

Committee on Resources

Full Committee

Witness Statement

Committee on Resources

Hearing on H.R. 701, the "Conservation and Reinvestment Act of 1999" **and HR 798, the "Permanent Protection for America's Resources 2000 Act."**

June 12, 1999

Salt Lake City, Utah

testimony of

Clark L. Collins

Executive Director

BlueRibbon Coalition

Chairman, and members of the Committee on Resources. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Committee regarding our concerns with HR-701, the "Conservation and Reinvestment Act of 1999" and HR-798, the "Permanent Protection for America's Resources 2000 Act."

The BlueRibbon Coalition represents 404 member organizations, 351 member businesses and 5,482 individual members. We are based in Pocatello, Idaho, and are a national organization. While our Coalition primarily represents the interests of motorized back country users, we also have many equestrian and mountain bicyclists as members. Some resource industry interests, who share our recreation access concerns, also support our organization. Our members are primarily concerned with protecting their recreation access.

How much "public" land do we need? Who should be able to use it?

We represent recreationists in Western states like Nevada, Idaho, and Utah that are over half federal land. Millions more acres in these states are also managed by state land management agencies. Most of the recreation access we are fighting to protect in the West is on those federal and state lands. In the Midwest there is a mix of federal, state and even county controlled "public land." Eastern states have a very low percentage of federal land, but state forests are common in these states. Recreation access to these so-called public lands is in constant jeopardy. I would like to give you a few examples.

One example in the West is the BLM planning process currently underway for the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Utah. In an article published in the January 1999 issue of BlueRibbon

Magazine, Rainer Huck, with one of our member organizations the Utah Shared Access Alliance, said, "Four of the five alternatives presented in the Draft will place severe restrictions on off highway vehicle access and recreation, ignoring the heritage, traditions, and legal rights associated with this use.It is obvious that the restriction of vehicular access is the major focus of the entire planning efforts, since this is the headline issue addressed in each of the alternatives." I would like to request that the entire article be accepted for the public record on this hearing as Appendix A to my testimony.

"Public" lands in Midwestern states like Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois are becoming even less accommodating for back country recreationists, and I don't mean just for motorized users. One of our equestrian organizational members, The Shawnee Trail Conservancy, is apparently going to have to file suit against the Shawnee National Forest to prevent horseback riders from being kicked off trails in that forest. An article on this issue in the April 1999 BlueRibbon Magazine points out the kind of problems our non motorized members face. "Radical environmentalists have been viewed tacking hundreds of lie-filled inflammatory flyers on trees throughout Shawnee trails and natural areas. This trash degrades the forest's beauty and creates a litter-laden garbage dump as it blows around the forest landscape." I also request that this entire article be accepted, as Appendix B, for the public record of my testimony at this hearing.

We also represent recreationists in Eastern states like Vermont, Massachusetts, and Maine with very little federal land. Recreation access in those states is largely on state land or dependent on the generosity of private land owners. In these Eastern states, state land managers are becoming more and more restrictive in their recreation access policy. There are many examples of recreation access restrictions being imposed on the so-called "public" lands in the East. A threat to recreation access that is particularly relevant to consideration of these Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) bills, however, is the Northern Forest Stewardship Act. LWCF money is the likely source for money needed to purchase the private lands being considered in this proposal. At a Vermont conference on this issue, featured in the August 1998 BlueRibbon Magazine, the Executive Director of the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (another of our member organizations) Bryant Watson said, "We have been working with private landowners on our snowmobile trail system for many years. We don't need federal agencies interfering with that relationship." I ask that this article also be submitted in total, as Appendix C of my testimony, for the public record on this hearing.

Recreation access to federal lands is under direct attack in the current administration. "Tank traps" have been dug in access roads on the Targhee National Forest near our home office in Idaho. Snowmobile access to Yellowstone, Voyageurs, and Denali National Parks is threatened. Boating access is threatened in Isle Royal National Park and the Boundary Waters Canoe area. BLM lands throughout Utah are being closed and gated.

