

COMMISSIONER CAMPBELL ANSWERS OUR QUESTIONS

On Feb 8 Brad Campbell, New Jersey's Commissioner of Environmental Protection, made his third visit to a meeting of roughly 50 State Sierra Club Officers, taking two hours to summarize his accomplishments after his first year in office, offer suggestions to us, and to answer our many questions. It was clear that he has the utmost respect for most of our positions, for our ability to influence new legislation, and for our grassroots capacity to communicate to voters the positive and negative positions taken by members of the Legislature. He knows many of us by our first names!

On the topic of **sprawl**, he reminded us that NJ is losing 50 acres per day, and that water supply may impose an ultimate limit on population growth. He thinks the Big Map (with Red-Yellow-Green designations) will be adequate to limit sprawl, through protection of threatened and endangered species and protection of stream-water quality, but urged us to promote legislation permitting the imposition of timed growth limitations in municipalities. The Builders Lobby is powerful, and our best defense is probably to hurt our opponents in the Legislature by exposing the builders' campaign support for favored legislators.

Concerning **water quality**, there was concern by some Club members that the DEP has failed to stop some polluters from degrading high-quality (C-1) streams. Campbell said that a new round of C-1 designations will be made soon, and that the protection process is generally working well.

Regarding **water quantity**, he discussed the recent drought emergency, and noted that programs for water conservation and reuse were both on his radar screen. If treated wastewater were recharged to the ground, our water supply problems would be solved.

On the topic of **air pollution**, Campbell reminded us of the irony of former Gov. Whitman's preference for open market emissions trading. She is currently using the mechanism to permit air pollution to enter New Jersey from midwestern states. Campbell will be ending emissions trading within New Jersey.

On the topic of **enforcement**, Campbell described how he sent 70 enforcement staff to spend 70 days monitoring 700 facilities in Camden, resulting in over 100 citations for environmen-

tal violations. He feels especially responsible for restoring public trust in government by minority citizens, and has come down hard on pollution discharges in the Fairmont section of Newark.

Campbell spoke about changes in the State's **Open Space acquisitions policy**, giving the Green Acres program new priority for properties with high resource value, both for wildlife and for active recreation.

He answered questions about how we can oppose fraudulent Environmental Impact Statements that are submitted by developers, about how there needs to be caution before permitting growth in some of the "Green" zones on the Big Map, about what happens to the money recovered by DEP fines, about DEP participation in national "Orange Alerts," about the future of Liberty State Park (the Development Commission is about to be abolished, thankfully), and about whether Clean Car legislation might anger GM to the point of closing its factory in NJ (unlikely, thought Campbell).

Campbell was optimistic about the prospect for Horseshoe Crab protection, and is working with officials from Delaware. He has ensured that Green Acres projects will not accept uncertified tropical hardwoods. He anticipates that the states of New York, Connecticut and Pennsylvania will join with us in a regional compact accepting Kyoto limits on greenhouse gas emissions. He encouraged us, in our public education campaigns supporting smart growth, to emphasize "resonant" issues such as lower tax rates, relief from waiting in traffic jams, and better schools.

Campbell said he is working with Jeanne Fox, and other members of the Board of Public Utilities, to promote a portfolio of renewable energy sources. He said that Former Gov. Florio, Chairman of the Pinelands Commission, will be seeking enforcement authority. He predicted that the battle over Route 92, currently in review by the Army Corps of Engineers, may be one of his deepest worries. He predicted that it will take six months to achieve TMDLs for phosphate and nitrate in the Passaic River, and that the methodology for setting them will be easily applicable to all our other rivers within a further six months. We should then be prepared for a "sustained and looming backlash" from developers. ☺

Pinelands Residents Speak Out Against Water Withdrawals

by Mike Gallaway, the Club's liaison to the Pinelands Preservation Alliance

Over 300 members of the public gathered at a DEP hearing on Jan. 28th in Manchester Township, Ocean County, to protest a proposed increase in water pumped from the shallow Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer. The Crestwood Village Water Company (CVWC) wants an additional 12.8 million gallons per month to supply new development, which is a 17% increase in their water allocation permit. They have increased the amount of groundwater pumped from the aquifer in 8 of the past 9 years. Residents have complained that local streams and ponds are drying up.

