

WHAT ARE ALL THE BIOLOGY TEACHERS DOING ABOUT IT?

At recent hearings in Seattle, Wash., on the proposal by the city's municipal power company to flood national park land in Washington's North Cascades, not one college biology professor and only one high school biology teacher spoke in defense of the national park.

In Washington state, where this fall we were desperately attempting to gather signatures on a shorelands protection initiative, biology teachers were reluctant even to discuss the issue, urge their students to participate, or participate themselves. Yet who could better understand the need for such legislation than biologists? Especially those who saw Santa Barbara! It must be comforting to make like an ostrich.

There are dozens of national, state, and local battles whose outcome is going to shape our biologic and physical surroundings. Hell's Canyon, Storm King, Alaska's north-slope oil, the cross-Florida canal, pesticides, and the fire ant are only a few of the better known.

The citizens are aroused. They are concerned about the quality of our environment. They realize that no one is going to pay for all the needed studies leading to legislation aimed at cleaning up the mess. This is the key role for biology teachers.

If biologic information is needed and we are not willing to aid in its procurement, then legislation will be attempted without this knowledge. Mostly this means industry will continue to do what it wishes wherever it desires, regardless of the ecologic effects. What little man knows about living systems is indeed a major factor in making good decisions about our environment. If biology teachers can't help, who will? Union Carbide, U.S. Steel, and Standard Oil of California?

If you have a local group of the "Nader's Raiders" kind or a local environmental action group—join it. Don't wait for the group to seek its biologic information from the local college. Chances are the professors are all tied up with research grants or consulting fees from the very polluting outfits the citizens are fighting.

You can be objective. The big requirements for such a task are scientific inquiry, persistent research, and guts—the latter being the most important.

I do not wish you to believe that the task will be easy. But since some of you cut your teeth on obdurate school boards, blew your minds on teenage dances, and still teach a six-period day, you are eminently qualified.

It is certainly a golden opportunity for the biology teachers of this nation to make a contribution now that might well be the most important gift to man in this century.

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GRASSLANDS, DESERTS STUDIED

Major ecologic investigations of the nation's deserts and grasslands will continue under \$3.15 million in grants from the National Science Foundation.

Part of the ecosystems analysis of the International Biological Program (IBP), the two studies form part of an overall approach to the study of environmental quality.

"Information growing out of these studies, along with that from related investigations of deciduous and coniferous forests, tundra regions of Arctic areas, and others, will provide greater understanding of how biological systems work and how they are affected by man," said W. D. McElroy, NSF director. "It is only through accumulation of this detailed basic knowledge, and its careful consideration in the future, that we can plan intelligently the best uses of our resources and solution of many environmental problems."

The grants were made to Utah State University, Logan (\$1,350,000), and to Colorado State University, Fort Collins (\$1,799,500).

The grant to Colorado State provides for the third year of a broad study of the nation's grasslands. Involving approximately 80 senior scientists from 24 colleges and universities and four federal agencies, the project is under the direction of George M. Van Dyne, of the institution's Natural Resource Ecology Laboratory.

The grant to Utah State provides for the second year of a major investigation of American deserts. Nearly 100 senior scientists from 19 institutions will be involved ultimately in the project under the overall direction of David W. Goodall, of Utah State University's Ecology Center.