

WATER QUALITY REPORT

March, 2014

By Karen Griggs

The aggressive Asian carp, a very large fish, has upset river ecology in the Wabash River and other tributaries of the Mississippi River Basin. Silver carp and bighead carp are known for leaping in the air and displacing native fish. They evidently escaped from an aquaculture farm during a flood.

The Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant agency, an extension service of the state universities, recommends catching the carp by bowfishing and using a large hand-held net.

Recipes for 29 fish dishes are available at www.food.com.

The Corps of Engineers has designed a fence and wetland excavation in Allen County at the top of the Wabash River valley. The Corps believes that the structure will prevent invasive species of carp from getting into the Great Lakes from the upper Wabash River, over the watershed divide, into the Lake Erie watershed.

The Little River Wetlands, an environmental education organization, reports that the Corps will mitigate the loss of the wetlands by buying some nearby property.

The documentary movie, "Everglades of the North," is on Facebook. The movie is available through Lakeshore Public Television at 219-756-5656, or toll free at 888-694-LAKE.

Homeowners and business leaders in Tippecanoe County have organized a coalition of over 200 people to protest a stone quarry proposed for farmland between Delphi and Americus. The site is upstream of the confluence of the Tippecanoe and Wabash Rivers.

Kay Miller, co-president of the coalition, said that there is sulphur in some of the local aquifers. The county GIS office shows discontinuous underground well water sources.

There is no public water supply for hundreds of homes in the area. The Americus Area Citizens Coalition said that they expect to lose their well water and suffer from blasting noise and heavy traffic if the quarry is developed. The Leisure Time Campground, a family resort, Camel Crossing Restaurant, and Roberts

Americus Restaurant have shallow wells that would be affected.

Teresa Maxwell, a local farmer, predicted massive flooding of the Deer Creek Levee Association farms. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources held a public hearing in 2013, and the agency issued a construction permit in February 2014. Several landowners appealed and the permit is in the review stage. They are preparing to travel to Indianapolis for a pre-hearing conference with the administrative law judge.

So far, the Coalition members have sent letters to the editor and written guest editorials, held meetings with county commissioners in Carroll and Tippecanoe Counties, met with city councils, mayors, and town boards.

A public hearing by the Board of Zoning Appeals will be June 24. For more information contact Bill and Kay Miller at 765-564-3546.

The Save the Dunes Council will have a wine tasting fundraiser April 13 at the Miller (Gary) bakery at 555 South Lake Street, starting at 4:00 PM. They will also have a “Jam” event on June 7, with four bands and local grub. For details see their website.

Members of the Water Quality Committee are myself as chair, Charlotte Read, and Jim Sweeney. We meet during the quarterly Division meetings. If you are interested in doing research, monitoring government meetings, and writing contact me at 765-463-5215 or Jim Sweeney at 219-322-7239.

IN MEMORY OF ETHYL BLOCH

Ethyl Bloch passed away on February 15 at her home in Peshtigo, Wisconsin. She was 93.

She was born in Des Moines, Iowa. She moved to Pearl Harbor in July, 1941 with her family as her father was in the military. She was a civilian employee of the U.S. military and worked at Scofield. She witnessed the attack on December 7.

Ethyl returned to the states in 1942 and married Bill. They lived in Fort Wayne, Indiana. She moved to Peshtigo shortly after Bill's death in 2005. They had a daughter, Pamela Malicoat, and a son, Wilson. Another son, Andrew, preceded Ethyl in death.

Ethyl was a longtime member of the League and active through the Fort Wayne Chapter. She was one of the founding members of Acres, a land trust group, striving to protect natural areas in Northeast Indiana.

She was president of the Indiana Division and served on several committees. Most notably the Water Quality Committee. She also served on the Water Quality Resource Committee at the National level as its chair, and was instrumental in moving numerous water protection and preservation issues into both state and national policy.

Her dedication was legend. Always ready to help, and strongly devoted to the League mission. And she acted on that devotion. She earned the title as “one of the white haired ladies” who regularly showed up at events, meetings, hearings, and any place where water quality issues were on the agenda. She was always polite, but with a dogged persistence.

LABEL GMO’S? OR BAN THEM?

[Reprinted from “Organic Bytes,” a publication of the Organic Consumers Association.]

The introduction in the mid-nineties of genetically engineered crops into the U.S. food supply—with no independent safety-testing or labeling required—sparked a debate over how to drive these unhealthy and environmentally destructive “Frankenfoods” off the market.

[<http://www.earthopensource.org>]

Some campaigners have called for an outright ban of GE crops. Others argue that strict mandatory labeling laws, similar to those in the EU, are all we need in order to rid the world of GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms).

Who’s right? A review of two decades of anti-GMO campaigning in North America and Europe suggests that mandatory labeling and bans, or GMO-free zones, should go hand-in-hand. And recent news about increased contamination of non-GMO crops by the growing number of USDA-approved GMO crops suggests that if we don’t implement labeling laws and bans sooner rather than later, we may run out of time to protect organic and non-GMO farmers and their fields.

[http://www.organicconsumersassociation.org/articles/article_29447.cfm]

LEGISLATIVE

Dateline March 10, 2014

[Thanks to Indiana Wildlife Federation and Sierra Club for this article]

Unfortunately, by the time this paper is published the legislature will have ended the session. It still gives you an idea of the kinds of things of importance to conservation minded people, and it is a way to stress the importance on interacting with your elected representatives.

