

# Freedom Matters

A Weekly Newsletter

Dane County, Wisconsin

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We are a free people in a republic, under a constitution which limits the powers of government to those necessary to secure the unalienable rights of each person to their life, liberty and property. Yet, when a legislature is in session, no one's life, liberty or property is safe. It's the curse of a democracy. That's why we have a republic instead. *Freedom Matters* dedicates itself to the fight to restore our republic. Most of the press and courts fail to do so. They've forgotten that freedom matters.

**We do from time to time try to sample some of the vast internet resources available to students of responsible public policy. (Of course our idea of "responsible" varies considerably from the currently advertised version) We think any organization interested in influencing public policy should at least be honest about it...**

## Guest Writer

**Bill Speers**

*(William Speers is a retired college professor who lives in Klamath Falls)*

*In recent weeks, I have been castigat-ed in letters to the editor for character-izing "environmentalist" organizations, and "environmentalists" in general, as scam-artist phonies. Quite by coinci-dence, I have also recently received almost-identical sollicitation letters from the Sierra Club and the Natural Resources Defense Council, attempting to persuade me to send them money.*

*The quality of the persuasive content is interesting: scare words, lofty abstractions, unsubstantiated conclu-sions, distortions and outright lies.*

## AN URGENT PLEA

Here are some examples from the Sierra Club letter, signed by its president, Carl Pope:

The letter opens with an urgent plea for the reader to send money to "save" the 19-million-acre Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from development for its oil and gas resources. "Renowned for its natural beauty, ANWR is home to polar bears, wolves, musk oxen, caribou, numerous bird species and a host of other animals."

Developing the refuge's energy resources would, the letter says "... destroy a national treasure." Anyway, according to the letter, the refuge could only furnish "... about six months' supply of oil."

Some sections of the refuge might be scenic, and are home to various animals, although not polar bears, which are hunters of the sea ice. However, probably not one lower-48 resident in a million will ever go to the refuge to enjoy its "scenic beauty."

**More to the point, the 2,000-acre patch 0.01 percent (one one-hundredth of one percent) of its total area of the refuge's north shore proposed for energy development has been aptly described as *hell frozen over for 10 months a year, and an uninhabitable, insect-ridden muskeg* the other two months.**

By the use of modern extraction techniques during the frozen months, energy could be brought out of this tiny patch without in the least disturbing either-the ani-mals or the mythical tourists. **Contrary to Sierra Club's scare implication, development would not cover the refuge with a swamp of spilled oil.** And, contrary to what Sierra Club would have us believe, cred-ible estimates indicate that its oil and gas could meet more than 10 percent of the nation's energy needs.

The letter goes on to list some other "urgent environ-mental goals" that can only be attained if I give money to Sierra Club:

"Stop war profiteers who seek to use the current international crisis as an excuse to plunder our nation's environment for their own financial benefit." **The letter neglects to inform us who these "war profiteers" are, or what parts of "the environment" they are "plundering," or how they will "benefit financially." But it sounds pretty scary and "greedy."**

## Do it how?

**"Fight urban sprawl."** It doesn't say how they plan to fight it. Maybe the Sierra Club will assume the power to tell people where they can, and can't, live.

"End commercial logging in our national forests which allows timber interests to clear-cut our public lands at the cost of millions of dollars each year to Amer-ican taxpayers." Ahhhh, yes, the premier goal of Big Environmentalism.

As many of us know but Sierra Club hopes we don't "timber interests" pay the federal government for the timber they harvest on public land. This is one of the government's few sources of revenue that doesn't involve confiscating money from the people: taxation. "Timber interests" process trees into useful products that people need and are willing to pay for. And "timber interests" plant more trees than they harvest.

