

SPECIAL REPORT: PART I

Agenda 21: Swallowing America

If you remember, “We have to pass the bill [Obamacare] in order to know what’s in it,” you will know that America’s weak leaders are using federal bribes to do the same thing with the United Nations’ Agenda 21.

By Michael S. Coffman, Ph.D.

Since the '90s, the United Nations' Agenda 21 has been implemented nationwide at the federal, state and local levels, with very few people even being aware of it. It is dangerous because it destroys the most important civil liberty we have—private property rights.

Most Americans have read or heard of one or more federally funded programs promoting “sustainability.” Few citizens, however, know these programs are based on a major U.N. program called Agenda 21, which is buried in smoke and disinformation generated by the government and its partners in the media. This U.N. program is very dangerous to our personal liberties and the stealth with which Agenda 21 has been implemented should concern everyone.

The Miracle of a Great Nation

Wealth creation and liberty are impossible without legally protected private property rights—which are the cornerstone of all other liberties. This is why Agenda 21 takes direct aim at eliminating them. This critically important principle is no longer being taught in public schools, but was well-known to our Founders. James Madison wrote: “Government is instituted to protect property of every sort; as well as that which lies in the various rights of individuals...this being the end of government, that alone is a just government, which impartially secures, to every man, whatever is his own.”

This may sound crazy if you are less than 50 years old and educated in the public school system. For more than 60 years, the education change artists have successfully removed any hint of this all-important principle. Yet it was widely known and understood by all colonists as the primary principle of “whoever owns the property owns the people depending on it to live.” Wayne Hage, a Nevada rancher who successfully fought a major property rights case in the U.S. Court of Claims during the 1990s and 2000s, made the concept even simpler:



RUSSIAN AD ENHANCED BY JOHN BARDWELL

Oh, the bounty! A 60-year-old poster extols the Soviet experiment with communal agriculture which was central to the Communist plan and possibly the most tragic failure in modern history. Millions needlessly starved to death while Soviet bureaucrats drank French wine produced on private property. The United Nations wants the developed world to try that again—especially the United States.

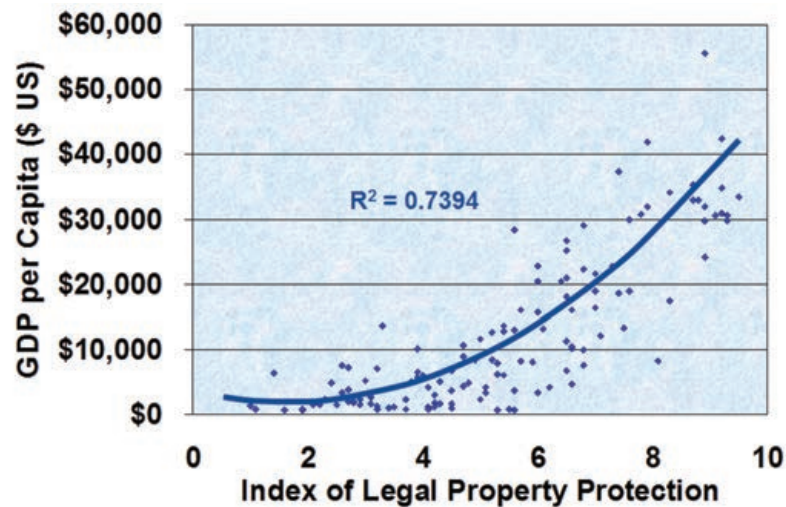
“If you don’t have the right to own and control property, then you are property.”

With the exceptions of safety, harm and nuisance restrictions, property rights were the backbone of U.S. law until the mid-20th century. It allowed the creation of a powerful middle class and their ability to create wealth that benefited all people. This was unheard of until the late 1500s when Sir Edward Coke wrote that all men should have the right to own legally protected property. Sir Edward then established an independent judiciary in England that brought those rights laid down in the Magna Carta to the common man. Those rights provided the driving force for expansion of the British Empire and, more recently, the United States.

