

The Wise Use Movement*

November 29, 1990

**Richard Lindeborg, Program Analyst
Beverly Carroll, Management Analyst**

**USDA Forest Service
Public Affairs Office
Market Research Section**

Management Implications

The growth of the wise use movement, which employs many of the grass-roots organizing techniques pioneered by environmental groups, adds a new dimension to natural resource management issues.

THE MOVEMENT--A confederation of organizations has emerged to combat what their members see are the abuses of the environmental movement. According to a recent article by Margaret Knox of Missoula, Montana, these organizations are dedicated to keeping public and private land open to such uses as logging, mining, drilling, and motorized recreation.

THE WISE USE AGENDA--Organizations in the wise use movement favor comprehensive changes in wilderness designation, national parks, and the protection of endangered species. According to the author, these groups believe land is to be used to benefit humanity, not preserved in a bubble: "They resent government telling them, in the name of the environment, what to do with privately owned marshes, orchards, factories, or slag heaps." The groups met twice in 1988, once in Reno and once in Las Vegas. From these meetings came a "Wise Use Agenda," which was given to President Bush and published in 1989.

WISE USE LEADERS--One of the leading spokespersons for the wise use movement is Grant Gerber of Elko Nevada, founder of

the Wilderness Impact Research Foundation (WIRF). The Foundation is dedicated to "educating the public about the damage wilderness causes society, the economy and even wildlife." Another major spokesperson for the movement is Ron Arnold of the Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise (Bellvue, Washington). Chief Robertson spoke in July at the Multiple Use Sustained Yield Commemorative Conference sponsored by the Center on the campus of Hocking Technical College in Nelsonville, Ohio.

THE BLUE RIBBON COALITION--An umbrella group over much of the movement is the Idaho-based Blue Ribbon Coalition (Henry Yake, president), which distributes the Blue Ribbon newsletter to 63 business, industry, and recreation groups.

OTHER GROUPS--Organizations associated by the author with the movement are the the American Freedom Coalition, the Eastern Washington Dirt Riders, Oregonians for Food and Shelter, the National Rifle Association, the National Inholders Association, the National Council for Environmental Balance, the Our Land Society, the Public Lands Coalition, and Communities for a Great Northwest.

***"The Wise Use Guys"**

Buzzworm: The Environmental Journal 2(6): 30-36, November/December 1990.

The Top Twenty-Five Goals of The Wise Use Movement

- 1. Wise Use Public Education Project (by the Forest Service): Federal deficit reduction through prudent development of federal lands.**

- 2. Careful development of the petroleum resources in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge with full protection of environmental values.**
- 3. Legislation to eliminate eminent domain power over inholdings.**
- 4. Legislation to promote systematic conversion of decaying and oxygen-using forest growth to young stands to help ameliorate global warming.**
- 5. Create "Tongass National Forest Timber Harvest Area" as first unit of a "National Timber Harvest System." Set harvest at 30,000 acres/yr.**
- 6. Create "National Mining System" following General Mining Act of 1872 and opening all public lands to wise mineral and energy production.**
- 7. Legislation to embody Water Act of 1866 and recognize rights of states to control all waters originating in or passing through them.**
- 8. Commemorate Forest Reserve Act of 1981, with emphasis on homestead settlement intent.**
- 9. Legislation to have the Forest Service supply local timber to biological capacity, including previous undercuts, to support local firms.**
- 10. Create the "National Timber Harvest System" to preserve suitable timber lands for commodity use (repeal non-declining even flow).**
- 11. Replace the (oversize) National Park Service with four agencies devoted to national parks and monuments, urban parks, recreational parks, and historical parks. Fund adequate park visitor accommodations.**

- 12. Pre-patent protection of pest control chemicals.**
- 13. Create the "National Rangeland Grazing System" to include lands presently used for grazing and those suited for grazing.**
- 14. Allow motorized wheel chairs in all wilderness areas.**
- 15. Require agencies to include in legislative recommendations statements of the economic costs of delaying action proceeding.**
- 16. Legislation to require agencies to separate out overhead costs from offering timber sales.**
- 17. Abandoned railroad easements to revert to adjacent property owners.**
- 18. Amend Endangered Species Act for separate treatment of species which were in decline before human presence and require disclosure of costs.**
- 19. Make individuals and groups liable for the economic losses suffered on projects which they challenge unsuccessfully.**
- 20. Establish the principle of private domain in Federal land.**
- 21. Free trade measure for developing nations favoring private enterprise technology exchange for sustainable resource development.**
- 22. Create categories of wilderness for human excludure, wild soliltude, backcountry, frontcountry, and commodity-use.**
- 23. Grant advocacy groups standing to sue on behalf of industries harmed by environmentalists.**
- 24. Return off-road vehicle gasoline taxes to a "National Recreational Trails Trust" for multiple-use trail development.**

25. End the "let burn" policy; fight all naturally-caused wildfires.

***The Wise Use Agenda, Alan M. Gottlieb, ed.,
Bellvue, WA: The Free Enterprise Press, 1989.**

See: <http://www.fs.fed.us/eco/eco-watch/ew901203>