



OTZINACHSON

Keep Private Interests Out of Public Park Land

By Ed Lawrence

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QUOTE

"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail"
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

There always seems to be someone eager to spin public straw into private gold. The magic formula usually includes a pinch of tax incentives or other forms of monetary fairy dust and usually ignores what would be lost in the bargain. The current scheme is no exception. Dreamed up by the Cambria County Industrial Development Corporation (CCIDC), the plan is to biggy up a state park facility into a privately run commercial conference center and resort complex, complete with hotel, luxury cabins and 18-hole golf course. The 'footprint'

for the project area steps on a stream classified by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission as a wild brook trout stream and buries an Exceptional Value wetlands. This so called 'public-private partnership,' envisioned as sprawling over 100 acres of private and 70 acres of park land is nothing if not industrial development gone awry in the woods of Pennsylvania. As Robert Wardrop, of the Cambria County Federation of Sportsmen's Club, a group opposing the proposal, said, "If wildlife isn't safe from the effects of development in our state parks, it isn't safe anywhere."

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Our Food Chain: What Are We Eating?

By Sam Pearson

TI went into a local butcher and asked whether they had any grass-fed beef. The question was greeted with complete bemusement. Why would I want to know? Well, for the same reason I want to know the ingredients of any food I eat. We are what we eat. And that in turn depends on what what we eat eats.

I suppose I became more aware of this issue when I was pregnant with my son. Having what you eat turn into another person rather than just fingernails or hair you will trim away soon has a tendency to make you more conscious of such things. I had also read Sandra Steingraber's *Having Faith: An Ecologist's Journey to Motherhood* which had emphasized the creation

of an internal habitat for one and the fact that the highest creature on our food chain is a nursing infant. As Rachel Carson had pointed out long before, toxins accumulate the higher you go in that food chain. I started to wonder what was in the fatty deposits I would shortly be converting to milk to feed my child... lots of less than desirable things I'd ingested over the years and carefully hoarded in my bodily tissues. I've got dioxins and mercury in there – not that I'm specially burdened in this, rather these are the hallmarks of life in a polluted age. There are also hormones – mine and other creature's flowing through me as well as other more elusive but terrifying objects like the prions associated with mad cow dis-

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Message from the Chair: Defeating Bush

Winter is a wonderful season that lasts just long enough to make us really appreciate the bird song of spring and the budding of Pennsylvania. If only it were the skunk cabbage alone that smelled, but no, something is rotten in the halls of government. Our state will be a key battleground in the November election, and we must all do what we can to make sure that the travesty of W is one terminated. Speak out against the administration's misdeeds packaged as prefab patriotism and poisonous piety. Write to your local papers. We can ill afford to hold our noses for four more years.

Ed Lawrence, Chair

OTZINACHSON

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The Sock Hop Needs You!

Originally conceived as a fundraising event for a variety of local non-profit groups, the Annual Sock Hop has been sponsored by the Otzinachson Group for well over a decade. Featuring local bands and music to dance by, the Sock Hop has endured and proven to be an effective fundraising event—as well as a fun time for everyone to look forward to.

This year we would like to schedule a Sock Hop sometime during the fall months of September through November. We need someone to coordinate this event. It's a fairly easy project for a volunteer. Preserving a room at the Lewisburg Club and contacting the musicians covers the basics. Anyone interested, please contact Dave Hafer at 570.523.3107 or write to PO Box 65, Lewisburg, PA 17857.

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Why More Regulations Doesn't Solve the Problem of Corporate Farming

By Thomas A. Linzey, Esq.

The recent hullabaloo - over yet another attempt by several State Senators to strip away local control over factory farms - has pushed corporate factory farming back into the limelight. For many of Pennsylvania's rural communities, it never left.

It is now widely recognized by farm organizations, scientists, land grant colleges, rural residents, local governments, and environmental groups, that corporate factory farms inflict a wide variety of damage in the rural communities in which they site. Those damages range from putting family farmers out of work through the production of assembly line meat and closing livestock auctions; the environmental assaults caused by liquid manure lagoons, water pollution, and noxious odors; the health damage caused by the production of antibiotic-resistant bacteria and viruses; and the treatment of live animals as simply another cog in the food production system. Corporate factory farms also cause another type of damage. When factory farms sprout, so does the power of agribusiness corporations. As their power grows, the rights of communities to make decisions locally are smothered.

