

VERMONT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

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Mo Udall

October, 1975, Number 44

UDALL TO ADDRESS VERMONT CONSERVATION BANQUET

Congressman Morris Udall will address invited guests at the Vermont Conservation Banquet on Saturday evening, November 1st at the Woodstock Inn.

The Conservation Banquet, held for the first time two years ago, is a fund-raising event for the Vermont Natural Resources Council. Its purpose is to focus public attention on major environmental issues facing Vermont and the nation.

Congressman Udall, who was first elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1961, serves on the Interior Committee and is Chairman of its Subcommittee on Energy and the Environment. Udall has worked hard for campaign spending reform and for reform in the way that Congress conducts its business. He is, however, best known to most people as a leading advocate of environmental sanity. His efforts to achieve a national land-use planning policy are known to many Vermonters. He has been a strong advocate of strip mining controls and he led the effort in the House that resulted in a \$20 billion non-nuclear energy research and development act.

The Banquet will benefit the VNRC EDUCATION FUND, a fund which is being established to further the Council's education and publishing projects. A goal of \$20,000 has been established and a challenge grant has been received that will match all contributions to this fund.

Invitations to the Banquet have been mailed to conservationists and friends of VNRC throughout the state. Anyone wishing to attend may receive an invitation by writing the Council at 26 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont, 05602, by calling 223-2328, or by using the coupon on page seven of this issue.

annual mtg.

VNRC ANNUAL MEETING SET FOR DECEMBER 6TH

VNRC members are invited to attend the annual meeting of the Council on Saturday, December 6th, from 9.00 a.m. until 3.00 p.m. Details of that meeting and its location will be described in the November issue of the VER.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE THIRD CENTURY COMMISSION: RETREAT FROM THE FUTURE?

The shock waves of Governor Salmon's sudden decision to abandon an idea for a Third Century Commission are still going out. For those who saw in such a Commission a commitment to the concept of long-range planning, and who urged the need for such planning, the Governor's decision was nothing less than a betrayal of the future.

Two of those who worked hard for the creation of a Third Century Commission were Tony Scoville, who was with the Agency of Environmental Conservation, and Dr. Carl Reidel, Director of the Environmental Program at the University of Vermont.

Scoville is a person of strong convictions. One of his most deeply-held convictions is the need for long-range planning, and long-range planning for Scoville, is not a decorative embellishment; it is not something that gets dropped when times are hard. Scoville looks at government: he sees it floundering from one crisis to another. He looks at political figures: and he thinks that politicians will be in trouble if they don't offer leadership.

Scoville is concerned about the increasingly large share of the nation's capital resources that are being devoted to the production and distribution of all kinds of energy. "Between the present and 1985," Scoville declares, "we will go from 22 to 35 percent of our capital dependence on the production and distribution of energy resources." Scoville is aware of the long lead times employed by large corporate groups. "They make their plans twenty years in advance." What about government? It tends to get left behind to pick up the pieces. Scoville expresses his views frankly. He does not feel that Governor Salmon has a "gut feeling" about the "limits to growth" that are upon us, and he is distressed at the failure to create a Third Century Commission.

Dr. Carl Reidel of UVM is also disappointed by the Governor's decision to abandon plans for a Third Century Commission. Dr. Reidel talks about a conversation he had with Governor Salmon several months ago. Dr. Reidel had discussed with Salmon the role of former President Harry Truman in launching the Marshall Plan. "It took a popular political leader to do this," Reidel told Salmon. Then he went on to make his appeal for long-range planning. "I told him that we needed in government a moral leader to make the issue of long-range planning a popular issue." Reidel feels that Salmon's decision to abort the Commission is another example of the Governor's capitulation to present political urgencies -- like the current budget crisis -- at the expense of the future.

"Can we afford NOT to have long-range planning?" Reidel asks. He sees us at present drifting into the future unaware of what kind of choices we can make. Some of these choices may be painful. People may have to decide such questions as: "Do you want to travel on a plowed highway to a second-class educational institution, or do you want to put on chains and drive to a first-class institution?"