Many land managers treat lands, that should be available for public use, as if they are managing the "Kings" forest. They feel they must "keep the commoners out." The BlueRibbon Coalition is working with our member organizations nationwide to address this problem.

A statement by Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt gives us an idea of where this attitude may originate, at least within the Interior agencies. At a January 12, 1999, White House press conference on the Land acquisition proposals being forwarded by the administration and Congress Babbitt was asked, "What is the Wilderness protection for the national park areas? Does that mean no roads, no -- any commercial development, nothing?" Secretary Babbitt's response to that question makes clear his intentions for any federal lands added to the public domain. "Yeah, the essential add-on, from a Wilderness designation in a national park, is precisely that.", Babbitt said. "No more roads; no motorized intrusions. No snowmobiles, jet-skis, ORVs. That's the real issue - and it, of course, precludes any kind of development as well. And,

sometimes, that does happen in national parks, however well-intentioned. And we need to make sure that it doesn't."

Federal and state lands are considered by many to be available for recreation use. In fact, in the name of "recreation and tourism," some Wilderness advocacy groups, are advocating the elimination of all resource industry activities on these "public" lands. Saying they represent recreation, these "anti-recreation" groups have lobbied for the elimination of any timber harvesting, livestock grazing or oil and mineral exploration. Now, our resource industries have been practically driven from this country into third world nations who lack our environmental regulations. Emboldened by their success in bringing our resource industries to their knees, these Wilderness advocacy groups are becoming more open about their opposition to recreation and tourism. They are actually anti-recreation access.

The primary catalyst for the founding of the BlueRibbon Coalition in 1987 was Wilderness advocacy group attacks on off highway vehicle recreation. These groups have always opposed the use of anything with a motor, anywhere. They are especially opposed to motorized access to our back country recreation areas. The bulk of our membership still is from the motorized recreation community.

More recently, however, these same groups have become more critical of equestrian use in the back country. As a result we have gained members from the equestrian trail user community. These horseback riders realize the value of working "with" our motorized recreation groups to protect and share our recreation areas.

One of the fastest growing back country recreation interest groups in the country are mountain bikers. The Wilderness advocacy groups' reaction to this popular sport has been real interesting to watch. The green advocacy groups first tried to keep this non-motorized user in their camp. However, due to the fact that mountain bikes aren't allowed in designated Wilderness areas, the bikers are rapidly realizing that this alliance is a one-way street. When the end goal of Wilderness designation is achieved, mountain bikers realize they are going to be sacrificed. As a consequence, we are getting increased interest from mountain bikers who realize the value of working with us to preserve our "shared" access.

The BlueRibbon Coalition is very concerned about the current plethora of LWCF related bills being offered by this Congress. We support adequate funding for important resource protection efforts, safety issues, recreation enhancements, and other infrastructure improvements to existing federal and state lands. However, the focus by this Congress on the purchasing of private inholdings for additions to the federal estate and "conservation easements" is a concept that we cannot currently support. Historically these lands are not managed in concert with traditional multiple-use values. **It has been our experience that property purchased with LWCF monies is either gated off and a barbed wire fence installed, or signed and posted closed with severely limited access, or managed as defacto Wilderness.** To date, we do not know of any lands purchased with LWCF funds that are managed for traditional multiple-use.

In conclusion, we hope that the Committee on Resources will address our concerns with the current lack of multiple-use recreational opportunities contained in HR-701 & HR-798. These bills are being promoted as being good for recreation. We don't think so! The recreationists we represent have historically been locked out of lands purchased by the LWCF. We believe the whole concept of the Land and Water Conservation Fund should be changed from a land acquisition program to one that focuses on funding for the maintenance of the public lands already under federal and state control.

Thank you for the opportunity to represent recreation interests at this hearing today. I would be happy to

answer any questions you might have about our position on this important issue.

APPENDIX A

Escalante Draft Management Plan Threatens OHV Access

from the January, 1999 BlueRibbon Magazine (page 7)

by Rainer Huck,

President Utah Shared Access Alliance

The creation of the massive two million acre Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Southern Utah by Presidential Proclamation on September 18, 1996 was a typical example of the underhanded tactics employed by the radical environmentalists in their endless effort to usurp our public lands.