Bills that were amended and need to be reconsidered by the house of origin are being scheduled for a conference committee where the bill will be worked then sent to the House and Senate floors again for a final vote. This is the link to see all bills that are going to conference committee. <http://iga.in.gov/documents/9dc120b6>

The names of the conferees and advisors on each committee will be posted soon. The meetings are public but there's usually very little notice because things are moving fast at this point.

SB 4: Natural Resources Matters- lifetime license fees language added by Rep. Sean Eberhart of Shelbyville, 317-232-9793. Allows Natural Resources Commission to make rules allowing this. It's a money loser as we all know and we would like to see the language stripped out.

SB 52: Natural Resources Criminal Penalties – changes DNR misdemeanors to infractions. Bill author is Sen. Brent Steele of Bedford, 317-232-9477. Hope is to pull out all Title 14-22 language and have DNR work on it over the summer, then bring another bill next year that would better protect natural resources and wildlife by keeping most of the misdemeanor penalties. We keep hearing this is the direction but will believe it when it really happens.

SB404: Hunting preserves – “canned hunting” Sen. Carlin Yoder was bill author. Dead for this year unless an unprecedented attempt is made to amend language at conference committee. 99.9% sure it's done for this session. Thanks for all the calls and emails that stopped this bill in the Senate and kept it from being amended into language in the House. This is an example of the power of your grassroots voice!

SB 340: Demand Side Management. This bill destroys the Energy Efficiency structure set up by the IURC to reduce electricity demand by set percentage points over time. The bill allows big users to opt out of paying for it. This was passed in

the Senate and changed in the House and now is back in the Senate. It is a bad bill.

SB 186: This bill creates policy on agriculture and farmer rights. Called the ag gag it criminalized those who report on factory farm abuses. It still gives legal protections to allow agriculture operations to use “accepted practices” but it does not spell out what those are.

HB1005: Government Reduction – could restrict Natural Resources Commission actions except in emergency. Author is Rep. Judd McMillin of Brookville, 317-232-9815. The bill was amended to remove the objectionable language by Sen. Scott Schneider of Indianapolis and we thank him for that, 317-232-9812 – but this is the Governor’s bill and one of his staff testified they would like to see that put back in. Will have to see what happens in conference committee.

HB1050: Special circumstances hunting card. By Rep. Lloyd Arnold of Leavenworth in Crawford County, 317-232-9833. This is a good bill that allows people with special circumstances and handicaps hunt with a licensed hunter. We thank Rep. Arnold for making it possible for these folks to hunt in a safe and manageable way. The bill was amended to fix a detail. No canned hunting language. Should be ok.

HB1143: Environmental Rules and Standards – “no more stringent than”. (Bill is dead, not going to conference committee, but wanted you to know about it.) Authored by Rep. Dave Wolkins of Warsaw, 317-232-9816. Passed by House but died in Senate Committee. We thank Sen. Ed Charbonneau of Valparaiso, 317-232-9468, for hearing the bill but not taking a vote. Would have taken away the authority of the state to determine its own level of environmental quality and standards.

GARDENING WITH BRUCE

Part 2

It is still winter and northern Indiana, where Bruce Hunter lives, is still under a blanket of snow. But, that does not mean Bruce is idle. Well, kind of. But, preparing to plant, gathering the seeds and planning can all be done before actually getting your fingers in the dirt. I asked Bruce how things were going as of March, and, here is the status as we go to print.

HW: When do you anticipate being able to plant outside?

BRUCE: Around May 15th. Give or take. The temperature needs to stay above freezing.

HW: How much mulch did you make?

BRUCE: I have a compost bin full and a pile under a tree in the back yard. Both are under snow so I won't have a good handle on volume until I can get back to check them after the melt.

HW: How do you plan to distribute it in the beds?

BRUCE: Soil in my beds is good and will not need anything added, but I will put some in the holes I dig to put the plants that I started indoors when I move them outside.

HW: How do you determine watering needs?

BRUCE: Mostly by the feel of the soil and what the weather has been, I do have a moisture meter I bought at Menards for \$5.00. Check it out at:

<http://www.menards.com/main/home-decor/crafts/planters-accessories/house-plant-moisture-meter/p-1488186-c-10138.htm>. It actually works pretty good.

HW: You mentioned you use your own formulas for chemical needs. Can you share those formulas and how you use them to accomplish what? Yes, I realize this is several questions.

BRUCE: I start with 2 quarts of water, add 1 table spoon of dish washing liquid and 2 drops of peppermint extract. Shake well and use it in a spray bottle. I use it if I see any insects have been starting to nibble on my plants. If so, I then use it on everything. It works really well. It dries on the plants and when the insects eat it they die (I am guessing of diarrhea. There is a certain amount of poetic justice in that.) You apply it after watering and reapply if it rains.

HW: You have already recommended a couple of web sites. Any others of note?

BRUCE: One YouTube channel I can recommend is:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/growingyourgreens?feature=watch>. He has over 900 short how-to videos on organic gardening. I have picked up a few ideas from him.

HW: How many plants of each vegetable will you be planting?

BRUCE: It varies each year. I actually have way more seeds than I have room to plant. Menards had a great sale on Heirloom seeds for 19 cents a package last week and I stocked up even though I already had all the seeds I needed. They will last for several years if kept cool and dry. I place the packages in quart mason jars and use my Seal-a-Meal to vacuum seal the jar then store it in a cool spot in my basement where I keep all my canned goods. As to how many plants, well I always start more tomatoes and peppers than I personally need since I give them to my son and some friends. It is also a good idea to have more since anything can happen to young plants right after transplanting and having backups is always a good plan. Any plants or vegetables not used or given away end up in the compost

bin, so nothing goes to waste.

HW: What will you be looking for as the plants grow? Like how to see if they are healthy?