Relying on regulatory agencies - focused on helping factory farms cause a little less environmental damage - when corporate factory farms are wreaking an array of fundamental harms to life, community, stability, and democracy, doesn't do anything but choreograph the charade. Isn't it time to stop validating the factory farm model? After all, that's exactly what nine Midwestern states have done - banning agribusiness corporations from owning or controlling farms in their states. Right here in Pennsylvania, local governments in five Counties have followed their lead by prohibiting those corporations from invading rural Pennsylvania.

Better regulating factory farms doesn't solve any problems for family farmers. Indeed, complex regulations applied to family farmers actually accelerates the losses of those independent farmers who are already losing their shirts in a corporate dominated marketplace.

Comfortably protected by deep pockets and tax write-offs, agribusiness corporations then reap a marketplace devoid of their competitors. Increased regulatory costs force farmers to sign contracts with corporations to raise livestock, because those costs help to sink the farmers'

ability to operate independently. Under those contracts, the corporation owns the animals, the family farmer is held responsible for any environmental damage, and the corporation reserves the right to terminate the contract at its discretion. Regulating factory farms certainly doesn't solve consumer problems. More regulation that drives - smaller, family farm competitors out of business inevitably creates a monopoly for a handful of multinational corporations. That, in turn, enables the price of meat in the grocery store to be fixed by a select few. Regulating factory farms actually creates more problems for residents of rural Pennsylvania. Rural property values still plummet, noxious odors still waft, and the threat of water pollution continues to loom. Better regulating factory farms also doesn't solve problems for family farmers attempting to raise organic hogs, chicken, and beef. Better regulatory frameworks falsely assure local governments and economic development agencies that corporate factory farms are acceptable ways to produce livestock. So, who do regulations serve? In the end, they only serve the regulatory agency - which grabs more authority and a larger enforcement budget - and the corporations themselves - which succeed in getting the regulatory agency to "legalize" factory farms and shield them from local control. After all, when agencies regulate corporations, they use the law to force corporations into unwilling communities. When the DEP issues a permit to a strip-mining corporation, the agency legalizes that destructive mining. When the agency issues a permit to an agribusiness corporation, it legalizes factory farming. More often than not, agency regulation is about the preemption of local, community control. It's not called permitting for nothing. Agencies thus serve as a shield - stopping communities from controlling corporations, while merely adjusting the amount of legal harm inflicted upon our communities. It's time to see the regulatory system for what it is - a tremendous waste of time and energy that diverts us from the real work that must be done: governing our communities without corporate interference. Township communities institutionalizing their values through making local law was what started this hullabaloo in the first place. But isn't that what America is supposed to be about? It's time to drive corporations out of our legislature and away from governing our communities.

It's time for our elected representatives to support legisla-

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Corporate Farming (continued)

tion that explicitly recognizes the authority of local governments to control corporate farming. Otherwise, the dream of a communities run by people - not corporations - will continue to be an illusion.

Linzey is the President of the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, Inc.
www.celdf.org
 717-709-0457

The Great PA Cleanup!!!



The Great Pennsylvania Cleanup is an ambitious statewide community cleanup program to be held on Saturday, April 24. Communities are being asked to organize and conduct local cleanups - re-

recruit volunteers, promote your event, and report your results for inclusion in statewide and national cleanup totals. The theme of the cleanup is "Let's Pick It Up, PA!" Business and trade organizations, state government agencies, environmental and civic organizations, and many others, have all volunteered to assist local communities with conducting successful cleanups. Click here for a complete list of our many sponsors. PennDOT's regional and county offices will provide free supplies, including gloves, safety vests and trash bags to registered cleanup groups.

The Pennsylvania Waste Industries Association will donate landfill space for trash collected during the cleanup. Environmental and civic groups will provide answers and assistance in organizing and preparing your cleanup. Inside this website, you will find a wealth of information. Follow these steps to organize and conduct a successful cleanup in your community.

1. Get Organized
2. Get Registered
3. Promote your Event
4. Order Supplies
5. Review Cleanup Safety
6. Have A GREAT Cleanup
7. Report Your Results.

For more information, visit [http://www.dep.state.pa.us/earthdaycentral/04/ Let's Pick It Up, PA!](http://www.dep.state.pa.us/earthdaycentral/04/Let's%20Pick%20It%20Up,%20PA!)