Working in a secret, highly political process designed to wring additional votes from the environmental lobby, President Clinton's staff, cooperating with extremist Wilderness advocates, drew boundaries to fill in their regulatory void between the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area on the east, Capitol Reef National Park on the north, and Bryce Canyon National Park on the west. This sorry process completely subverted normal and statutory procedures designed to insure fairness and public participation.

Although there are still two pending legal actions challenging the legality of the monument, many millions of dollars have already been spent in establishing a bureaucracy to plan for future management. It's saddening to realize that taxpayers will be required to sacrifice huge sums each year to hyper-manage these durable lands that were doing just fine until the President decided he needed a few more votes.

After two years of effort, the planning team released the Draft Management Plan in November.

Because the Presidential Proclamation took the unprecedented step of naming the Bureau of Land Management rather than the National Park Service as the management entity, we harbored some small hope that the principles of multiple use and recreational diversity would be honored. Indeed, Utah Senator Bob Bennett, to the dismay of many, initially lauded the monument, saying that it offered opportunities for the development of additional access and recreation facilities.

Sadly, however, the reality of the Draft Management Plan shattered this illusion. It is unlikely that even the National Park Service could have produced a worse set of management alternatives.

Four of the five alternatives presented in the Draft will place severe restrictions on OHV access and recreation, ignoring the heritage, traditions, and legal rights associated with this use. Most of the land will become inaccessible to those who cannot travel by foot. It is obvious that the restriction of vehicular access is the major focus of the entire planning effort, since this is the headline issue addressed in each of the alternatives.

The plan envisions an "outdoor museum" with "scientific preservation" becoming the principle management objective. In essence, it seeks to remove nearly two million acres of public land from multiple use, reserving it for the exclusive use of the elite few.

The "preferred" alternative B will close more than 1,100 miles of roads, nearly all of which have RS-2477

status. It would ban all cross-country travel even though generations of open travel have produced no impacts that would disqualify this area for Wilderness designation according to the latest Utah Wilderness Coalition proposal. Vehicular travel would be allowed only on 818 miles of designated routes, of which 591 miles would be available to unlicensed vehicles.

Alternatives C and D are even more extreme in their efforts to make the monument look like a National Park. They would totally ban the use of any unlicensed vehicles! Since ATV's cannot be licensed in most states, they are banned entirely. Dirt bikes would have to be street legalized. Naturally, the enviro's are pushing hard for alternative D, which would designate the vast majority of the land de facto Wilderness.

Alternative E is just a bit more liberal than B, designating 1,264 miles of vehicle travel routes, including 980 miles available to ATV/dirt motorcycles.

It is unfortunate that two year's effort on the part of 15 expensive public employees produced a plan so extreme that it has only one acceptable alternative: The No Action Alternative A.

This alternative will continue existing use and access patterns, which have had no negative impacts on this rugged and indestructible land of sand and stone. It respects the rights of diverse and multiple uses and allows all of our people the opportunity to explore and delight in this rugged and remote landscape. It allows for the continuation of the traditions and heritage of the local people who have lived on and exercised stewardship over this land for well over a hundred years. It is the only viable option the Draft Management Plan produced, yet it existed even before the first dollar was spent.

The public phase of the process has begun. The BLM has produced a plan and now it's your turn to participate in the process. We all have a stake in this, no matter where we live. The key to determining just how these two million acres will be managed is in your hands! If enough people speak up for alternative A, then it will be difficult for even the most biased managers to ignore. You can be sure that all the radical land closure groups will be getting their members to send in comments attacking Alternative A and pressing for Alternative D.

Accompanying this column is a sample letter supporting alternative A. If you want your voice to be heard, all you have to do is sign and mail this letter. Even better, if you have the time, write your own. If the planners see 10,000 of these sitting on their desks, Alternatives B through E will be DOA. That's a pretty good payback for the price of a stamp! The deadline for submission is The effectiveness of your letter will be increased if you send a copy to: Sen. Bob Bennett, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510 and Congressman Chris Cannon, US House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515. Feb. 12, 1999, but don't wait until the last minute.