BRUCE: Plants should look healthy (green , not full of holes, not withered) and grow daily. I swear, you can almost see them grow from day to day when they are young plants.

HW: What about pest problems?

BRUCE: I check my garden every day and spray if I see any sign of insect damage. The one thing my spray seems to have no effect on is caterpillars. That love to eat the leaves of carrot plants. Those I pick off by hand (they make great fishing bait).

HW: Nutrient requirements?

BRUCE: Since I plant in 8 raised beds, I rotate my crops just as a large farm would. You can find all kinds of information on the Internet about using crop rotation to replenish you soil.

HW: Do you use any store bought chemicals--like Miracle Grow?

BRUCE: Nope, all natural.

While these installments are three months apart, we will try to make a continuous effort to have them in a nice usable sequence so you can prepare and work on your own backyard garden.

PROPOSED BY-LAW CHANGE

In keeping with the by-law requirements, proposed amendments are sent out 30 days prior to a vote. A by-law amendment must be voted on without changes. The Article in question is below as it currently exists:

ARTICLE 2 - Officers

The officers of the Indiana Division shall consist of a President, a First Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer and four (4) Regional Vice Presidents.

a) Each Regional Vice President shall be a resident of the Region of Indiana established by the Board of Directors, and shall be a member of a Chapter in that Region, with only one Vice President for each Region.

b) Not more than two (2) Officers of the Indiana Division shall be members of the same chapter.

Amendment number 1: Change Section b) to read as follows: [An unlimited number of Officers of the Indiana Division may be members of the same Chapter.]

Amendment number 2: Delete Section b).

Both of these Amendments will address the same concern.

PROTECTING INDIANA WILDLIFE

By Jim Sweeney

Protection of the rare and endangered plants and animals of Indiana has been a priority of the Izaak Walton League since we formed in 1922 and the Indiana Heritage Trust (IHT) and the Indiana DNR's Wildlife Diversity Section (WDS) are important parts of this strategy.

Here are some of the ways Ikes can help:

- * Have your chapter send as generous a donation as you can to the WDS every year and encourage your members to do the same.
- * Buy and proudly display the Environmental License Plate.
- * Donate all or part of your Indiana Income Tax refund to the Endangered Wildlife Fund. Look for the Bald Eagle on the form.
- * Even if you do not hunt or fish, buy a license. The DNR gets generous matching funds from the federal government for every license sold in the state. A portion of the license money and matching funds are used to buy more habitat for conservation and recreation. Songbirds and other "non-game" species use that land as much as game species.

The Federal Government matches every dollar donated by Hoosiers under the State Wildlife Grants program and endangered species funding programs.

This program is producing amazing results for the citizens of Indiana with scant funding. Look at some of the accomplishments of the WDS over last few years:

- * Bald eagle numbers have rebounded so quickly that the DNR has reduced formal surveys to use limited funds elsewhere. Sightings of eagles in Indiana are now common.
- * Peregrine falcons numbers are growing and river otters can now be found in

almost every county.

* Studies are under way that will determine the status of such animals as the hellbender salamander, lake sturgeon, bobcats, songbirds, frogs and toads, and all the mussels of Indiana streams and rivers.

Much of the responsibility of conserving wildlife in Indiana falls on the Indiana DNR, yet only four percent of the state is publicly owned. This includes federal, state, county, and local levels of government, and only a portion of this is managed for nature.

In 1991, the Indiana General Assembly created the Indiana Heritage Trust to increase the amount of publicly owned land in Indiana. So far, over 50,000 acres have been protected in Indiana. The IHT plate is still the most popular license plate in Indiana.

Send donations to:
Indiana Endangered Wildlife Fund
402 W. Washington, W273
Indianapolis, IN 46204.

For information on the Wildlife Diversity Section, go to:
<http://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/2356.htm>

For more information on the Indiana Heritage Trust, go to:
<http://www.in.gov/dnr/heritage/>

As chairman of the Endangered Species Committee for the Indiana Division IWLA, I want to encourage each and every chapter and member to support these programs. You can make a difference.

PUBLIC LANDS AND FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT

March, 2014

By Chuck Bauer

The best news is that we did get a Farm Bill. It is not all that we had hoped but it did couple crop insurance subsidy with conservation compliance. There is a sod saver provision for North and South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, and Montana. Taxpayers will pay an average of 60% of crop insurance premium costs (\$9 billion this year). CRP remains albeit at a reduced acreage. Now we have to

fight through the writing of new Regulations and Guidelines. Opponents will attempt to weaken our initiatives at each stage. A good summary of the bill is on the IWLA web site.

The second best news is that at this point we do not have legalized canned hunting in Indiana. It was very close. It was introduced in the Senate and needed 26 votes. It got 25. Again IWF led the way with IWLA, Indiana Deer Hunters, Indiana Bow Hunters, Total Quality Deer Management, and Association of Conservation Officers supporting. The IDNR helped as much as possible.

The biggest new problem is that the Indiana Farm Bureau is supporting the Deer Farmers. Deer Farmers are using their purchasing power to intimidate the Farm Bureau. Remember Farm Bureau sells fence, feed, fuel, insurance, etc. to deer farms.

The ravages of CWD are increasing at an alarming rate. Wisconsin is a disaster. In some areas the wild deer herd is 25% infected. They have basically given up trying to manage it. Unfortunately it is spilling over the border into Northern Illinois and they are spending a lot of money eradicating deer in CWD areas and infuriating both hunters and Nature lovers. Worse yet it has entered wild deer in Willis County Illinois, which borders the Indiana Kankakee. CWD can devastate your deer and cost taxpayers and hunters millions of dollars. Remember, deer farmers insist you can't prove they imported the disease but the first CWD in Wisconsin was in a captive herd. That herd had imported deer from an infected herd in Colorado. The second CWD farm in Wisconsin received deer from the first farm. The first wild CWD deer was in close proximity to the first farm with CWD.