Private Interests (continued)

At the behest of Gov. Rendell, the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) is studying the proposal, to the tune of \$50,000, to see if it is economically viable. This, despite the state park's mission statement asserting that "the conservation of the natural, aesthetic, and historical values of the parks should be given first consideration," not turned into sacrifices on the altar of economic growth. Some things may make dollars but still not make sense.

Located northwest of Altoona, Prince Gallitzin State Park is slated by the CCIDC plan to be transformed into an upscale engine driving the local economy. It is being pitched as a model that could be emulated by other state parks. Even DCNR, the erstwhile guardians of our public lands heritage, is now referring to it as a 'pilot project.' A pilot project that promises to set a terrible precedent.

Fortunately, a broad alliance of more than a dozen local and statewide organizations has formed to defend the natural integrity of Pennsylvania's state parks and question the wisdom of turning our parks into appendages of large-scale, privately-run commercial resorts. These groups include the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, United Bowhunters of PA and Trout Unlimited, as well as Pennsylvania Audubon and the Sierra Club.

It is clear that the direction taken at Prince Gallitzin will have state-wide implications. Now is the time to let Gov. Rendell and your state lawmakers know that our state parks are, and should remain, natural treasures; accessible, affordable, and maintained in an environmentally sensible and sensitive manner. Remind them that state parks are not meant to be commercial resorts, and urge them to continue to protect our park system from such ill-advised development schemes. Gov. Rendell can be reached at (717) 787-2500 or by e-mail at <http://sites.state.pa.us/PAExec/Governor/govmail.html>.

**Earth Day is April 24,
2004**

How Will You

DCNR Report: Emphasizes on Importance of Wildlife

By Joseph Rebar

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR) has recently made available to the public a report titled, "Pennsylvania's Wildlife and Wild Places...Our Outdoor Heritage in Peril" written by Ben Moyer. This report examines how unchecked urbanizing sprawl impacts open wild spaces and wildlife habitat due to land development (sprawl) and how these impacts (sprawl) are changing the landscape of Pennsylvania. The report was developed and funded through a joint effort of the PA Fish and Boat Commission, the PA Game Commission, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and PA Wild Resources Conservation Fund.

The report details how Pennsylvania green lands and open spaces are being lost to development at the rate of 120,000-plus acres per year. (This report details a plan to reduce this sprawl.) The PA 21st Century Environment Commission reports that urban sprawl is a major environmental problem in the state. As I read this report, I can't help but think, at the rate of current sprawl, and if it continues at this rate, what will be left for our grandchildren a hundred years from now? Consider that and realize, you may not think or care about sprawl, but now is the time to start learning about it. From the report: "Unless we, as a state, can find a way to understand, value, and conserve our wild lands, we face a future that may offer only a shadow of the outdoor heritage we have always enjoyed. The next few years may be our last chance to save the best parts of our home, Penn's Woods. As our woodlands, fields, and wetlands dwindle, so do our choices of the kind of Pennsylvania we will leave to our children".

The report, obviously, does not call for an end to growth within our state. It does though, encourage growth without sacrificing our wildlife and wild places. Planning and managing growth are at the forefront of new economic development without losing the natural landscape that makes Pennsylvania a special place to live.

The report goes on to say, "If Pennsylvania is to offer abundant forests, tumbling waters, diverse wildlife, and opportunities to hunt, fish, and view our wild legacy-we must find a balance between land development and land conservation". DCNR Secretary DiBerardinis adds, "This report is definitely a wake-up call. We need to do something fast to stop the loss, or the wildlife we enjoy today will be seen only in photographs by our grandchildren".

Five recommendations were generated by this study:

1. Protect the best of what remains of Pennsylvania's major habitats and clear conservation priorities must be set.
2. Efforts should concentrate on restoring wetlands and streams, reclaiming surface mine lands, controlling invasive species, and keeping deer populations in check.
3. We all must work together to conserve and protect private lands and encourage better land stewardship.
4. More research of Pennsylvania's 25,000-plus species to identify declining species, critical habitats and conservation priorities.
5. Promote environmentally responsible land use. Concentrate development away from sensitive areas, develop land use planning codes, and foster productive use of cities and towns.

PA Game Commission executive director Vern Ross states, "This report points out the crisis we have in wildlife management today: The significant loss of habitat that impacts Pennsylvania's native wildlife. As all Pennsylvanians benefit from the diversity of wildlife, the Commonwealth needs to face this challenge and make a commitment of additional resources in order to stem the tide of development and encroachment".