THIRD CENTURY COMMISSION (Continued)

Reidel had high hopes for a Third Century effort. He saw it as a chance to get people in Vermont to raise tough questions about the future and identify a series of choices: "Maybe we will never be a self-sufficient, free-standing state," says Reidel. "But there may be choices we can make." Maybe the rate of change is so fast that we cannot predict the future. Reidel thinks we ought to acknowledge if it is true.

THIRD CENTURY

There are two sides to every story.

The man who first conceived the idea of a Third Century Commission was Arthur Ristau, the newly-named Transportation Secretary.

Ristau tells what happened.

"I proposed that a Third Century Commission be created a year ago. I suggested it at a cabinet meeting. It was part of a position paper that I worked up."

The focal point of such a Commission was to have been the observance of Vermont's own Bicentennial as an independent republic in January, 1977. Ristau proposed the establishment of five task forces to consider these issues: (1) economic development, (2) transportation, (3) agriculture, (4) energy and (5) social services.

The Commission was to have held a series of regional meetings and conferences throughout the state, and out of these exchanges was to have come a series of recommendations for future action. According to the plan, these recommendations were to have been debated during the first two days of the new legislative session in 1977. The idea was this: to encourage public discussion, to get a look at the future, to arrive at legislative proposals, and to identify problems that needed further study.

"I had to price it out," says Ristau. "I concluded that nothing of any consequence could be mounted for less than \$25,000. Where was the money going to come from? The idea was nice, but hardly necessary if it meant not plowing roads, not feeding the hungry, not helping the hapless." The conclusion was inescapable: the Commission was superfluous and the Commission would have to go.

By every account it was Ristau who occupied the key position in the battle to give the Commission life, to keep it alive, and finally to put it to sleep. "Remember," says Ristau, "this was my brainchild."

Why did Ristau change his mind? This is the question that asserts itself.

The answer is that a number of things changed his mind. As a member of the New England Regional Planning Commission Ristau had travelled alot. He had seen what similar study groups were doing in other states, states like Minnesota, Washington, Maine, Connecticut and Rhode Island. The results of these efforts were not coming off too well.

Ristau looks at "the present" as a different kind of universe from the 1960's, when, as he says, "We could look to an annual 12-14 percent increase in the amount of money that government had to spend. The only problem in the 60's was figuring out how to cut up the pie among the several claimants. Now the obverse is true."

"We live in an era of lowered expectations," explains Ristau, and then he confesses, "The constituency for planning isn't there."

"I cannot agree," Ristau goes on to say, "to the assumption that we can manage and direct our own destiny." Ristau cites the case of the Mt. Snow ski area. "Mt. Snow has filed for involuntary bankruptcy. If Mt. Snow doesn't open next winter, you will see calamitous effects in the Deerfield Valley. Ask people," challenges Ristau, "Do they want a return to the 30's or a Mt. Snow development?" Ask them and they will reply: "All things considered we are better with Mt. Snow."

In looking ahead Ristau sees continued increases in the cost of gasoline, the cost of all forms of energy. It is costs like these that will have a more pronounced effect on how people use the land than formal government planning. At the same time, the writing on the wall is clear, "The average voter is hesitant to interfere with the ebb and flow of the free enterprise system. Vermonters have accepted their future," says Ristau. "We have learned a lesson." Like the inhabitants of the Deerfield Valley, "We are a state subject to the conglomerateurs in New York, Boston and Chicago. Most Vermonters realize that self-sufficiency is not a realistic alternative."

Another high official, Environmental Secretary Martin Johnson, responded to the stillbirth of the Third Century Commission in a different way.

It was Johnson who had challenged an audience at the September 10th Governor's Conference on Natural Resources "to do something about a Third Century Commission, if they felt it was important." What exactly did Johnson mean? He explained later. "If you are satisfied, do nothing. If you care, then it's up to you to demand it. Get discussions going in your own community. Citizens can go ahead and do it."

Johnson, like Reidel and others, saw the Commission as a lively opportunity for contending with problems of the future. "Go forward in time fifty years," muses Johnson, "and figure out what people will be doing." We can be sure of only two things. "Whoever is here will be eating food and caring for one another." All of which leads Johnson to the timely reflection that we haven't found a way for farmers to make a decent living, between the price of milk and the cost of grain; and that we are stuck with a welfare system that is not designed to offer any solutions.