Deer hunting licenses in Wisconsin plummeted from 690 thousand in 2001 to 620 thousand in 2002 when CWD was found. They also lost the Matching Federal Funds.

There has been another major change in the CWD battle. The US Department of Agriculture had an objective of eradicating CWD through 2012. In 2013 they gave up and urge containment. They had funded CWD testing and indemnified deer owners for herds that were eradicated. No longer. The States now have the Responsibility. Indiana transferred CWD testing to the deer farmers. Indiana did have to eradicate a small herd that had imported deer from a farm with CWD. The Board of Animal Health paid roughly half the costs and the IDNR Division of Fish and Wildlife paid the other half. That's our hunting license money. The Department of Agriculture new CWD certification program guidelines is a

complete sell out to the deer and elk farmers. It facilitates transfer of CWD animals.

I mentioned that Indiana Wildlife Federation championed the battle. Without Barb Simpson and the IWF office we would have lost. We need to fund them for their efforts. We have no presence in Indianapolis without them.

Things are going well at the Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge. Land acquisition continues. Right now the waterfowl use is outstanding. We are sending healthy birds back North. For the Great Backyard Bird Count we identified 57 species. Notably the February counts have had 6 Eagles, 6 Whooping Cranes, 12 Swans, 32,500 Northern Pintail (a state record), and over 320,000 Snow Geese. There were also thousands of Canadas and White Fronted Geese. The Refuge did receive the \$1,000,000 NAWCA grant the Ike's supported. DU wrote and is administering the grant. It will be used for acquisition. The Indiana Division pledged \$1,000 and is a partner in this grant.

Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO's) are becoming an increasing problem to water quality in Iowa's rivers, streams, aquifers, and drinking water. These pigs are being raised to produce ... Spam. And the fastest growing market for spam is... China. So let's review: Pig farming in Iowa is threatening the states drinking water to send spam to China. Regulations are being weakened by politicians who share deep ties to Big Ag. This is becoming a larger threat to our public resources.

Remember the concerns of Honey Bee colony collapse a few years ago. Well, we may have found the cause. Outbreaks of diseases in honey bees, fish, amphibians, bats, and birds in the past two decades have coincided with the increasing use of systemic insecticides, notably neonicotinoids and fipronil. A link is hypothesized. Almost every kernel of corn planted is dosed with a neonicotinoid. This makes not only the seed poisonous but the plant, the tassel, and the corn poisonous. There is also a residual in the ground. The USFWS has outlawed use of these treated seeds on all federal refuges. Our intensive treatment of seeds may be collapsing our ecosystem.

One new attack to watch. During the Indiana Senate Agriculture and Natural Resource committee meeting on Feb.24, Ice Miller (Indianapolis law firm often lobbying legislature) proposed an amendment to IDNR bill, H:1307, to allow Purdue University to sell water from their underwater aquifer. The logic provided was that since they were a state owned enterprise it would be appropriate. The

lobbyist purported not to know what Purdue was trying to do. It was interesting that none of Purdue's three full time legislative lobbyists attended the meeting.

ROADSIDE HERITAGE PROGRAM

March 2014
By Dean Farr

The Indiana Division of the Izaak Walton League in partnership with Pheasants Forever successfully introduced Senate Concurrent Resolution 4 Commending INDOT on the management practices of the innovative Hoosier Roadside Heritage Program. It passed the Senate unanimously by voice vote and the House by 92 for and none opposed. This is a first small step toward creating new habitat and toward a statewide buffer program. Indiana needs a buffer program to plant grass buffers of native plants along all streams and drainage ditches. This will create new wildlife habitat and protect water quality that will improve fishing. To learn more about the program and do survey, Google on Hoosier Roadside Heritage Program.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION commending the Indiana Department of Transportation on the management practices of the innovative Hoosier Roadside Heritage Program.

Whereas, The roadside vegetation management practices of Indiana and the federal government aim to secure motorist safety, reduce the presence of noxious weeds, and stabilize the soil to complement good soil and water conservation practices;

Whereas, State and local highway departments are facing severe budget shortfalls;

Whereas, Native forbs and grasses are less likely to encroach onto roads than invasive species such as kudzu;

Whereas, Native forbs and grasses are best adapted to local conditions and thus require less active management, reducing the need to replant, weed, and mow the areas adjacent to the road;

Whereas, Integrated vegetation management practices reduce the cost of maintaining roadside vegetation, with the Hoosier Roadside Heritage program saving Indiana \$45 per 20 acre a year in maintenance costs;

Whereas, Pollinators such as bees, birds, bats, and butterflies are suffering drastic population loss, due in part to habitat loss;

Whereas, Pollinators are vital to American agriculture and are responsible for one out of every three bites of food we eat;

Whereas, A diverse pollinator population is necessary to maintain the diversity of our plant life and food supply;

Whereas, Enhancing pollinator populations on rights-of-way can result in improved pollination for neighboring lands, including agriculture and wildlife ecosystems;

Whereas, Sound wildlife ecosystems help support Indiana's \$1.7 billion a year outdoor recreation industry; and

Whereas, Highway rights-of-way that are kept in a native state sequester carbon in the soil, and reduced mowing lowers greenhouse gasses, both of which help to prevent climate change:

Therefore, Be it resolved by the Senate of the General Assembly of the State of Indiana, the House of Representatives concurring:

Section 1. That the Indiana General Assembly commends the Indiana Department of Transportation for its innovative Hoosier Roadside Heritage Program, which saves taxpayer dollars, improves the environment, and supports agriculture production.