--Rainer Huck is the President of the Utah Shared Alliance. For questions or comments on this article, he may be contacted at 1680 East Atkin Ave., Salt Lake City, UT, 84106. Phone & fax: 801-467-3795. Email [mivv@email.msn.com].

APPENDIX B

Shawnee Closures Prompt Lawsuit

from the April, 1999 BlueRibbon Magazine (page 19)

It's been a long battle between recreational users and the United States Forest Service in the Shawnee National Forest, which consists of 280,000 acres located at the southern tip of Illinois. The forest is operating under the 1992 amended forest plan, which has shut out most recreational users from the 81 so-called "natural areas" (NAs) which were included in the plan.

Horseback riders were the first group affected when the forest service announced in early 1994 that equestrian use would be prohibited in the areas, even though horsemen were promised that existing user-created trails (used by them for decades) would become designated by the United States Forest Service (USFS) and allowed under the plan. The closures of the most scenic areas of Shawnee, which contain huge rock formations, tumbling streams, caves, 200 foot-high bluffs, and beautiful timber, put the midwestern trail riding enthusiasts up-in-arms.

Each year, riders from 20 states come to the Shawnee and trail riders spend \$1.3 billion each year in the state. Responding to this outcry was US Congressman Glenn Poshard, in whose district much of Shawnee resides. He appointed a trail review committee in hopes of resolving the situation. The closures were delayed and the impact analysis of 10 of the "natural areas" were conducted with members of the USFS, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, the horse campground owners, the Sierra Club, the Regional Association of Concerned Environmentalists, and equestrian leaders. These walks were supposed to point out any endangered species and the horrific erosion sited by the environmentalists as the main reason to close these popular riding areas. However, no endangered species were sited and only minimal trail erosion was discovered.

Horsemen have for a longtime agreed that trail maintenance would solve the problem. But the USFS being pushed by the IDNR and radical local environmental groups contend that horses should be prohibited from these "natural areas" which total approximately 16,000 acres. Unfortunately, most of the horse campgrounds in Southern Illinois are located near these areas and the closure of the most scenic areas would severely impact the riding trails close to the campgrounds and the horse tourism coming to Southern Illinois. As many as 65% of the trails would be either closed or would sever the trails extending beyond the "natural areas." Horsemen agreed to the closure of 26 of the areas which had little horse use and the forest service lead them to believe that the others could be left open.

In January of 1997, Forest supervisor, Louise Odegaard announced that 40 "natural areas" would be closed immediately to mechanized and motorized vehicles, horses, rock climbing, camping and rappelling. She also announced that the remaining areas were being analyzed for future closings. The ATV-OHV's had been banned from the entire forest in September of 1995 as a result of a lawsuit brought against the forest service by the Sierra Club, The Illinois Audobon Society, and RACE to prohibit ATV's, oil leasing, timbering, and mining on forest service lands. These activities were prohibited in the forest until the forest service could complete necessary NEPA and impact studies on these uses. None of these studies have been completed and even though the forest plan calls for 286 miles of ATV trails, none were ever built.

Fearing that the same demise was soon to befall them, the horsemen, who had formed the Shawnee Trail Conservancy (STC) in 1994, decided to gear-up for a fight over their trails. They solicited the legal expertise of the Mountain States Legal Foundation in Denver, CO, who listened to their story and decided to help them. The legal ownership of the old county roads was a course of action, since most of the old roads are now horse trails, and in Illinois horses have road rights. The forest service has gated many of these old un-maintained roads and they claim ownership. The counties say, however, that these roads were never legally closed so they are county property.

