

Jobs for the Environment -- by Patrick Heffernan, Goleta, California.

The second largest public works program in the State and in the nation today is the construction of wastewater treatment facilities to meet the standards of the Clear Water Act. Other environmental protection programs in California that provide meaningful work for thousands of Californians include the manufacture of air pollution control systems, the operation of mass transportation systems like Bart, and the rehabilitation of urban housing. This challenges the conventional wisdom that the protection of the environment and the creation and protection of jobs are mutually exclusive. In fact, protection and renewal of the urban and rural environment of California can be a source of significant employment in the private sector.

The current employment crisis is not a short term disease, like a cold, that we can cure and forget about. It is rather one of the symptoms that present profit and growth oriented economic system the State and the nation depends on to produce not only the necessities of life, but the jobs we all depend on for survival, is not working. It parallels another symptom that has been ignored by those who attempt to decipher and guide the economic machine, the destruction of the environment we also depend upon for the necessities of life. The two are tied together and must be approached together. Unemployment in California can now be seen as an opportunity, unpleasant to many, for a reexamination of the assumptions of the present economic system, and experimentation with solutions and approaches that attempt to address not only the immediate crisis, but the need for a long-term shift in priorities to prevent the occurrence of more and greater crises in the future. A truly "ecological" approach sees the unemployed -- the human worker -- as a participant in the natural life support mechanism, and recognizes that employment must also mean replenishment of the environment and development of the human person. Diversity, human scale, community orientation, self-sufficiency,

and recognition of longer term consequences and needs are a part of that ecological approach....a Green Collar Revolution.

With this in mind, employment programs are submitted, each designed using the criteria of a new agenda for California:

1. Reduction or nonexpansion of government services and involvement.
2. Protection of the present environment and/or renewal of damage to the environments of the state, both urban and rural.
3. Self-sufficiency and satisfaction for the employed through the development of new marketable or personally useful skills.
4. Implementation possible in a variety of time frames, rather than a rush attempt to meet today's crises.
5. Development of immediate programs into long-term employment.
6. Repayment to the state of front-end investment whenever possible.
7. Utilization of existing state, community, environmental and labor organizations whenever possible to prevent expansion of state staffs and programs.
8. Fostering of cooperation among environmental, labor, and community-minority organizations.

Programs submitted fall into environmental categories, such as urban rehabilitation, wilderness protection, and pollution control. They also are identified by time frame, i.e., short, medium and long term. Cooperation among state agencies

is stressed in several of the recommendations, as is cooperation between citizen groups and cooperation with the private sector.

Programs are listed in brief descriptions and detailed in separate reports. A chart showing key points for comparison follows.

The list is by no means exhaustive and the time frames listed are not restrictive.

All of the listed programs have medium term potential and most can be developed to provide long-term employment.

Suitable for Short-Term Implementation.

1. Unemployed teachers and college graduates work with cities and to develop field environmental data currently not available but required for proper planning and for completion of EIR's. After initial training, the researchers could train unemployed youth to collect samples and record observations under the supervision of the researchers. Pilot project could be launched in suburban developing counties such as Santa Barbara, San Diego, Marin; in geothermal counties of Lake and Sonoma; three to five researchers and eight to ten youth in each county.
2. Begin retrofitting of state buildings with devices to conserve energy and water. Unemployed construction workers and welfare dropout youth would be trained in the techniques and equipment and put to work on one or more buildings.
3. Retrofit state buildings in southern California with alternative energy systems. The technology exists now and can be installed by unemployed construction workers to reduce or totally eliminate dependence on standard energy sources.
4. Start up and operate local paper, glass and metal recycling centers in ghetto neighborhoods. Local welfare and unemployed resident would be employed and the proceeds could be returned to the community.
5. Set up local wine-bottle washing and return centers similar to Alameda County's Encore program. Residents are paid to work in the program and the proceeds of the sale of bottles to wineries not only pay those who bring in bottles but can make the program self-supporting.

6. Training and creation of air and water pollution patrols in conjunction with or similar to those operated by volunteers of the Oceanic Society San Francisco. Unemployed junior college and college graduates, and ghetto youth can be trained to identify, photograph and sample pollution. Boats and planes are supplied by environmentalists, who receive a federal tax write off. Patrol members are trained by and supplement pollution control agencies and Coast Guard.

7. Teams of unemployed youth are trained in the mechanics of 10-speed bicycles and tour city and suburban schools and service clubs holding bike clinics and encouraging the use of bikes.

8. Unemployed and welfare men and women are trained to drive and maintain passenger vans and are enrolled in a program to supply jitney and dial-a-ride service in transportation-poor areas. Participants would eventually pay for and own vans and become self-supporting.

9. The Association of California Loggers and the Resources Agency combine forces and CETA funds to train unemployed loggers in the techniques of the environmentally protective "skyline" logging (required in some areas by the regulations of the Board of Forestry). Skyline-trained crews are rare or non-existent in the State.

10. Urban gardens are established in roof tops and vacant land in cities using federal matching available for this purpose. Residents are trained in vegetable gardening and paid to supply the community with fresh vegetables.

Medium and Long-Term Implementation Programs.

11. The State institutes the use of recycled paper in all possible state operations and begins to collect and recycle all of its paper.
12. The State undertakes retooling of its printing facilities to use nothing but recycled paper. This includes Xerox, which is asked to develop and convert its machines to recycled paper. (Actually, new Xerox machines will print on just about any paper; the only known hangups are in the paper feed mechanisms, easily solved by requiring paper from the recycle plants of correct weight and texture.)
13. Unemployed youth and welfare recipients are trained with LEAA funds by local sheriffs, police, and federal enforcement agencies to police the illegal use of off-road vehicles, dirt bikes and dune buggies on State and Federal lands.
14. State mandates the retrofitting of all ORV's, dirt bikes, dune buggies and racing boats with noise control equipment to reduce noise to acceptable levels. Currently operating ORV and motorcycle shops would be certified to perform the necessary testing and installation at the owner's cost.
15. State requires the construction of bicycle parking areas in all public facilities and begins installation in state buildings.
16. The Association of California Loggers and the Resources Agency combine forces to recruit and train unemployed loggers to restock state lands that have been cut over and not restocked or restocked poorly.
17. The Association of California Loggers and the Resources Agency combine forces to recruit and train unemployed loggers and others to establish

and manage restocking nurseries to provide seedlings to public and private restocking programs.

18. The State uses federal mass transportation funds and Prop. 5 funds to initiate the construction of bicycle trails and lanes that will enable bikes to go anywhere cars can now go. Combined with 7. and 14. (above) this can have the effect of increasing the use and sales of bicycles in the State and reducing a small amount of auto traffic.

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