Section 2. That the Indiana General Assembly further encourages the Indiana Department of Transportation to work with local governments and conservation groups to promote Hoosier Roadside Heritage Program maintenance practices throughout Indiana.

Section 3. That copies of this resolution be transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the Indiana Department of Transportation.

SAFE DISPOSAL OF COAL ASH

[This resolution text was omitted from the Fall issue of the Hoosier Waltonian. It was adopted at the June 2013 Indiana Division convention.]

WHEREAS, fly ash, bottom ash, boiler slag, and flue gas desulfurization sludge are collectively known as “coal ash” and are generated by power plants and industrial boilers; and

WHEREAS, coal ash contains harmful levels of more than 20 trace heavy metals, elevated radioactivity, harmful pH levels and high concentrations of dangerous salts; and

WHEREAS, lax regulation and the dumping of coal ash has contaminated water supplies with toxic metals, harmful salts and pH levels, harmed wildlife, and threatens human health; and

WHEREAS, coal ash is the second largest industrial waste stream in America and is less regulated than household garbage; and

WHEREAS, more than half of 1400 known coal ash dump sites around the United States are unlined and unmonitored by state and federal agencies; and

WHEREAS, Indiana has more active coal ash impoundments than any other state with no regulations requiring liners, monitoring or the control of toxic discharges from these ponds, no construction standards or inspection requirements; and

WHEREAS, according to data and records of the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) and USEPA, there are at least ten sites in Indiana where coal ash has contaminated drinking water wells, destroyed fish populations, harmed birds and wildlife, and continue to threaten human health; and

WHEREAS, USEPA is proposing rules under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act setting minimum requirements for states that will phase out the wet storage of coal ash, require its placement above groundwater supplies, require leachate collection and treatment, monitoring, and covers at disposal sites, and proper closure and cleanup of contaminated sites; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Indiana Division of the Izaak Walton League of America, assembled in Convention June 9th, 2013 calls upon the Obama Administration to finalize, without further delay:

1. The most protective of currently proposed coal ash rules proposed under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act; and
2. The strongest EPA Coal Plant Water Pollution Standards requiring zero discharge of heavy metals in coal ash to ground or surface waters of the US

SELECTIVE MORAL DISENGAGEMENT

By Albert Bandura

The Population Bomb is Still Ticking

Selective moral disengagement, with the denial it fosters, enables people to

pursue harmful practices freed from the restraint of self-censure. This is achieved by investing ecologically harmful activities with worthy purposes through social or economic justifications; enlisting exonerative comparisons that make damaging practices appear righteous; using sanitized and convoluted language that disguises what is being done; reducing accountability by displacement and diffusion of responsibility; ignoring, minimizing, and disputing harmful effects; dehumanizing and blaming the victims, and derogating the messengers of ecologically bad news. These psycho social mechanisms operate at both the individual and social systems levels.

We can disguise environmentally harmful practices and dress them up in words to help ease our consciences, but such practices will have a negative impact on the planet and the quality of life of future generations, no matter how we label them. We must stop attempting to justify our actions and switch on our environmental conscience to save the world.

As consumers we are now bombarded with messages telling us to consider the environment and to save energy in the face of global climate change. However, the fact is that personal economic savings on energy consumption may be offset by increased consumption of goods and services. What may at first appear to reduce the level of ecological harm that we cause, may in effect be cancelled out and possibly lead to even greater harm. Moreover, many of us pursue practices that are detrimental to the environment but which we justify by a kind of moral disengagement. This frees us from the constraints of self-censure and we defend our actions on the basis that such practices are somehow fulfilling worthy social, national, or economic causes and, as such, offset their harmful effects on the future of our planet.

Moral disengagement equates to switching off one's conscience. Convoluted language helps disguise what is being done, reduces accountability, and also ignores and disputes harmful effects. Learning about moral disengagement shines the light not only on the malpractice of others but on ourselves.

Human conduct can be distinguished in terms of whether it falls in the realm of social custom or morality. This distinction is based, in large part, on the gravity of the social consequences of the conduct. Harming others by one's practices is clearly a matter of morality. The reality today is that harm to the Earth is largely the product of human activity. Societies, therefore, have a moral obligation to preserve the environment so that future generations have a habitable planet.

We are witnessing hazardous global changes of mounting ecological

consequence. They include widespread deforestation, expanding desertification, rising Earth temperature, ice sheet and glacial melting, flooding of low-lying coastal regions, severe weather events, topsoil erosion and sinking water tables, increasing loss of fertile farmland, depletion of fish stocks, loss of biodiversity, and degradation of other aspects of the Earth's life support systems. As the unrivaled ruling species atop the food chain, humans are, at an accelerating pace, wiping out species and the ecosystems that support life.

Environmental degradation of human origin stems from three major sources: population size, the level of consumption, and the damage to the ecosystem caused by the resources used to supply the consumable products which support an increasingly affluent lifestyle. Environmental sustainability must address all three sources of impact on ecological systems and quality of life. There are limits to the number of people the Earth can support sustainably. The world's population was 3 billion in 1950, more than doubled to 6.5 billion in the next 50 years, and is increasing by about a billion every 15 years—toward a rise of over 9 billion by the year 2050. Adding billions of new consumers will take a heavy toll on the Earth's finite resources and ecological system. We have already exceeded the size of the human population the Earth can sustain. Converting to clean, green technologies, renewable sources of energy, and adoption of less consumptive lifestyles will help, but adding billions more consumers will offset the benefits of these other remedies. Lifestyle changes must, therefore, be coupled with reduction of population growth.