Last year, the state of Illinois passed a law allowing the counties, at their discretion, to declare old roads to become multi-use recreational trails. This has ATV-OHV users excited since the outcome of the lawsuit brought by the Shawnee Trail Conservancy who were joined by the Illinois Federation of Outdoor Resources (IFOR), the Illinois Trail Riders, Inc., Horsemen's Council of Illinois, and the Southern Illinois Ranch and Campground Owners Association will affect them, as well. The Shawnee Trail Conservancy has been growing by leaps and bounds as hunters, horsemen, bikers, campers, ATV-OHV users are all joining together along with local business people who rely on recreational tourism for their livelihood. Shawnee Trail Conservancy now represents over 50,000 people.

The suit was filed in federal court in August of 1998, and should be heard this summer. For more information contact the Shawnee Trail Conservancy, PO Box 44, Eddyville, IL. 62928 Bill Blackorby, President 618-672-4768.

(Sidebar) Spotlight On The Shawnee Trail Conservancy

The BlueRibbon Coalition (BRC) has a growing constituent of equestrians in its membership. Individual equestrian membership has existed for some time, but the BRC is pleased to welcome our new member organizations. These groups have become an important part of our team effort to "Preserve Our Natural Resources FOR The Public Instead Of FROM The Public." This month, the *BlueRibbon Magazine* highlights the Shawnee Trail Conservancy. Primarily an equestrian organization, they are a group which has supported the shared-use concept from the beginning. Their membership is open to all types of recreationists.

What Is The Shawnee Trail Conservancy?

MISSION: To ensure the Shawnee National Forest (SNF) remain open to the public for the use and enjoyment of the public who are the taxpayers and the true stewards of the government-owned land.

WHO WE ARE: A nonprofit corporation which advocates **multiple-use** of the Shawnee National Forest for recreational and sporting interests, yet is dedicated to preserving and protecting it's natural resources through proper trail maintenance, good trail signage, education of trail, camping, and hunting users to achieve a low environmental impact, and wise use management practices. We represent over 50,000 equestrians, hunters, ATV riders, bikers, hikers, campers, rock climbers, business people, professionals, retirees, and fishermen who love to enjoy the beauties of the Shawnee.

THE FACTS:

- The US Forest Service and radical environmentalists have decided to close approximately 16,000 acres of the most scenic areas of the SNF to equestrian use, campfires, camping, bikers, rock climbers, rappellers, and ATV riders.
- Since ATV's were banned 2 years ago, deer and turkey harvest has dropped considerably. In 1997, the number of deer harvested in Southern Illinois was down by 1,900, and permits were down by 5,000 hunters due to the inability of hunters to retrieve an animal via an ATV. Many hunters are not physically able to drag a 200 pound animal 2 or 3 miles out to the nearest road.
- Shawnee Trail Conservancy has united with four other organizations: the Illinois Trail Riders, Illinois Federation of Outdoor Resources (IFOR), Horsemen's Council of Illinois, and Southern Illinois Ranch

and Campground Owners Assoc. in a lawsuit to reopen the old public roads (which the USFS has barricaded) and to prevent the proposed closure of the 41 remaining "so-called" natural areas and to reopen the 40 "natural areas" which were closed in January 1997.

- Shawnee Trail Conservancy DOES NOT seek to reopen old public roads which go across private land, only publicly owned land. For decades, these "so-called" natural areas were once privately owned farms, ranches, and homesteads. Now they are called pristine, sensitive, fragile, and supposedly home to endangered species of plants, mice, and bats.
- Local economy is in financial difficulty due to the bans and closures. Closure of the remaining 41 areas will even more severely impact these businesses, since the heart of the SNF will be off-limits.
- Radical environmentalists have been viewed tacking hundreds of lie-filled inflammatory flyers on trees throughout Shawnee trails and "natural areas." This trash degrades the forest's beauty and creates a litter-laden garbage dump as it blows around the forest landscape. Instead of trashing our forest, which is against the law, they should put their efforts into helping maintain trails. Forest officials are currently investigating this issue.
- Shawnee Trail Conservancy is a grass-roots organization and is NOT being financed by big oil companies, timbering interests, or Japanese ATV manufacturers. We need your Support and Contributions to all who come and enjoy the national forest. We must UNITE and fight TOGETHER!

