

# CONSERVATION PRIORITY CAMPAIGNS

## Wildlands Campaign

By 1900, America had already lost most of its buffalo, tallgrass prairies, Eastern old-growth forests and grizzly bears. Bold, immediate action was called for and taken. Between 1901 and 1909, President Roosevelt oversaw the establishment of five National Parks, including the Grand Canyon, more than 50 wildlife reserves and almost 99 million acres of forest reserves. Now, a century later, our nation again needs to take bold and urgent action to protect our remaining wildlands. Despite the progress we have made since 1900, we continue to lose ground -- namely forests, marshes and mountains.

The number of threats to our wild places and open spaces has increased dramatically in the last 100 years. Pollution, development and suburban sprawl have added to the historic, continuing effects of logging, mining and overgrazing. The rate of wildlands destruction is accelerating and the list of special places in peril is growing.

The Wildlands Campaign is dedicated to protecting America's wild places and the beauty, solitude, clean water, wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities they provide. The Campaign seeks to realize these goals by promoting a program of smart growth, preservation, acquisition and restoration.

## Stop Sprawl

Uncontrolled development of America's cities, suburbs and farmlands -- commonly known as sprawl -- has brought with it a score of environmental problems. Sprawl serves to increase pollution, fossil fuel consumption and traffic congestion, while destroying forests, agricultural land and critical wildlife habitat, endangering many species. A specific objective of this campaign is to reform government policies and subsidies that encourage sprawl and undermine our

cities. The Sierra Club is committed to ending sprawl by promoting the development or redevelopment of compact, vibrant, livable cities and communities.

## Clean Water

America has made great progress in cleaning up its waterways since the signing of the Clean Water Act in 1972. (The Clean Water Act's goals: all water should be safe for fishing and swimming by 1983, there should be no more direct discharge from pollutants into navigable waters by 1985 and there should be no pollutants released in toxic amounts.)

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the Clean Water Act prevents more than 900 million pounds of sewage and 1 billion pounds of toxic chemicals from entering our waterways every year. Yet, we still have not met the Clean Water Act's goals: over one-third of our rivers, lakes and streams are still not fit for swimming and fishing. America's drinking water, rivers and lakes are at risk from giant, corporate-owned animal factories. These Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) create one of the nation's most dangerous water pollution problems. According to the EPA, hog, chicken and cattle waste have polluted 35,000 miles of rivers in 22 states and contaminated groundwater in 17 states. Livestock produce an enormous amount of waste -- about 2.7 trillion pounds of manure a year. The current industry waste disposal practice -- spraying it onto crop lands or storing it in open-air waste pits -- often results in leaks, spills and runoff that pollute ground and surface water and create a health risk to people and wildlife. The Sierra Club is calling for a moratorium on new large CAFOs until our clean water protections are strengthened and the massive pollution from current facilities is eliminated.

*Explore, enjoy and protect the planet.*

## **Protect Our National Forests**

America's first National Forests were established over one hundred years ago. Today we have 155 of them, stretching across 191 million acres, an area the size of California, Oregon and Washington. But sadly, the timber industry has turned our publicly owned National Forests into a patchwork of clearcuts and logging roads. Commercial logging has taken a harsh toll on the National Forests, decimating most of our nation's old growth forests, draining nutrients from the soil, washing top soil into streams, destroying wildlife habitat and intensifying the severity of forest fires. Healthy forests purify drinking water, stabilize hillsides and protect us from floods. Hillsides with clearcuts or logging roads lose their ability to absorb heavy rains. Without trees to soak up moisture and roots to hold the soil, water gushes down the slopes, muddying streams, polluting our drinking water, intensifying floods and causing lethal mudslides. National Forests are our link with America's wild heritage. Although only a percent of America's old growth forests are still standing, 75 percent of them are within National Forest borders. And a forest is more than just its trees. More than 3,000 species of fish and wildlife and 10,000 plant species -- including 230 endangered plant and animal species -- rely on National Forests for habitat. To protect what is left of our wild forest heritage, the Sierra Club is committed to ending commercial logging of our National Forests.

## **International Campaigns**

The arrest, torture and incarceration of Mexican environmentalists Rodolfo Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera, whose only crime was to organize supporters against destructive logging in southwestern Mexico, was a stark and tragic demonstration of the relationship between human rights and environmental protection. The Sierra Club will continue to work to build awareness of human rights abuses against environmental activists who are working to preserve the wild places of the earth and the health of their communities.

With the implementation of the NAFTA and GATT trade agreements, environmental protections are increasingly threatened by the weakening of regulations in the name of competition and investment. The Sierra Club's international activists are raising public awareness of the relationship between trade and the environment and building a network of trade activists to encourage trade reform. Furthermore, we are working to ensure that international, multilateral and U.S. bilateral development financing promotes sustainable development. The Sierra Club will continue to work toward curbing global warming by fighting for stricter efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on a global scale. The Sierra Club will continue to work toward population stabilization in this country and around the world. We will play an essential part in efforts to protect the environment, sustain the ability of the earth to support life and enhance the quality of life for all human beings.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

For more information on Sierra Club's Conservation Priority Campaigns, please visit our website:

***Wildlands Campaign***

<http://www.sierraclub.org/wildlands/>

***Stop Sprawl***

<http://www.sierraclub.org/sprawl/>

***Clean Water Campaign***

<http://www.sierraclub.org/cleanwater/>

***Protect Our National Forests***

<http://www.sierraclub.org/logging/>

***Human Rights and the Environment***

<http://www.sierraclub.org/human-rights/>

***Responsible Trade***

<http://www.sierraclub.org/trade/>

***Stop Global Warming***

<http://www.sierraclub.org/globalwarming/>

***Global Population and the Environment***

<http://www.sierraclub.org/population/>