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## **AWW Newsletter      December, 2002**

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.  
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” Margaret Mead*

You will see by the following article by Sloan Shoemaker, AWW’s conservation director, that this past election leaves the environment wide open for every attack possible. There will be a concentrated effort to roll back environmental regulations, gut the Clean Air Act, weaken or eliminate the Endangered Species Act and open up Wilderness. It will be harder and harder for the public to protest these actions. All of which means the Workshop and every other environmental organization will be working overtime. Grassroots efforts do pay off. Just reread Margaret Mead’s quote at the top of this newsletter. Stay involved and help us fight these battles!

### **ELECTION BLUES**

The Aspen Wilderness Workshop, as well as conservationists across the nation, are going to have our work cut out for us in the coming years. As a consequence of the election, industry and the anti-environment crowd is going to be rolling out their wish list of ways to eviscerate environmental laws and regulations. They’ll also be jumping on this opportunity to fast track proposals and projects that would otherwise be non-starters.

It has already started. Rep. Hansen of Utah has submitted a bill that would exempt all military lands, private property, and plant life from the Endangered Species Act. The Bush Administration is pushing a rewrite of the regulations governing National Forest Management plans, a rewrite that would cut out citizen involvement and element requirements to protect biological diversity. This is just a representative sample ... be prepared for a whole litany in the next session of Congress.

Closer to home, Congressman McInnis has been busily pushing his agenda on a number of fronts: fire logging, water logging, and wilderness-lite. He has been touting logging as a two-for-one solution to the wildfire problem and the recent drought. By his reckoning, if we log 40% of each our watersheds, we’ll get more run-off as well as reduce fuels that feed wildfires. If only it were that simple. While there is some data to suggest removing 40% of the trees in a watershed will increase its water yield, this increase: is only detectable just below the clearcuts and is undetectable further down stream; only occurs in the spring and in big snow years when water is not needed; would require the construction of a vast new system of storage dams to capture and store the excess water produced in wet years. Since trees grow back, the clearcuts would have to be kept as permanent openings or more clearcuts would be needed as old ones grew in. Furthermore, the subalpine forests that collect snow and would be clearcut to produce more water are the wettest and the most fire resistant forests. It’s the lower, drier forests immediately adjacent to where people live that need to be targeted for fuel reductions and thinning if people’s homes and property are to be protected. A case in point is the Coal Seam Fire that threatened Glenwood Springs this summer. It was carried by fuels in the gambel oak/shrubland community, not a place associated with snow accumulation.

Recently, the local press has been full of stories about Congressman McInnis’ legislation to create a Red Table Mountain Wilderness Area. While we are always thrilled to see our representatives take up

wilderness legislation, this one may do more harm than good. On the last day of the lame duck session, Congressman McInnis submitted legislation proposing a Red Table Mountain Wilderness Area that, while sounding good, appears to be a stealth strategy to create a sham wilderness that will set precedent for further dilution of the Wilderness Act. His McWilderness would be fragmented by 38 miles of motorized routes. Inexplicably, some of these routes were proposed for closure in the Congressman's own forest plan alternative. The legislation would allow unrestricted National Guard maneuvers over and upon the 'wilderness.' Lastly, it would require the Forest Service to forfeit its federal court granted right to keep adequate amounts of water in streams. We don't think of a motorized, militarized, dried-up landscape as wilderness and are not willing to compromise the integrity of the National Wilderness Preservation System simply to appear cooperative.

## **THE KILLINGS**

Meant as an insult: tree hugger. So, the one insulting really doesn't know what's going on. They just happen to be insulting the very main item that keeps them alive. The very thing that is defenseless from the wrath of humans. Is defenseless to the manacles enchaining the trees. They can't move from the saws of your greed. They have no defined voice to scream out in pain from your murder. And the ones left standing just wait for the onset of tomorrow. Shaking down to the very tips of their roots; knowing what is going to be.

Do you even thank the trees used as a symbol of winter holidays, and life? Some left to die for no one wanted them. Do you even think about the warmth from the night that is produced from chopped up trees; both soft and hard. Do you ever thank the roof above your head? Or do you only think about it when it's about to be burned to the ground from a wildfire? Of course only thinking of your house, not the innocent trees that burn in the process of destruction usually caused from humans.

What happened to respect your elders? Why doesn't it apply to trees? Respect the things that keep you alive. Respect the trees you kill for warmth. Respect them for the pain and suffering they endure from your greed and money lust. Respect the trees for what they are. Amanda Ellis (12 years old)

## **HOLIDAY PARTY**

The Aspen Wilderness Workshop's **holiday party and annual meeting** is always a fun event, and we hope that all our members along with spouses, relatives, friends or visitors will attend on **Tuesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>** at the Little Nell Hotel. There will be a cash bar at 6:00 p.m. and dinner at 7:00 p.m. with an entrée choice of chicken or vegetarian. The usual exciting door prizes will be given during dessert. If you haven't already replied, call 927-4483 or send a check for \$35.00 per person and your entrée choice to: Dottie Fox, Box 545, Snowmass, CO 81654. We will need to know how many by December 5<sup>th</sup>. We'll look forward to seeing you!

## **AWW RETREAT**

A day-long retreat was held November 16<sup>th</sup> for all board members of the Workshop. It was held at Tim McFlynn's barn in Old Snowmass and was facilitated by Debbi Falender, Aspen Dispute Resolution. We covered everything including a 3-5 year plan, conservation projects for 2003, staff needs, the budget, our new website, fundraising, marketing, membership, and more. It was a long and productive day. An incredible Mexican potluck was definitely welcome at lunchtime, and at the end of the retreat we celebrated with margarites. How about joining our board?

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Our drive is continuing to update our membership records. On the label of the envelope in which you received this newsletter is the expiration date of your membership. If your membership is not current, we request that you send a check for \$30 (basic membership dues; most members send \$50, \$100 or more to help support our programs) to AWW, Box 9025, Aspen, CO 81612. Please make sure your current address and phone number are included. If you wish to be dropped from our mailings, or have a question about your membership, please contact Warren Ohlrich at 927-0796.