Johnson talks with exhilaration about what the Third Century effort might have been like. He had conceived a special role for young and older people alike. "I made a pitch to appoint young people," says Johnson smiling. "It met with horror from everybody. 'I don't know anyone under twenty they said.'" Johnson had imagined an exciting "fire-and-ice" exchange between distinguished older Vermonters like Deane Davis, Royce Pitkin, George Aiken, Phil Hoff and others, and the young people themselves. He saw an opportunity for these older people to state their views of the current problems to which younger people might respond.

"Suppose we asked every town to warn an article on the Third Century and spend an hour raising issues that must be

facéd. Ask the towns to elect a delegate to a general assembly in Montpelier, and let these delegates represent their towns." Johnson is full of ideas, but aware of the complications. "Sure there were going to be problems," confessed Johnson. "We would have to give people guidance or you would get a laundry list of complaints."

Looking back on Governor Salmon's decision to abort the Commission, Johnson spreads the blame pretty evenly. He acknowledges the difficulties in striking on the right formula for citizen participation. "I don't know how to do it," says Johnson. And Johnson seemed reluctant to advise the Governor "to just name" another commission. "At this point," Johnson explains, "the Governor feels we have not given him any solid recommendation."

If anything is to be salvaged from the Third Century Commission idea, it is David Goldberg, Executive Director of Vermont Tomorrow, who might hold the key.

Goldberg had been anticipating the formation of a Third Century Commission ever since it became a plank of the Vermont Democratic Party platform last year. He had been making plans for a possible role for Vermont Tomorrow in forming a citizens' response to the Commission's activities.

When the Governor decided to drop the Commission idea, Goldberg was ready to step into the breach. He has been in continuous correspondence with a Washington-based group known as the Citizens Involvement Network (CIN). CIN is looking for twenty communities around the nation that might qualify to be part of a study of community involvement and decision-making. CIN wants to find out how community participation can be engaged successfully.

The key part of the Vermont Tomorrow proposal to CIN is the creation in the "statewide community" of Vermont what Goldberg calls a "Committee of 100." This Committee would form the heart of a rejuvenated citizens' effort to rescue the idea of a Third Century Commission.

Goldberg is excited about the Vermont Tomorrow proposal. He stresses the importance of the Committee of 100. These are not to be the same old people who are constantly brought out to serve on state-appointed boards and committees. Instead they are to be approximately 100 individuals who have exhibited leadership capacity in their local communities. They will be people who, over the years, have earned the respect of their neighbors, people who have served on local boards, local committees, organized local clubs, who have initiated local projects and contributed to the establishment of local institutions. The key word here is "local!"

Goldberg's first response to the Governor's decision to drop the Third Century Commission was disappointment. But now, after further reflection, he says, "It might be a blessing in disguise." As Goldberg sees it: "We rely on government too much to do things, and government has become very large and powerful at the expense of individuals and communities. With a nine million dollar deficit perhaps the Governor felt hard-pressed to justify a Third Century Commission whose results might be of questionable value."

Goldberg expects word from the Citizens Involvement Network in Washington sometime in mid-October. If the proposal is accepted, there will be seed money to begin; if it is denied, a whole new approach to the Third Century will have to be considered.

CSSV TO SPONSOR ALL-DAY CONFERENCE IN PUTNEY

The Conservation Society of Southern Vermont (CSSV) is sponsoring a conference entitled: "Environmental Behavior and Social Institutions: A Discussion of the Biological Implications of Western Values." This all-day event will begin with registration between 8:30 and 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, October 25th, at Windham College in Putney, Vermont.

Richard Wilson, Director of CSSV, said that the conference was being called to focus attention on the "root causes" that underlie many of the environmental problems we are facing. Wilson went on to explain that our environmental behavior is largely influenced by our western culture, our resulting value system, and the social institutions we have created.

CSSV has assembled a program of distinguished academic figures to address the conference. These are the featured speakers: Dennis Meadows, coauthor of LIMITS TO GROWTH; E. F. Schumacher, author of SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL; Joseph Sax, author of DEFENDING THE ENVIRONMENT and Richard Falk, author of THIS ENDANGERED PLANET.

