

WELCOME DROPPING OF MURCHISON FALLS POWER  
SCHEME, UGANDA

Conservationists throughout the world will surely welcome the announcement last October by President Idi Amin that Uganda will *not* proceed with plans for a hydroelectric power station at Murchison Falls, centrepiece of one of the world's finest National Parks.\*

A WWF statement said: 'The Murchison Falls, where the Nile pours through a 20-foot gorge, are one of the natural wonders of the world, and are the focal point of an area abounding in African wildlife. Thousands of people have been drawn to Uganda to see this great spectacle, bringing 70 per cent of the country's tourist revenue.

'The World Wildlife Fund and the IUCN, together with other conservation organizations, had represented to the Uganda Government that this great world heritage should be conserved, and that the power scheme should be carried out elsewhere. The project would not only have reduced the Falls to a small stream, but construction work over some 20 years would have created such a disturbance in the area that the magnificent array of wildlife would have been driven away and possibly destroyed.

'Power schemes are necessary for economic development, but the World Wildlife Fund and the IUCN believe that natural assets, such as the Murchison Falls and their surroundings, should not be destroyed when other sources are available. They are pleased that Uganda will be able to obtain its electricity from the Aru Falls, and express the hope that successful development there will join the Murchison Falls National Park in contributing to the prosperity of Uganda.'

WORLD WILDLIFE FUND,  
1110 Morges,  
Switzerland.

\* See *Biological Conservation*, Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 309-10, July, 1970.

---

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES AT UNITED STATES  
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

In the United States as elsewhere, 'environment' and 'ecology' have literally become household words. Concern for the status and welfare of the natural environment can be said to have begun permeating the national consciousness with the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962. The *Torrey Canyon* and subsequent oil-spills added their impact, and perhaps the zenith of national concern and attention was approached with the first national Earth Day in the spring of 1970. As the challenges of environmental

stewardship and, indeed, biosphere preservation, have been recognized by increasing sectors of American society, institutions have begun to respond. Mass-media and publishing houses have produced an inundation of information (and misinformation); the Congress has held innumerable public hearings, enacted new legislation, and proposed far more; the executive branch has reorganized the federal environmental management machinery; and educational institutions have made some major efforts of note.

Files compiled by the author on approximately 100 North American colleges and universities indicate that environmental studies and/or environmental sciences are receiving widespread attention and often major emphasis. Somewhat traditional courses related to ecology, media (air, water, land) pollution and treatment, as well as to conservation in general, have seen significant increases in student enrolments. The increase includes persons moving towards professional careers in environmentally-oriented fields as well as those merely seeking greater information as concerned citizens. Serving the latter category, new courses dealing with the theme of 'Man and Environment', and which incorporate social, political, economic, and legal (as well as ecological) considerations, are flourishing.

Three examples from the University of Michigan are illustrative of national trends: (1) *Natural Resources Ecology* treats aspects and problems of integrated resource management and use. Offered by the School of Natural Resources for well over a decade, enrolment once consisted of 30-40 undergraduates from the School in the single term each year in which the course was offered. Since 1970, however, enrolment has been approximately 200 students for each of the two terms during which the course is offered. They are primarily upper-classmen and almost all are enrolled in liberal arts, engineering, and other colleges of the University, and are not, initially, pursuing degrees in natural resources; (2) *Wildlife Ecology* once drew but 10-20 'professional' wildlife students each year. Since 1970, aided by a dynamic professor, the course has drawn over 130 students, nearly half of whom come from liberal arts or other schools and colleges besides the sponsoring School of Natural Resources; (3) In response to student enrolment pressures on extant courses, a new course on *The Human Environment* was developed and first offered in 1970-71 jointly by the Department of Zoology in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and by the School of Natural Resources. Billed as 'An inquiry into Man's impact on his surroundings, with special emphasis on ecological aspects of natural resources, world food supply, human population, and pollution', the course drew over 200 enrollees in each of two sections during

each of the two terms in which it was first offered—*i.e.*, over 800 students in its first year. Enrolment was primarily of under-classmen from diverse academic homes in the University.

Beyond the mere changes in course offerings and enrolments, however, are the structural changes in the colleges and universities themselves. Several relatively new institutions (less than ten years old) have begun their educational tasks by structuring their faculty and their students not about traditional departmentalized disciplines, but rather about ecological or other integrative environmental themes. And older, established institutions lacking the total flexibility of those starting completely anew, are creating environmental studies programmes and majors, centres, and institutes, which serve to cut across the traditional disciplines and to foster interdisciplinary teaching and research. These changes are both promising and generally unproven, as the operating time in almost all cases has been so brief. There are well over a score of this latter class of new institutional creations now extant in the United States.

Interest in environmental studies and allied sciences in higher education extends beyond the halls of Academe, of course. Federal interest is represented in part by allocation of funds, by the Office of Education and the National Science Foundation, for educational and research efforts that are interdisciplinary in their approach to environmental problem-solving. Private

foundations are investing notable sums in these directions as well. The Rockefeller Foundation alone has allocated \$5.3 millions since late 1969 through its new 'Quality of the Environment' programme. Most grants have gone to universities, and at least three have been made as three- or four-year development awards of between half and three-quarters of a million dollars each. The foundation support has been to institutions already having excellent resources in various departments, schools, and institutes, as well as ongoing programmes dealing with conservation, regional planning, pollution control, and related efforts. The support is to help them build up and coordinate studies focused on environmental problems, from which other institutions can benefit in setting up similar programmes.

Results of these varied efforts in American institutions of higher learning can not yet be evaluated adequately. The ultimate measure of their worth will be in the contributions made to environmental quality, and the associated impacts on society, of graduates of such programmes in the coming years.

WILLIAM C. JOLLY,  
*Assistant Director,  
Institute for Environmental Quality,  
University of Michigan,  
Ann Arbor,  
Michigan 48105, USA.*

---

## CONFERENCES & MEETINGS

'THE PROCESSES AND PROBLEMS OF SEEKING CONSERVATION': A SYMPOSIUM CONVENED BY AND HELD AT THE CENTRE FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION, AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, CANBERRA, AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY, 26-28 JUNE 1970

During the past few years a number of important conservation problems have arisen in Australia which have attracted a high level of public interest. Conservation is now a matter of great social and political importance, although the actual social and political processes involved are not well understood.

This Symposium was arranged by the Centre for Continuing Education, Australian National University, in consultation with members of the National Parks Association, and was attended by biologists, public servants, conservationists, and others, from throughout Australia. The broad objective of the Symposium was to analyse the processes whereby decisions are made that affect the proposals put forward by conservationists. It sought to achieve this objective by attempting to answer the following questions:

1. Who is responsible for deciding whether conservation proposals should be favoured?

2. How is inaccessible or scientific and technical information translated and transmitted in such a way that the essential matters emerge?
3. What paths are open for the citizen who wishes to conserve his natural heritage, and how is he most likely to achieve results?
4. What is the position of the politician or administrator who is caught between the conflicting demands of economic interests and conservationists?

Keeping in mind the objectives of the symposium, case-history accounts were prepared by various authors on major conservation matters which had become public issues within Australia.

Initially the broad purpose of the symposium was briefly outlined by the Chairman, Professor Donald Walker of the Australian National University. A political scientist from the University of Melbourne, Leon Peres, opened the symposium with a paper discussing the background of public administration and politics against which conservation decisions are made. This was followed by an outline of the issues involved in the mining for limestone of the Colong Caves near Sydney. In this Milo Dunphy, Honorary Secretary of the Colong Committee, said that in the past