Deputy executive director Dennis Guise of the PA Fish and Boat Commission adds, "State agencies, environmental organizations and conservation-minded individuals-really all Pennsylvanians-have a role to play in conserving habitat for all wildlife".

Wildlife and outdoor recreation, such as hunting, fishing, hiking etc. is a multi-billion dollar Pennsylvania 'industry'. 45% of Pennsylvania residents participate in some type of outdoor activity that generates \$6 billion dollars into our economy. If sprawl continues unabated, this economic 'industry' will potentially go into a decline.

Example's, of many, is how sprawl has affected the bog turtle. In the last twenty years, the population of the bog turtle has declined by 50%! At this rate, they'll be extinct in the near future. This may not seem to be too important, but it is. The Quail, in the past recognizable by it's "bob white" call, has declined by 80% since 1960! Extinc-

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Why Kicking G.W. Out of the White House is So Important By Jack Miller

Here are just some reasons why we must send Mr. Bush packing off to Texas. This list is far from complete and just the tip of the old iceberg. It is a list that would need to be updated daily to keep up with Mr. Bush's ongoing attack on the environment.

- The energy bill promoted by this administration has been called the "leave no lobbyist behind" bill by Sen. John McCain. It promotes this administration's simple formula of drill and burn, it will stick the taxpayers with the estimated \$29 billion bill for cleaning MTBE pollution. It provides more than \$60 billion in subsidies for this country's worst polluting industries.
- This administration lied to the people of New York City about the quality of asbestos tainted air after the terrible events of 9/11. Mr. Bush and his team were more concerned with reopening the markets than letting the people of NYC know about the health risks of the air they were breathing.
- Mr. Bush's administration has attacked in many ways America's right to breathe clean air. Under changes to rules under something called the "new source review", old coal fired power plants will be allowed to increase their toxic emissions. Mr. Bush's "Clear Skies" initiative means dirtier air for all of us.
- Mr. Bush has the foxes in charge of the chicken house when it comes to the regulatory agencies. These agencies should work to protect all Americans, but the people Mr. Bush has chosen come from the industries that they are to regulate and continue to keep these industries' best interest as their first concern.
- Team Bush is working overtime to attack the Clean Water Act. They have been working to limit the bodies of water to which the regulations of the Clean Water Act apply.
- If scientific research does not support the ideology of the Bush administration, they simply ignore the facts or misrepresent the results. When EPA wanted to release a report on the threat of global warming, Mr. Rove and his henchmen wanted to alter the report so much that EPA was forced to drop the whole section from the report. Department of Agriculture scientists must get special permission to talk about "agricultural practices with negative health and environmental consequences." How is the public to know about the real dangers of industrial hog farms?
- Mr. Bush has been using a "starve and strangle" approach to weaken our environmental protections. He has been steadily slashing the budgets of important programs to protect the environment.
- The burden of paying for toxic clean-ups is being rapidly shifted from "polluter pays" to the taxpayer picking up the bill. By next year, the taxpayer may be paying up to 98% for toxic clean-ups.
- Americans' public lands are being turned over to the extractive industries for private gain. As the New York Times stated, "from the beginning, President Bush has been far more interested in exploiting the public lands for commercial purposes than protecting environmental values." The Powder River Basin in Wyoming is being turned over to the natural gas industry for a massive expansion of drilling. Rivers and streams are being damaged and the lives of second and third generation ranchers are being turned upside down.
- The Bush administration has moved to destroy what little wilderness remains in America's national forests. They have set aside the Roadless Area Conservation Rule that was developed over 3 years by the Clinton administration. The American taxpayer usually gets the short end of the stick when it comes to sales in our national forests. The destructive road building process costs more than the sale of the timber.
- Bush's "Healthy Forest" initiative is designed more for the profit of industry than the protection of our forests and the communities surrounded by the forests. The program is to be run by a former timber industry lobbyist.
- Environmental enforcement has been reduced. EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance has been reduced by more than 120 positions. Less enforcement means more pollution and more profits for Bush's supporters.
- Mr. Bush's reckless fiscal policies and mounting deficits will make it more difficult for future administrations to support the funding of sound environmental programs.
- Mr. Bush has not kept his promises about the Park Service's maintenance backlog. He and his administration are eroding the values that are most central to an experience in our national parks.
- This administration attempted a weakening of standards to protect drinking water from arsenic pollution.
- Under Mr. Bush the rules to protect the environment from hard-rock mining have been weakened.
- By changing the classification of coal mine and other mining waste to "fill material", the Bush administration has allowed the practice of mountain top mining. In this process the tops of mountains are literally cut off and pushed into valleys destroying forests, streams and the lives of local residents.

www.pantsonfire.net

*What George W.
Ain't Telling ya!*



DCNR Report (Continued)

(Continued from page 5)

tion is a real possibility. The Ring-Necked Pheasant that was so popular to hunt has declined due to a loss of habitat. Pheasants are rarely seen today.