Moral disengagement by indifference to harmful realities extends beyond disregarding, minimizing, or disputing their occurrence. It includes ignoring escalating population—the root cause of environmental degradation. A view, currently in vogue, contends that population growth is no longer an ecological problem. This erroneous view arises from failure to consider the differential pattern of population growth across regions of the planet, and the changing shift of populations. The population growth problem must be addressed globally, not dismissed as a myth by selective focus on some industrialized countries with declining birthrates.

Compare the claim that the population bomb has 'fizzled' with actual population growth trends. China has a population of 1.3 billion and is adding about 7 million people annually. India has passed the 1 billion mark, and is on the brink of surpassing China as the most populous nation in the world. At its current fertility rate their population will double to a staggering 2 billion in 44 years. Africa has a population of 944 million and, at its present growth rate, will swell to 2 billion in 35 years. The population in the Middle East and North Africa is about 400 million

and is projected to surpass 700 million in 50 years. The USA has the highest rate of population growth among industrialized countries. Although the rate of population growth globally has slowed somewhat, it is still at a pace to add about 1 billion people every 15 years. Dismissal of global population growth cannot go on indefinitely. Mounting aversive consequences of environmental degradation will eventually force the international community to address the population problem.

There is also mass migration of people from heavily populated poor countries to more habitable or prosperous ones. Some of the people are migrating in search of a better life. Others are seeking a safe haven from internal ethnic atrocities. And still others are 'environmental refugees' subjected to forced migrations because of the growing inhabitability of their environment as their once-fertile land turns into desert through prolonged drought and inadequate water resources. The oft-repeated scenes of hordes of emaciated people struggling to survive under squalid conditions in refugee camps is more likely to depersonalize and dehumanize them than raise social compassion. Large-scale international migration, which will swell with increasing environmental destruction, is changing the face of national populations and becoming the source of major regional upheavals that breed sectarian violence.

The population bomb is rapidly ticking away, but is being ignored as a major contributor to climate change and ecological destruction. Population growth is an escalating global problem—not a disappearing one. In an attentional sleight of hand, soaring population growth disappears as a problem and population decline is elevated to an alarming one that 'haunts our future'. Even some of the leading environmental and conservation organizations, which morphed from active grass-roots environmentalists to cautious bureaucracies, have, in accommodating political forces, disconnected ecological damage from population growth. The population of the USA was 150 million in 1950 but grew to 300 million in 2006 and is heading to 420 million in the next 45 years. Most of this increase stems from migration. After a grueling internal fight over the role of immigration in population growth, for fear of its racial implications, the Sierra Club jettisoned domestic population growth from their agenda as an environmental conservation issue.

Fear of alienating donors, criticism from the progressive left, and disparagement by conservative vested interests claiming that overpopulation is a 'myth', served as further incentives to cast off the rising global population as a factor in environmental degradation. Population growth vanished from the agendas of other mainstream environmental organizations that previously regarded escalating

numbers as a major environmental threat. Greenpeace announced that population “is not an issue for us”. Friends of the Earth declared that, “it is unhelpful to enter into a debate about numbers”. The common justification for the retreat is that it is consumption not human numbers that is creating environmental problems, despite evidence that more people produce more ecological damage. To construe ecological woes as due to consumption and dismiss the number of consumers as of minor consequence overtaxes credibility.

David Brower, the inspiring founder of the Sierra Club, would have probably viewed this retreat for political reasons as a tragic irony. He put it well when he once said, “You don’t have a conservation policy unless you have a population policy”. The escalating global population which already exceeds the Earth’s carrying capacity is now a much more serious ecological threat. Some prominent scientists have taken bold steps in the inhospitable political-correctness climate to break the stranglehold of the population taboo. Christopher Rapley, Director of the British Science Museum, argues that stabilizing human population at an ecologically un-sustainable level is not much of a solution. In his view, we need fewer people to curb global warming. A few columnists and commentators are also beginning to give voice to the global consequences of willful indifference to the population aspect of the problem. Mounting ecological degradation will force renewed attention to population growth.

Population growth has become politically incorrect for a variety of reasons. About two-thirds of the greenhouse gases are produced by the richest industrialized countries with high consumption lifestyles, but only about 3% by Africa, the poorest continent. To target poor countries that suffer the ecological harm of extravagant lifestyles spewing pollutants elsewhere is analogous to blaming the victim. Ironically, ignoring poor people’s need for help with planned childbearing and social supports that enable them to achieve it, is victimization by benign neglect. High consumption lifestyles wreaking havoc on the environment and harming other people’s lives is a moral issue of commission. Evasion of the influential role of population growth in environmental degradation is a moral issue of omission.

Immigration is a minefield in political life. On the one hand, industrial, agricultural, and service industries want cheap labor and workers to perform the dirty and low-wage jobs that their own citizens will not accept. They rely heavily on migrant workers, both legal and illegal. Using economic justification, the industries also argue that they need cheap labor to stay competitive in the global markets. They use their political clout to secure their labor needs. On the other

hand, migrant groups are marginalized, denied adequate services, even human rights. Families that are better off are not about to groom their own offspring for toilsome menial jobs with paltry wages and lowly social status. So migrants are welcomed although they tend to become a disadvantaged ethnic underclass that remains largely unassimilated and is resented for its intrusion on the prevailing cultural norms, traditions, and practices.