APPENDIX C

BRC & Northeast Snowmobilers Speak Out Against Land Grab

A Conference on the Northern Forest Stewardship Act >

from the August 1998 BlueRibbon Magazine (page 13 & 16)

The St. Johnsbury, Vermont snowmobile trails of New England could be threatened if a land control measure being pushed by Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) is passed into law. BlueRibbon Coalition Executive Director Clark Collins and Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) Executive Director Bryant Watson shared a panel with George McNeill with the Sportsman's Alliance for the Vermont Environment on the subject of "RECREATIONAL CONCERNS WITH THE STEWARDSHIP ACT."

"The green advocacy groups (GAGs) pushing this initiative cannot be trusted," said Collins, who told of his experience attempting to work with a local Sierra Club leader. "These groups will attempt to divide and conquer us one by one until they get these areas locked up as Wilderness. Backcountry recreationists can be your allies in this battle when they realize that the GAGs ultimate objective is to eliminate them right along with the resource industries."

VAST is concerned that years of cooperation with Vermont private land owners could be jeopardized if the Stewardship Act is enacted. "We've been working with private landowners on our snowmobile trail system for many years," said Watson. "We don't need federal agencies interfering with that relationship."

New Hampshire Snowmobile Association Executive Director Jeff Lyons, who also attended the Conference, agrees that a federal land grab of this magnitude has the potential to cause similar problems in New

Hampshire. New England snowmobilers have worked for years with local land owners to plot and maintain extensive snowmobile trail systems on private land in the rural areas of the east. The Stewardship Act, which would put much of this private land under federal control, is being pushed by anti recreation access groups in the Environmental Conflict Industry.

The Conference, hosted by the Associated Industries of Vermont and the American Land Rights Association, was apparently a serious threat to proponents of this eastern land grab. One of the speakers, Greg Sweetser with the Ski Maine Association said he had received a phone call from the Maine Audubon Society "to inform him that they perceived some of the groups involved in the Conference as extreme" implying that his participation could result in his being branded a radical. After years of dealing with Environmental Conflict Industry opposition to ski area expansions in Maine, that call only served to strengthen his interest in participating. "Those in the environmental community say that tourism can replace the resource industries they are attempting to eliminate in our backcountry areas," said Sweetser, "but then they oppose attempts to expand tourism facilities to accommodate increased visitors. The ski industry realizes they need to be a part of the multiple use team."

The Conference agenda included many other national Wise Use speakers besides BRC's Collins - Ron Arnold with the Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise - Chuck Cushman with the League of Private Property Voters - Jim Burling with the Pacific Legal Foundation - Rob Gordon with the National Wilderness Institute - R.J. Smith with the Competitive Enterprise Institute - Frank Gladics with the Independent Forest Products Association - and Bruce Vincent with the Alliance for America.

The meeting provided an excellent opportunity for national Wise Use leaders to strengthen their ties with New England activists who are realizing that the green advocacy groups have plans for their areas too. Local speakers, in addition to VAST's Watson, included representatives of the Maine Ski Areas Association, Vermont Farm Bureau, New Hampshire Paper Workers' Union and a New York County Commissioner.

One of the speakers, Mike Waddell a Town Councilman in Gorham New Hampshire, explained that he came to New Hampshire on the Appalachian Trail, had been on staff with the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) and had always considered himself a hard core "environmentalist." After spending several hours over coffee with eastern Wise Use leader Leon Favreau (also from Gorham), he was a converted "Wise User" and proud of it. Wadell confirmed what many in the Wise Use movement already know, that groups like the AMC, the Sierra Club and others in the environmental conflict industry really have evolved into nothing more than hate groups.

The Northern Forests Stewardship Act proposes that Congress set aside 26 million acres of forest in Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine and upstate New York. In a letter explaining the threat of this proposal to Bob Voight of the Maine Conservation Rights Institute, Pacific Legal Foundation's James Burling says, "In Section 2 Congress declares, among other things, that the 'forests in the region are rich in natural resources and values cherished by residents and visitors.' If I were the owner of any the land in this cherished 26 million acres I would be concerned. Whenever the government starts talking about the public 'cherishing' or otherwise coveting something owned by individuals, the inevitable result is that the public rather than the individual winds up owning the object of the affection." In a state where so much recreation access is freely allowed by private property owners, this government intrusion into that cooperative relationship is likely to upset the apple cart.