Each speaker will make a presentation during the morning and early afternoon. They will discuss our economic system, our democratic processes, and our commitment to human welfare services. They will show how these institutions affect our environmental behavior and they will explain how these institutions may complicate our need to respond intelligently to environmental problems. At 3:30 p.m. the several speakers will participate in an open panel discussion with participation from the floor.

A preregistration fee of \$10.00 will cover the cost of a vegetarian lunch. Registration at the door will cost \$12.00. Members of the public are invited to register or to seek additional information by writing the Conservation Society of Southern Vermont, Box 256, Townshed, Vermont, 05353, or by calling (802) 365-7754.

BUY A VNRC PATCH!

VNRC has its own patch, offered to members for \$2.00; a gold sun, setting behind a green mountain, on a white background with blue "VNRC" letters. It's handsome and looks like this:



VERMONT NATURAL RESOURCES
COUNCIL

D'ANN FAGO

INTERVIEW: D'Ann Calhoun Fago, Director,
Arts and Crafts Service

"Is it a budget cut or are they ending the Service?"

"This would be extermination, right."

The voice is D'Ann Fago's. The thing to be exterminated is the Arts and Crafts Service, which she directs,--- a line item on the Administration's budget cut list, a saving of \$50,000, of which \$14,000 is operating expenses.

"How do you feel about it?"

"The Arts and Crafts Service was brought into being at the end of the Great Depression," Mrs. Fago explains. "That it should be cut down on the eve of the Bicentennial is ironic and curious."

D'Ann Fago takes the work of the Arts and Crafts Service seriously. She talks about achievements: the Business Practices Seminars that are being conducted around the state to provide basic business skills to craftsmen and artists; the School Workshop/Demonstration Program that takes craftspeople into the public schools; the bi-monthly newsletter that passes on information on fairs, markets, apprentices, materials? the revolving fund, \$1500, a source of money for craftsmen who need to purchase supplies to fill orders.

Mrs. Fago talks about one extraordinarily successful effort, the Shelburne Spinners Project. People working under the auspices of the Arts and Crafts Service took a natural resource, wool in this instance, provided skills to low-income people, formed an 18-member workers' cooperative, and produced at the end of the line, a yarn with natural dyes. "It would be difficult to find a project that had been funded for so little for so much success," says Mrs. Fago about this undertaking.

The September/October, 1975 NEWSLETTER of the Arts and Crafts Service is devoted to a discussion of "alternative plans for coping with energy shock (no more cheap oil and all the ramifications) within the Vermont environment." The Service sees an important role for crafts as part of these alternative plans. It sees the enterprise of crafts as part of an effort to develop community industries based on under-used native resources, vegetable, mineral and human.

D'Ann Fago discusses the need to make a complete inventory of the goods coming into the state. Many of these goods could be made here. In the low-energy economy that is coming we shall be substituting human skills for machinery and this will give individuals a far greater sense of involvement in their work.

Mrs. Fago reflects on the stereotypes that many people associate with crafts: leisured people, spare-time pursuits, unnecessary products that few people can afford. She feels these stereotypes are hardly true.

She looks at the current enthusiasm for bringing in industry from out-of-state that is supposed to generate jobs and money. She wonders at our insistence on placing "a dollar value" on everything, as if money was a faithful measure, as if money could be a substitute for the "network of dependencies" that people used to have with each other. Isn't there a value in cultivating self-reliant skills, a value in well-made things, (quilts, bread, cloth), a value in meaningful human relationships? Can you assign a cash value to these affirmative social goals? What can we raise here? What can we make here? These are questions we should be asking now. "If the answer to the dilemma is more of what produced the dilemma, then there is no answer." We could industrialize Vermont and then it would no longer be Vermont.

Last March the Arts and Crafts Service sponsored an exhibit at the State House in Montpelier and put out a flyer explaining the work of craftspeople.