To complicate matters further, immigration is an emotionally charged issue with deeply-engrained prejudices, favoritism toward certain ethnicities and occupational strata, and indignation over illegal entries. These conflicting forces have spawned political correctness in both the political right and political left. Some people exploit this contentious issue for political purposes, but most do not want to talk about population growth for fear of rousing the controversial specter of immigration and being branded a racist.

Burgeoning populations also fuel civil strife with devastating humanitarian consequences. In many underdeveloped countries a major share of the population is under 20 years of age. As previously noted, populations in many developing countries will double in 20–30 years. The added stress of deteriorating life conditions facilitates the collapse of weak states and the rule of law. Many recent conflicts occur in countries with young populations, living in poverty, without jobs or skills, under autocratic rulers often plagued by corruption. The age structure, intense competition for sparse resources, and widespread social discontent make young men ripe for recruitment for civil wars and terrorist activities, and provide a growing threat to international security. To worsen this problem, water sources are being rapidly depleted as the demand by soaring human numbers outstrips the supply. The looming water crisis will spawn growing regional conflicts over the allocation of water from sources crossing national borders. In the 21st century, water will be a major global issue over which people will fight.

Expanding economies fuelling consumptive growth by billions of people is intensifying competition for the Earth's vital resources and overwhelming efforts to secure an environmentally and economically sustainable future. Powerful parochial interests create tough impediments to improving living standards globally through sustainable eco-development with economic growth which preserves the Earth's environmental base. Employing collective practices driven by a foreshortened perspective, humans may be well on the road to outsmarting themselves into an irreversible ecological crisis.

Many people are beginning to express concern over catastrophic climate change,

advocate environmental conservation in the abstract, but resist curbing their behavioral practices that degrade and destroy the life of the planet. Under troublesome life conditions people generally seek quick fixes that require no significant changes in lifestyle. Once they get wedded to rewarding lifestyles that exact a toll on the environment they devise schemes that enable them to stick with their behavioral practices without feeling bad about their adverse effects. They make cosmetic changes in their energy and resource use that make them feel like conservationists. On average, Americans consume more energy in a week than an inhabitant in India does in an entire year. Environmental conservation calls for more fundamental lifestyle changes than switching to more efficient light bulbs and doing a bit of recycling. People remain faithful to their driving habits but seek to power them with supposedly environmentally-friendly fuel that inflicts hardships on the less advantaged. [Think ethanol and catastrophically rising corn prices in Mexico.] They create marketplace systems that enable them to continue their consumptive ways but grant them forgiveness for their ecological sins through the purchase of carbon offsets for green projects. Through carbon cap and trade schemes, industries can spew greenhouse gases but buy carbon credits from more efficient companies with unused allowances rather than clean up their act. Going green through ecologically degrading behavior is an odd way of saving the planet.

As in the case of token remedies at the individual level, tinkering with environmentally and economically unsustainable systems, while aggressively promoting ever-rising consumption rates with polluting technologies, will not beget a green future. Substitutes for genuine behavior change usually accomplish too little too slowly. If we are to preserve a habitable planet it will not be by token gestures and schemes for buying one's way out of wasteful and polluting practices. Rather, it will be by major lifestyle changes with commitment to shared values linked to incentive systems that make environmentally responsible behavior normative and personally worthy. A sustainable future is not achievable while disregarding the key contributors to ecological degradation—population growth and high consumptive lifestyles.

Ecological systems are intricately interdependent. Global changes affect everyone regardless of the source of the degradation. Because of this interconnectedness, lifestyle practices are a matter of morality, not just environmental sustainability. Most current human practices work against a less populated planet whose inhabitants live sustainably in balance with natural resources. Given the growing human destruction of the Earth's environment, Paul Watson [Founder of the Sea Shepherd Society] may not have been too far off the

mark when he characterized the human species as an “arrogant primate that is out of control”. Moreover, this arrogant human is morally disengaged from his own actions. If we are to be responsible stewards of our environment for future generations, we must re-engage moral sanctions with lifestyle changes and ecological decision-making as we seek to build a sustainable world.

[From the academic treatise: “Impeding ecological sustainability through selective moral disengagement”, *International Journal of Innovation and Sustainable Development*, Vol. 2, # 1, pp 8-35. Bandura, A. (2007). Reprinted from PopulationPress.org.

SOIL AND AGRICULTURE REPORT

March, 2014

By Clara Walters

How long did it take to pass a Farm Bill? Only two years for Congress to get their act together. Now that it has been passed, what does it mean for conservation? Since 1985 the Farm Bill has represented our nation’s commitment to help farmers conserve resources through public investment in conservation programs on agricultural and forested lands. While the 2014 bill has fundamentally renewed this commitment, for the first time since 1985 it takes backward steps by reducing funding for conservation programs. The final bill cuts conservation funding by approximately \$4 billion over 10 years directly, and that number increases to \$6.1 billion under the upcoming automatic cuts to conservation under the sequestration process that was not changed or modified by the Farm Bill.

On a positive note, the 2014 Farm Bill reconnects conservation compliance to crop insurance and includes a Sodsaver program to protect our remaining grasslands. For the first time since 1996, when Congress severed the link between conservation compliance, farmers who purchase crop insurance will have to develop conservation plans when they grow crops on highly erodible land. Those who receive crop insurance subsidies will be prohibited from draining or filling wetlands unless the wetland loss is mitigated. Since 1996 these conservation requirements applied to commodity program payments, conservation program payments, and farm loan programs. However, they did not apply to what is now the largest subsidy program—federal crop insurance.

The Sodsaver provision limits crop insurance subsidies on native grasslands converted to crop production. This provision applies to six states—Montana, North

and South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, and Nebraska—where some of the native grasslands remain. Once the Farm Bill is enacted, a producer who plows native prairie for crop production in one of those six states will receive a 50 percent insurance premium subsidy reduction.