Most of Pennsylvania wetlands, swamps, marshes and bogs, have been lost since William Penn's time. Wetlands are critical to not only wildlife, but to people as well. Wetlands help to control flooding and serve to re-fill underground aquifers. From this report, "An acre of wetland lost to development carries a disproportionately high environmental cost in wildlife habitat, water quality, and water supply".

"Our Outdoor Heritage in Peril" summation states; "This is a call for a fundamental shift in land ethics and conservation initiatives that assure more land of all habitat types are protected for wildlife and outdoor recreation. Each and every Pennsylvanian has a stake in shifting the habitat balance from land conversion to land conservation. When we lose an acre of woodland, field or marsh to sprawl, we lose more than living space for wild things. We also lose our choices for the future, for once sprawl transforms the living landscape, that change is almost always irreversible. We can no longer stand by without questioning and challenging the impact that development will have on the future of wildlife and wild places in Pennsylvania".

We must all take seriously the contents of this report and understand how it will affect us, our children and grandchildren.

Our Food Chain (Continued)

(Continued from page 1)

ease. I decided to clean up my act.

So now I ask what my food ate. What are the options? Well, in the case of beef, they are in decreasing order of preference, grass, organic feed (grains), conventional feed, hormonal supplements, antibiotic medications and additional "animal proteins." So I lean toward cows that eat what they were made to eat – grass – and allowed to lead more or less normal lives. If they are going to be fed grain, I'd certainly rather it be organic grain. According to one set of calculations, the petroleum cost for conventional agriculture to produce a quarter pound of hamburger is 16 oz of crude oil – that's just in the form of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, independent of transportation and preservation energy costs. To be truly ideal, it's even better if I can get it from a local provider to further cut down on those additional costs and support the local economy.

Some might argue that the ultimate ideal would be to avoid eating meat entirely. But it seems like there is room for a happy medium between eating too much meat that is produced in a destructive manner and eating none at all.

When these factors are taken into account, the price tag may give you pause – compared to what the entrenched system is trying to sell you,

this is expensive (that is, it is directly expensive with respect to your wallet, as opposed to being more covertly spendthrift with respect to the resources and resiliency of the world). Maintaining your currently budgeted allowance for meat and simply eating it less frequently may be the best way to go in the end. For one thing, most Americans could afford to make more room in their diets for the other food groups. For another, the food energy you will derive from that beef is hard won from the earth, requiring some 7 times the resources necessary the same number of calories in plant form – in other words, eating meat is very inefficient.

If you are interested in bolstering your resolve to eat better meat and eat less of it, try reading Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation*. My father, who tends to regard a meal without meat as a bad joke, threatened to give up beef in response to Schlosser's Sinclair Lewis-style expose of the slaughterhouses that supply the fast food industry and most of our homes.

For more information, I recommend Michael Pollan's "Power Steer" from the *New York Times Magazine*, March 31, 2002, as well as *Fast Food Nation* by Eric Schlosser. Also see the last two issues of *The Sylvania*, which had articles on the Local vs. Organic question and Sustainable Agriculture.

**Check out Group's Website at
www.sierraclub.org/chapters/pa/Otzinachson/**



Nicole Faraguna, Editor
Otzinachson Regional
Group of the Sierra Club
P.O. Box 65
Lewisburg, PA 17837
[www.sierraclub.org/
chapters/pa/Otzinachson/](http://www.sierraclub.org/chapters/pa/Otzinachson/)

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Spread the Word—Bush Bad for Environment

With the election this year being such a critical matter for the environment, we are offering to speak to other groups about our environmental concerns. If any of our members are also members of other groups which have outside speakers make presentations to them, would you please let your group know that we are offering to come speak to them on environmental issues and the current administration is Washington.

If interested please contact Jack Miller.

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570-837-6546 (before 8:30 PM)

or email jmiller1018@yahoo.com