The flyer carries this heading: "Handcrafts -- The New Entrepreneurship -- New Problems - New Solutions." Then it goes on to say: "In the face of rising unemployment and increased production costs, there is a strong movement towards a new spirit of entrepreneurship. This movement is based on greater development and use made of manual skills and native resources, within Vermont, in creating functional and well-made products. Though some of these enterprises employ several people, in every case, the owner is directly involved with each phase of producing and marketing his/her product."

Some of the craft enterprises are listed: commercial sheep raisers and maple sugar producers; production of highly crafted wooden boats; production leatherwork; custom design and printing; reproduction Shaker chairs; touring bicycles; production handweaving; woodburning stoves; quality reproduction of early musical instruments i.e. harpsichords.

"The Arts and Crafts Service was brought into being at the end of the Great Depression; that it should be cut down on the eve of the Bicentennial is ironic and curious."

COUNCIL NEEDS A CAMERA

VNRC needs a single lens reflex 35 mm camera. Anyone who might be able to make such a gift to the Council should call or write Seward Weber at the VNRC office.

ROGER MILLER

INTERVIEW: Roger N. Miller, President,
Windsor Minerals, Inc.

Roger Miller was one of four main speakers who addressed the September 10th Governor's Conference on Natural Resources. Miller is President of Windsor Minerals and runs a talc mining and processing operation for Johnson and Johnson, Inc. in Central Vermont.

Miller pulled no punches in his talk to a crowd of 230 people at the Tavern Motor Inn in Montpelier. He said that we should double our industrial base in Vermont in the next ten years. He is bullish on industry, he is bullish on expansion, and he is bullish on the Vermont working-force.

Roger Miller is no industrial apologist. "For too long," he insists, "those who have had access to the media have struck fear into the minds of Vermonters about steel mills and oil refineries." Now it is time, he believes, to set the record straight, and to articulate a different point of view.

Miller feels that no-one is speaking up for the person who is out of work. In his business, he meets a lot of these people. "If you were a politician, whom would you listen to?" he asks. "The political process has got to recognize who their constituency is."

According to Miller, there are some towns in the state that have drafted their zoning by-laws with the clear intention of fencing out any kind of industry, denying the opportunity for any kind of industrial development. By doing this, Miller says, these towns are knowingly saying to their young people (at least to kids who want to work in industry), "Get out of town." This attitude disgusts him.

It isn't as if Vermont was heavily industrialized, because it isn't. Miller has a sheaf of statistics to back him up. What these statistics reveal is that Vermont is a state of predominantly small industrial operations. The September, 1975 report of the Department of Employment Security points this out. It indicates that more than half of Vermont's 11,641 employers have no more than three employees. Another 4,000 operations have from 4 to 19 workers and only 150 businesses, the balance, employ 100 or more persons. Vermont could hardly be called a large-scale industrial establishment.

"How are people going to find work in Vermont where unemployment is always a problem, but a particularly acute problem today?"

Miller has a few ideas. These ideas begin with the resources that are available: human, natural and financial.

He looks out at his own operation. It is owned by an out-of-state company, but Miller warns against the inclination to be overcome by the negative features of outside ownership. There are distinct advantages and these tend to get neglected. Miller discusses the 80 jobs that were created by Windsor Minerals; he discusses the money that has been invested; he discusses the secondary impact of an industrial operation, the "spin-off" work it stimulates in the rest of the economy. He points out that 80 percent of the inbound and outbound traffic on the Green Mountain Railway is generated by shipments from Windsor Minerals.

Out of the 80 people employed by Windsor Minerals only twelve are people from out-of-state. Critics of industrial development are constantly asking about industrial enterprises: "How many people will this mill or plant employ, and how many of these will be local people?" Similar questions are being asked about the Parsons and Whittemore pulp mill that is being proposed along the Connecticut River. The answer at Parsons and Whittemore is that there would be 500 workers at the mill, of which 150 would be from out-of-state. Miller favors the mill. He goes on to explain the total impact of the proposed operation. Beyond employment opportunities at the mill itself, there would be hundreds of people working in the forests of Vermont and New Hampshire, and there would be hundreds of other people, trucking the pulp wood.