The down side of this bill is that it grandfathered producers who destroyed wetlands prior to passage of the bill. They will not be required to mitigate prior actions taken to drain or fill wetlands. Producers will be required to self-certify that they are in compliance. The bill states that if the USDA does not review a certification in a timely manner, the producer is to be held harmless even if found not to be in compliance. The problem is that the farm bill does not define ‘a timely manner’ and leaves huge loopholes by which producers can still destroy wetlands without losing their eligibility for crop insurance.

With respect to the larger issues of the impact of growing expenditure and reliance on crop insurance premium subsidies on the structure of agriculture’s impact on the environment, there was good news and bad news. The good news is that several steps were taken to improve access to crop insurance for sustainable and organic farming systems. The bill does not insure they will be implemented or be adequate for the task at hand. Combined with the absence of effective payments cap in the commodity title of the bill, this lack of subsidy reform is the bill’s greatest failing.

The bill limits enrollment in the Conservation Stewardship Program to 10 million new acres per year, a cut of 2.8 million acres, or 22 percent. This unwise cut will reduce conservation acreage by 28 million acres over the coming decade. The bill cuts funding for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), but increases the program’s limitation by 150 percent, which will result in less EQIP funding for some farmers. Meanwhile the bill maintains a separate payment of \$80,000 for producers participating in the EQIP Organic Initiative.

The bill provides \$879 million in new money for renewable energy programs and permanent funding for the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). Fortunately, the bill also prohibits USDA from using REAP to fund blender pumps at gas stations.

The Farm Bill is a huge document with many other provisions but these mentioned are the ones related to conservation.

U.S. CO2 EMISSIONS ARE ON THE RISE **[Coal-loving Members of Congress Want to Keep it That Way]**

By Ben Adler

If the steady decline in U.S. carbon emissions in recent years has lulled you into a sense of complacency, this fact should snap you to attention: Last year, U.S. CO2 emissions rose by 2 percent over 2012, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Brad Plumer provides a good explanation in *The Washington Post*. Over the past few years, the natural gas boom has made gas cheap and helped it displace coal, hence the declining emissions. But the price of gas inched back up last year, thanks to tighter supply and more demand for home heating fuel, causing some power plant operators to turn back to coal.

So how could we get back on track? If polluters had to pay the social costs of their emissions, that would make both coal and gas a lot more expensive, and renewables comparatively cheaper. But that would require an act of Congress, and the votes just aren't there.

In the meantime, President Obama has directed the EPA to exercise its authority under the Clean Air Act and place limitations on CO2 emissions from both new and existing power plants. The EPA already has such rules for other pollutants released by burning coal, such as mercury and sulfur dioxide. Why shouldn't CO2 be regulated too?

Well, Republicans and the odd coal-state Democrat in Congress have an answer for that: because they don't care about climate change, but they do care a lot about the coal industry.

Rep. Ed Whitfield (R-Ky.) and Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) are cosponsoring a bill that would strip the EPA of its ability to regulate CO2 emissions from power plants. It passed the House Energy and Power subcommittee that Whitfield chairs. In light of Republican domination in the House of Representatives, there's a good chance the Electricity Security and Affordability Act will pass the full Energy and Commerce Committee, and even the full House. But it will be dead on arrival in the Democratic Senate. It is worth looking at, nonetheless, as it shows what Republicans might do if they gained control of the Senate and White House.

For existing power plants, which are responsible for one-third of American greenhouse gas emissions, the bill would simply revoke the EPA's regulatory power. The agency would be able to set a standard for carbon emissions from

plants, but it couldn't implement the standard unless Congress passed a federal law endorsing it and specifying the date it would take effect. "The standard would be just an academic curiosity, sitting on a shelf gathering dust," says David Hawkins, the director of climate programs at the Natural Resources Defense Council. With this bill, in other words, Congress would arrogate to itself the EPA's authority to regulate emissions from existing plants.

For new plants, the bill would theoretically allow EPA to set CO2 standards, but only under conditions that environmentalists say are sure not to be met. According to the bill's fact sheet, the EPA would not be able to establish a standard for new coal plants unless the standard had already "been achieved over a one-year period by at least 6 units located at different commercial power plants in the United States." There's little incentive for six existing coal plants to dramatically clean up their emissions unless they're required to (and, as explained above, the EPA would no longer be able require it). To make things even more difficult, the law would prohibit any of these six units' emissions reductions from being obtained via a carbon-capture-and-sequestration (CCS) demonstration project that has received any government funding. "This would hamstring the EPA and tell vendors and coal producers, 'OK, go back to sleep, ignore impending climate change, and build plants the way you did 50 years ago,'" says Hawkins.

There's a double irony to this bill moving forward now. First, it's happening right as the latest CO2 emissions data shows the clear need for limits on coal plant pollution. Second, a chemical spill in Manchin's home state has just vividly demonstrated the need for more, not less, regulation of pollution. "With everything happening now in West Virginia, it's hard to imagine there is more appetite for more leeway for polluters to dirty our air and water," says Terry Maguire, Washington representative for the Sierra Club.

Public support for EPA regulation of CO2 is quite high, according to opinion polls. But the sponsors of this bill don't care about public opinion or the public interest. They care about serving the coal industry, a powerful force in states such as Kentucky and West Virginia. "It's putting interests of coal producers ahead of the climate that all Americans, and indeed all of humanity, depend on," says Hawkins. "It's an example of congressional chutzpah."

[This article reprinted from Grist.org. Ben Adler covers climate change policy for Grist.]