The CVWC currently takes all of its water from 8 shallow wells. Only one of the wells is in the State-designated Pinelands Area, and the well slated for the increase lies outside the Pinelands boundary, but all the wells are in the Pinelands National Reserve designated by Congress in 1978. Approval of this diversion would seem to directly contradict an existing DEP-Pinelands Commission policy dated 1989, which required that water sources other than the Kirkwood-Cohansey be used for diversions, unless it can be demonstrated that diversions from the Kirkwood-Cohansey system would not adversely affect the Pinelands ecosystem. Residents complained that a draft DEP report, presented at the hearing, did not even mention - much less analyze - the ecological effects of the increased withdrawal. Also, many residents claimed that there are a number of viable alternative water sources available, including confined aquifers, Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) and water conservation, that should be explored first.

The ecological changes could be significant. Changes of as little as 4 inches in the water table can disrupt wetlands ecology, and the area is home to Knieskern's Beaked-Rush (*Rhynchospora knieskernii*), a federally threatened, State endangered species.

Other rare wetlands plants likely to be harmed by the proposed diversion include Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium americanum*), New Jersey Rush (*Juncus caesariensis*), and Curly Grass Fern (*Schizaea pusilla*), species for which the US Fish & Wildlife Service has sufficient information to support a proposal for a federal listing. A vernal pond in the area would also be jeopardized.

The Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer lies directly beneath large areas of the Pinelands, and provides over 90% of the water for local ponds, lakes and streams in the Manchester area. The New Jersey Geological Survey estimated that streams in the area would drop an average of 0.5 to 1.5 feet with the proposed withdrawal. An independent hydrological analysis obtained by the Pinelands Preservation Alliance challenged the applicant's figures and concluded that a number of streams would lose water, some losing so much they would not flow. (A similar situation has occurred within the last 2 years in Berlin Township, just outside the Pinelands border: A new shallow well coming on line caused a stream in adjacent Evesham Township, within the Pinelands, to go dry. The DEP ran tests that concluded the well was directly responsible and the well was shut off. It has not been permanently closed, though, due to water supply pressures in Berlin.)

Hopefully, the DEP will do the right thing and deny this application. The record will be closed by the time you read this, but the DEP needs constant encouragement to make prudent water supply decisions all over the State. If we can't learn to say no to such obviously bad ideas as this one, that giant sucking sound we'll hear will be from the Pinelands. And the results will not be pretty.

For more information on this or other Pinelands issues, contact Mike at 856-797-7922 (m.gallaway@comcast.net) or the PPA website (pinelandsalliance.org). ☺

The Delaware River Sojourn is an annual event to celebrate the river's outstanding natural, cultural, scenic, ecological and recreational resources. The Sojourn combines canoeing, camping, educational programs, historical interpretation, and more. First-time boaters are welcome and will find a supportive environment.

This year's Sojourn will take place June 14-21, 2003. People can sign up for a day, a weekend, or the whole trip. Space is limited, and participants are urged to sign up early. The registration deadline is May 31. More information can be found at www.drbc.net.



BOOK SUMMARY:

ASLEEP AT THE GEIGER COUNTER

by Sidney Goodman, PE., M.S.M.E.

"Asleep" is personable and easily accessible. It vigorously exposes the destructive sweep of nuclear scams and frauds. It documents why nuclear programs mean cancer everywhere, birth defects forever, the uncontrolled proliferation of nuclear weapons, increased chance of nuclear war, the loss of civil liberties, the undermining of our national defense, and unending multi-billion dollar subsidies which have been bleeding us white, while actually delaying genuine energy independence.

It documents and explains how responsible energy policies can give us a golden age of environmental and economic benefits, a more peaceful world, and conditions which will help rich and poor alike.

The author is an engineer who is deeply concerned about the direction in

which some science is taking the world. He has been on the front line of varied research design and development for more than 43 years. *Asleep at the Geiger Counter* unveils censored material and much that has been forgotten by the present generation. Personal encounters add a touch of humor to this grim topic.

The book plainly points out that nuclear promoters do not believe one word of their assurances about health, safety, and the security of our nation. If they did, they would not insist that the Price Anderson Act remain in effect. This Act provides extremely limited liability. Nuclear waste has been used as a fertilizer, typical of the ethics which confront us. As you read this, the industry is "recycling" nuclear wastes into all kinds of products.

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