Miller is keen about developing industries based on Vermont's natural resources. He is keen about Vermont working-people. He calls them "stayers." He sees the Vermonter as a person with deep roots. Let's face it, not all Vermonters are going to qualify for work in precision industries, even though there are workers, like those in Springfield, who have developed impressive specialized skills as machinists and tool-makers. "I have worked all over the country," says Miller, "and I have never seen people I would rather have work with me. You hire someone and they will stick with you." They don't get up and quit and that's important to industry.

One of the aspects of large-scale industry that excites him is the pool of managerial talent that large-scale industry develops, what Miller calls, "fantastic managers." These are people who are willing to risk money to create jobs, who are flexible enough to change their approaches with changing conditions, and who have behind them the "financial clout" to develop resources intelligently.

There are problems ahead. Energy is one of them. Miller favors nuclear power in the short term. He thinks the decision to give the Legislature the authority to pass on nuclear siting and nuclear development was a mistake. He believes the interstate system should be recognized as the new transportation life-line in this state. His costs in drying ore have tripled with the rising cost of oil. He is interested in finding some method of heat transfer that will work with something other than oil; perhaps coal.

Vermont is a poor state; people are heavily taxed; we are supporting extensive government services. Manufacturing industries are paying a large share of the costs of government expense, almost twice as much as tourism and the service industries. Miller is convinced that not only can we not get along without industry, but that we need more of it.

BRISTOL CLIFFS: PRIVATE OWNERSHIP VERSUS "WILDERNESS"

For the past several months there has been a controversy over the Bristol Cliffs Wilderness Area along the western slopes of the Green Mountains. This controversy has involved the Forest Service, local landowners, the entire Vermont Congressional delegation and several conservation groups, including the VNRC.

The source of the controversy is the Eastern Wilderness Act, hailed at its passage last year as a tribute to retiring Senator George Aiken, but since then a cause of local consternation and debate. The Act established nineteen eastern wilderness areas, including two in Vermont: Lye Brook (14,300 acres) and Bristol Cliffs (7,100 acres).

Eastern wilderness areas are different from their western counterparts in two respects: first, they are smaller; and second, they contain a substantial amount of privately-held land. In the case of Bristol Cliffs, approximately 38% of the acreage is private "in-holdings," including nine permanent residences and several vacation homes and camps.

The cause of friction in the Bristol Cliffs dispute has revolved around the resistance of some landowners, first to the idea of losing their land to a wilderness area, and second, to the notion of governmental regulation and control.

These are several provisions of the Act that protect the rights of landowners.

(1) Owners may offer their land for sale at fair market value. (Twenty-one property owners with land amounting to 600 acres, over 20% of the in-holdings, have already done so.)

(2) Even after a piece of land is purchased by the federal government, owners may elect to continue living on and using the land for 25 years or until the owner or spouse dies. Owners may also apply for federal relocation assistance to find comparable housing elsewhere.

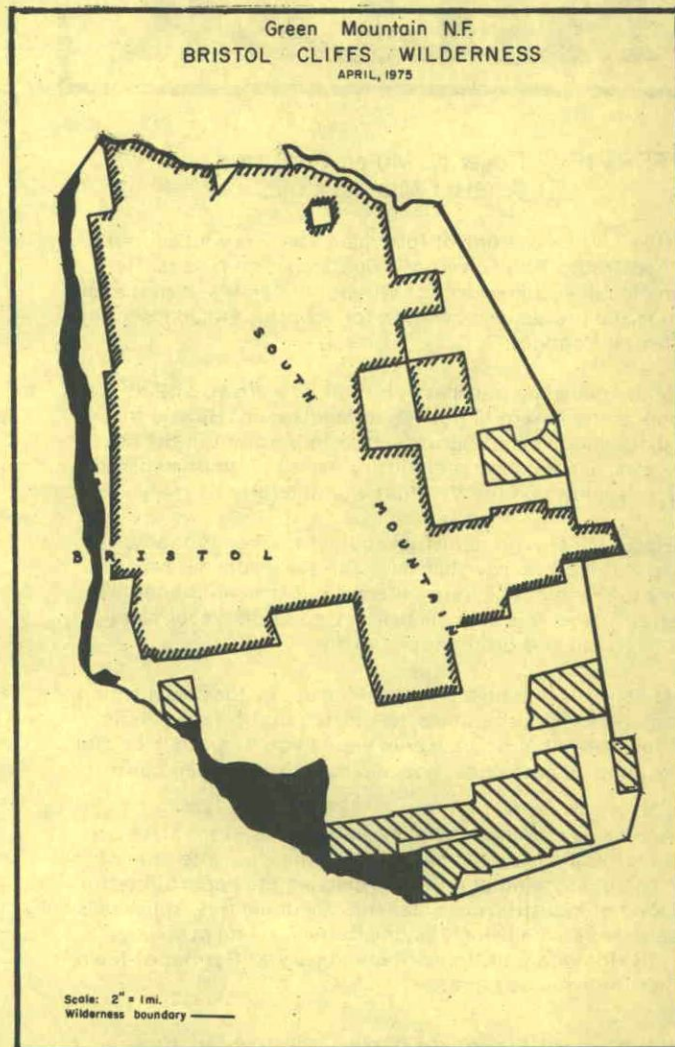
(3) Landowners are not forced to sell to the government. They may continue to use their land as they did before January, 1975 providing that use does not conflict with wilderness goals.