Readers' Bulletin Board. e-mail us your comments. Include your name, for publication by *Freedom Matters*

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We notice the *snarl-term* "clear-cut" here; it **implies that clear-cutting is (a) the only method of logging, and (b) deliberate, vandalistic destruction of forests.**

**Actually, clear-cutting is the preferred method of managing shade-intolerant tree species such as Douglas fir, whose seedlings won't grow in the shade of more mature trees.** Selective cutting can be used to manage shade-tolerant species such as Ponderosa pine, whose seedlings will grow in mixed-age stands. But of course *Sierra Club doesn't want forests to be managed at all: they want forests to be locked up to prevent any sort of management.*

Moving on to financial concerns, the letter assures the reader that "81.7 cents of every dollar you send goes to the implementation of conservation programs."

A further breakdown indicates that 11.9 percent goes to "public education," and 32.3 percent goes to "influencing public policy."

The letter doesn't define any of these lofty-sounding terms. But ***what Sierra Club calls "public education," I call broadcasting scare propaganda.***

***What it calls "influencing public policy," I call hiring lobbyists to pressure (and lie to) legislators, and paying ambulance-chasing shysters to file harassment lawsuits against legitimate businesses and interests.***

***And what it calls "conservation programs," I might call spending money on fund-raising and administrative overhead salaries and benefits for the Club's leadership.***

## WILDLIFE PROJECTS?

The letter didn't mention any expenditures for activities such as **habitat improvement for wildlife, or fire prevention on public lands.**

*Ronald Bailey, former science editor of Forbes magazine, wrote in the journal Nature, "Global emergencies and worldwide crises keep hundreds of millions of dollars in donations flowing into the coffers of environmental organizations. ... That pays for a lot of trips to international environmental conferences, furnishes some nice headquarters, and buys a lot of influence on Capitol Hill." I might add that it provides for some pretty nice salaries and perks, too.*

The Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council, and the other players in Big Green are in the business of manufacturing "environmental crises" as a pretext for obtaining money from well-meaning but ignorant people. Their tools are scare tactics, hysteria, name-calling, bandwagon techniques, empty abstractions, distortions, half-truths, and outright lies and the ignorant emotionalism of a propagandized, badly educated public.

**They claim that donors' contributions will be used to "save the environment."** (*Who could be opposed to that?*) Their real purpose in obtaining money

is to provide a small group of anti-capitalist, anti-progress radicals with illegitimate power over America's economic activity, and ultimately over other people's lives and, not incidentally, to benefit themselves financially. *That's how they make their living*

**I don't know what you call people who form organizations for the purpose of using propaganda techniques to obtain money for their own personal benefit and aggrandizement. I call them scam-artist phonies.**

\* \* \* \* \*

## Freedom Matters Comments

by Bob Bowman

Professor Speers engages in hyperbole himself, yet essentially speaks the truth. We too have observed that Big Green, i.e., fat-cat environmental NGOs (non-governmental organizations), use scam propaganda to influence voters. That's right, folks. Scam propaganda.

Consider the local Sierra Club mantra: "Sprawl costs us all." Their literature claims that the single family rural home does not pay enough in taxes to cover the services it requires from government.

If that is true, then the more rural homes, the higher the tax rate will have to be, to pay for the government services to them. The tax data for Dane County towns show just the opposite. Those towns with the highest number of rural homes have low tax rates.

The above Sierra Club claim is also nonsense on rational grounds. Property tax rates are not determined by the level of government services provided. Instead, they are based on assessments of market value for highest and best use. In the case of agricultural use of the land, the assessment is on the basis of "use value" which estimates the agricultural income the land will produce. Since the school tax is a large part of the property tax bill, and since the school tax is part of the property tax on businesses, therefore, the school tax on residences is compelled to be less than the cost of educating the students from those residences.

Or, does the Sierra Club propose that we excuse businesses from paying the school tax? Does the Sierra Club propose that the property tax should be based on the level of government services, rather than on market value assessment?

You see, one does not have to scratch Big Green propaganda much, to expose the scam in it. Their mantra that rural homes do not pay enough taxes to justify their existence is so clearly false, by both data and logic, that it bursts the bubble of their "sprawl costs us all" propaganda.

The Sierra Club support of mass transit rail for Madison or Dane County also ignores the hard facts. It is politically motivated, pure and simple. Our population is so little densified that rail will fail, and at a terrible environmental cost to us. More on that later.