In the late 1990s, the World Bank commissioned a global study to determine why capitalism failed so miserably in the former communist and developing nations but succeeded in the West. The results are presented in a stunning book, “The Mystery of Capital,” by Peruvian Hernando de Soto, president of the Institute for Liberty and Democracy. De Soto found that the common denominator underlying every failure around the world was the lack of easily obtained and inexpensive legal title to property. The process is simple to understand. Capital is required to start, expand or buy a business. In more than 70 percent of cases, that capital is obtained by using the equity in land, homes, stocks and other assets owned by an individual. Without title to that property, there is no way to secure an equity loan.

The effect is enormous. The wealth of a nation can be found in a simple graph of per capita gross domestic product (GDP) over an index of private property. The index of legal property rights accounts for 74 percent of all variation of per capita GDP. Western nations have varying degrees of formal property rights; the communist and former communist nations do not, or have only recently begun to obtain them. The World Bank noted at the time: “While the concept seems simple, very few property owners actually hold official government-licensed titles outside the United States, Canada, Australia, Western Europe, and Japan. De Soto estimates that nearly five billion people are legally and economically disenfranchised by their own governments. Since these people do not have access to a comprehensive legal property system, they cannot leverage their assets to produce additional wealth. They are left with what De Soto calls dead capital.”

Property Legal Protection Index and GDP per Capita



Source: James Gwartney and Robert Lawson. *Economic Freedom of the World – 2005 Annual Report*. Fraser Institute, 2005.
<http://www.fraserinstitute.ca/shared/readmore.asp?sNav=pb&id=789> and CIA World Fact Book.
<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/rankorder/2004rank.html>

The basis of wealth creation for every nation is legally protected private property rights. The better the legal protection, the greater the wealth of the nation. SOURCE: James Gwartney and Robert Lawson, from Economic Freedom of the World - 2005 Annual Report, Fraser Institute, 2005.
<http://www.fraserinstitute.ca/shared/readmore.asp?sNav=pb&id=789> and CIA World Fact Book.
<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/rankorder/2004rank.html>

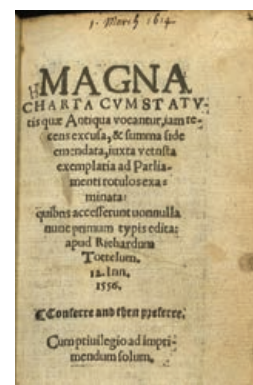
Agenda 21 Destroys Private Property Rights

Any infringement of private property rights beyond “harm and safety” can have a huge negative impact on liberty and wealth creation. As mentioned above, Agenda 21 cannot be implemented without destroying private property rights, yet that is what the United Nations unequivocally states must be done. At the Habitat I Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia, in 1976, a U.N. document stated: “Land...cannot be treated as an ordinary asset, controlled by individuals and subject to the pressures and inefficiencies of the market. Private land ownership is also a principal instrument of accumulation and concentration of wealth and therefore contributes to social injustice; if unchecked, it may become a major obstacle in the planning and implementation of development schemes. The provision of decent dwellings and healthy conditions for the people can only be achieved if land is used in the interests of society as a whole. Public control of land use is therefore indispensable.”

The United Nations has it backwards. Like so many “noble” schemes socialists and progressives implement to help the poor or save the environment, their policies accomplish exactly the opposite. European green

energy, another Agenda 21 folly, has turned into a disaster and shown that green policies were disconnected from reality from the start. (See “The Disconnect,” Fall 2013, at www.rangemagazine.com.)