The only clearly-outlawed use is commercial timber cutting. Other allowable uses may be more clearly outlined when the Forest Service issues regulations on in-holding use later this year.





One of the principal reasons behind the controversy is the uncertainty surrounding the question of what uses actually will be allowed. Can a landowner in a wilderness area add a garage to his house, extend his garden 20 feet, fence his meadow, or cut a supply of firewood? The answers to these questions are not altogether clear at this time.

At a hearing in Bristol last August, landowners in the affected area expressed their views. Senators Leahy and Stafford responded by introducing amending legislation (S-2308) which would exclude ALL private in-holdings from the Wilderness Area. This legislation provides for a re-drawing of the map of

map



key

-  Re-defined wilderness area IF S-2308 is adopted (all federally-owned land).
-  Other federally-owned land.
-  Privately-owned land which would be excluded under proposal of wilderness groups.
-  Other privately-owned land.

BRISTOL CLIFFS (continued from page 6)

the Area to include only the backwoods region (see key to map). Hearings on the Stafford-Leahy bill were held in Bristol, on September 28th and 29th.

Wilderness groups have expressed concern about the bill because they fear it may set a precedent for other wilderness areas. These wilderness groups agree that permanent residents should never have been included as part of the Area in the first place and they are proposing an adjustment to the western and southwestern boundaries (see key to map). These changes would exclude all of the permanent homes and all but two of the vacation homes and camps. The rest of the Wilderness Area would be left intact.

In explaining their position the wilderness groups point out that the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation places a high priority on the purchase of in-holdings in wilderness areas. If the wilderness status were lost, sufficient funds would not be available for such purchases.

The Vermont Natural Resources Council has found that despite the obvious differences that exist between landowners and the wilderness groups, there is a good deal of common ground. VNRC has suggested that a compromise solution could be worked out that would satisfy the interests and needs of all affected parties. VNRC feels, however, that time is needed to find the proper compromise. Senator Leahy who is concerned that Bristol landowners did not have a fair hearing when the Wilderness bill was passed is pushing for immediate revision of the boundaries.

LATE WORD: Word has been received as this Report goes to press of Senate approval by a voice vote of the Stafford-Leahy bill (S-2308). VNRC members may still comment on this issue by writing Senator Herman Talmadge, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, before October 26th. Even though action has occurred in the Senate, statements placed in the record now will be helpful when the bill reaches the House.

Letters

To the Editor:

In August, 1975 the Vermont Public Interest Research Group published a strong indictment of the state's air pollution section entitled, UP IN SMOKE, THE MYTH OF CLEAN AIR IN VERMONT. I felt, and still feel, that the report draws an accurate description of 'foot-dragging' and incompetence by state officials in the face of air pollution violations, health hazards, and citizen complaints. The report documents in detail the failure of Vermont's air quality monitoring program and recommends positive improvements.

I was surprised to read in the September VER that Hu Slack of the Vermont Lung Association feels the report unfairly ignores past accomplishments of the section and unduly criticizes the air pollution director. In making these criticisms, I think Mr. Slack misses the point of the report.