Attendees heard how the Act's concrete provisions to funnel federal tax dollars into the region for land acquisition and control coupled with vague promises of government economic assistance is an all too familiar

approach that has been tried and has failed in other areas of the country. As William Sayre, of Associated Industries of Vermont noted, "Federal programs and money are no substitute for a strong local economy."

Ron Arnold, Executive Vice President of the Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise, told the conference that "while government bureaucracy is a necessity to efficiently run a complex civilization, bureaucracy is prone to abuse." This fact was made clear by the discouraging real life examples of dealing with federal agencies related by individuals such as Dave Cioffi from Hanover, New Hampshire and his three year odyssey with the Appalachian Trail Conference over the siting of a trail on his land. Cioffi just wanted the trail located in a different route on his land than the site chosen by the National Park Service.

Bruce Vincent, President of the Alliance for America spoke of the impacts on his small hometown of Libby, Montana from a lawsuit induced effort by the federal government to reintroduce grizzly bears. "It's no wonder that so-called environmentalists want to save areas in your states and mine, these are the 'last great places'. The problem is that the 'last great people' live there, and it seems to many that we in the rural, resource-based economy are simply in the way. We must get beyond the command and control environmental regulation mentality that places man outside of nature." Vincent implored the audience to "get involved and craft local solutions."

Opposition to the NFSA is building. A coalition of recreation, labor, landowner, local officials, farm and forestry interests at the conference were encouraged that the Northern Vermont Development Association voted just prior to the Conference to formally oppose it. A proponent of the NFSA, Brendan Whittaker of Brunswick, childishly responded to news about opposition to his plans, saying, "They aren't about to harm Vermont in any way. So there." William Davies, with the NFSA support group the Northern Forest Lands Council, was apprehended on his way home from that meeting and charged with DWI and possession of marijuana. It sounds like supporters of the NFSA might be unable to cope with organized opposition to it.

Unfortunately this eastern land grab has gained a lot of momentum in Congress. Leahy has convinced many other eastern legislators to support his proposal. Some are having reservations now and asking for field hearings in the affected areas, but no hearings have been held to date.

New Englanders are encouraged to contact their congressional delegations to express their opposition to the Northern Forest Stewardship Act land grab. Other recreationists concerned about it should call their legislators as well to ask that they not allow the proposal to move forward without field hearings in the affected areas. If you don't know the names or phone numbers of your Senators or Representative, call (202)224-3121, tell them where you live and they'll connect you.

Whether it be Wilderness proposals for federal lands in the west, or land grabs that threaten recreationist/landowner relations in the east, the environmental conflict industry is up to mischief everywhere. Their agenda is different, but their objective is always the same. PREVENT ANY HUMAN USE OR ENJOYMENT OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES. Recreationists must stand with our natural resource industries and private property rights interests to defend our mutual objective of "Preserving our natural resources FOR the public instead of FROM the public."

DISCLOSURE

Required by House Rule XI, clause 2(g)

and Rules of the Committee on Resources

A..

1. Name: Clark L. Collins

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3. Business Phone Number: (208)233-6570

4. Organization you are representing: BlueRibbon Coalition

5. Any training or educational certificates etc.: None

6. Any professional licences, certifications etc.: None

7. Any employment, occupation, ownership in a firm or business, or work related experiences which relate to your qualifications to testify on or knowledge of the subject matter of the hearing: Executive Director of the BlueRibbon Coalition since 1988.

8. Any offices, elected positions, or representational capacity held in the organization on whose behalf you are testifying: Executive Director

B.

1. Federal grants etc.: None

2. Federal grants to BlueRibbon Coalition: None

3. Additional information: I have been representing back country recreation interests in one capacity or another for over twenty years.

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