necessary habitat to live in, some species like the Grizzly Bears that inhabit Yellowstone National Park are severely threatened.

Over 80% of the national forest lands that border Yellowstone and are not specifically put out-of-reach for oil development, have been leased: habitat that the Grizzlies rely on, as do elk, moose and deer.

If their refuges are replaced with roads, oil rigs and gas pipelines, they too will become victims of senseless and thoughtless development. The Sierra Club's work to protect public lands from development also helps preserve the habitat of these Grizzlies, saving the wilderness they need in order to survive.

To learn more about our work protecting endangered species such as the Grizzly Bear in Yellowstone or to take part in it through membership, please write us at: Sierra Club, 730 Polk Street, San Francisco, CA 94109, (415) 776-2211.

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