The point of the report was not to historically eulogize past achievements of the air pollution section; nor was the point to give praise and recognition to the air pollution director who happens to be a friendly and disarming bureaucrat. The point of the report was to communicate to people that there are serious sulphur dioxide problems and particulate problems in Rutland, that there is a carbon monoxide problem in Burlington, and that there are probably other pollution problems in Vermont cities that go unnoticed because the monitoring program is in a continual state of disrepair. The report was strongly worded and factually based. It laid out concrete steps to attack the problem of air pollution by getting industries to burn low sulphur fuel in Rutland, by planning to reduce automobile traffic in Burlington, by moving to enforce rather than ignore air

Banquet reservations can be accepted only on a first come, paid basis. Tickets will be mailed upon receipt of your reservation. Please do not delay as space is limited.

- () I/We are pleased to accept your invitation to attend the VERMONT CONSERVATION BANQUET. Please send us tickets for the Banquet. Tickets are \$25.00 per person.
- () I/We also are pleased to make an additional tax-deductible contribution or pledge of \$..... to the VNRC Education Fund.
- () I/We are unable to accept your invitation, but are pleased to make a tax-deductible contribution or pledge of \$to the VNRC Education Fund.

NAME:.....

ADDRESS:.....ZIP.....

Vermont Natural Resources Council, 26 State Street, Montpelier, Vt., 05602 Tel: (802) 223-2328

clip.....

LETTERS

quality standards, and by seeking to improve the monitoring program. It was a call for action in response to inability and indifference at the state level.

I read in the newspaper (September 30, BOSTON GLOBE) that an epidemiology team in California found that deaths from chronic lung disease dropped by 33 percent in San Francisco County during the energy crisis when less automobiles were driven. I think of the fact that Vermont leads the nation in deaths due to respiratory diseases, and that Rutland County has one of the highest cancer mortality rates in the country. I remember some of the letters from citizens in Rutland who said the smoke was so bad it smelled like "poison gas." And I wonder why a critical, factual report such as VPIRG's gets put off with mature-sounding statements about "complexity" and "difficulty" and that old shibboleth, "We need more study...." Of course the solutions are difficult and complicated but that is no excuse for inaction.

Air pollution is an environmental problem which kills people. The authors of the VPIRG report felt an urgency that something be done to protect the health of people. To allege that our interest in air pollution was primarily "aesthetic" is unfortunate. Hopefully the State Air Pollution Section along with the Vermont Lung Association can begin to act.

I would urge readers of the VER who are interested in air pollution to obtain a copy of the VPIRG report from their local library or by writing VPIRG at 26 State Street, Montpelier.

Sincerely,
Peter Franchot
East Dover, VT 05341

Sincerely,
H. Ward Bedford
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VERMONT NATURAL RESOURCES COUNCIL
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

To the Editor:

Your review of the Springfield proposal to go to municipal power was very fair. I would suggest that one sentence, however, is overly simplistic. It is not entirely accurate to say "Municipal power companies offer cheaper rates because they don't have to pay stockholders." That statement conveys the impression that one class of investor should be paid for the use of his money while another should not. By extension, that concept would mean that only bond holders are entitled to return on invested money.

Municipal companies can borrow money on a tax exempt basis whereas private companies must pay income tax on net earnings. Municipals serve a high density of customers which tends to reduce their investment and maintenance costs. Most municipals issue full faith and credit bonds which means that all property in the municipality is pledged as security and any deficits which may occur must be made up from property taxes or other revenue sources.

The August report of Beck Associates to the Springfield Selectmen estimates potential savings from municipal ownership over continuation with CVPS to be 15%. It just happens that this is exactly the percentage of increase recently granted CVPS by the PSB. The report contains some assumptions which may or may not prove accurate. For example, the cost of money is figured at 7.75% which appears modest in the light of present market conditions. The estimate of acquiring CVPS property will surely entail litigation. Since Springfield intends to issue revenue bonds rather than full faith and credit bonds, the bond indenture will certainly require another opinion as to the accuracy of the Beck Associates findings. This will be quite expensive. The Town Manager has indicated to me that there remains considerable work to be done before the soundness of the undertaking is established.