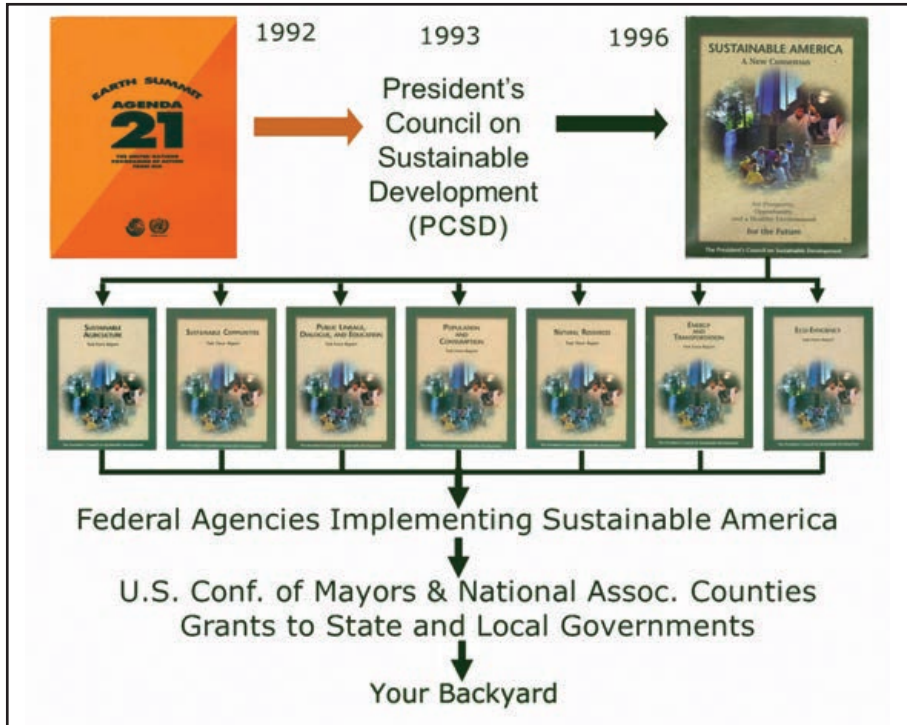
Money is one of our private property rights. By taxing citizens to fund an ideological boondoggle in green energy, the govern-



Sir Edward Coke changed the Magna Carta in the 1500s to allow the common man to own legally protected property. Those rights provided the driving force for expansion of the British Empire and, more recently, the United States.

ment is stealing from its citizens, thereby denying them the ability to use their property in a way that can create wealth. The entire economy falls into a bureaucratic malaise—exactly what has happened in Europe for over 100 years and more recently happened in the United States thanks to all presidents except Reagan, especially Carter and Obama.

People in impoverished nations are



How Agenda 21 got into your backyard: the IUCN helped write the U.N. Agenda 21 signed by President Bush at the 1992 Earth Summit. The IUCN also dominated President Clinton's President's Council on Sustainable Development from 1993 to 1999. The PCSD published "Sustainable America" in 1996, along with seven subdocuments, with goals that were quietly promoted by all federal agencies which worked through the U.S. Council of Mayors and the National Association of Counties. The agencies provided grants to state and local governments. These grants are linked back to Sustainable America and ultimately to Agenda 21 with almost no one knowing it.

locked into poverty. Meanwhile, the income of the middle class in rich nations will gradually diminish, especially as income redistribution sucks the life out of those who produce and gives it to those who don't. Agenda 21 and sustainable development, accompanied by an ocean of ignorance, is the perfect vehicle to accomplish transferring property rights from the people to the government—all under the guise of bringing prosperity.

What is Agenda 21?

In its introduction, Agenda 21 claims to be "a comprehensive blueprint for action to be taken globally, from now into the 21st century." The U.N. ambition was high, and so were its stated goals: improving the living standards of those in need; to better manage and protect the ecosystem; and to bring about a more prosperous future for all. Despite its noble propaganda, many people of both political parties strongly oppose Agenda 21 because they know it can never accomplish prosperity and livability. They also know that agenda-driven bureaucrats can never create a dynamic, vibrant economy that creates jobs.

Stunning in its magnitude, Agenda 21 covers everything from human population to urban development, global warming, destruction of biodiversity, women's rights, and much, much more. (See sidebar.) Although it has no enforcement ability, its existing and proposed enforcement treaties will eventually provide a web of interlocking international laws that would regulate virtually every aspect of human interactions with each other and the environment. Until then, the executive branch is going around Congress to make policy changes that implement it piecemeal.

The IUCN

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature is a nongovernmental organization that allegedly serves as a scientific advisor to the United Nations. It has more than 880 state and federal government agency and nongovernmental organization (NGO) members in 133 countries. Federal members include the U.S. Department of State, Commerce, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, National Park Service, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and others.

Since the 1970s, these federal agencies collaborated with the majority of environmental organizations in the United States behind closed doors to craft treaties and develop policies they, not Congress, believe the United States should implement. This unholy alliance between federal agencies and special interest groups is against the law, but Congress has shown no interest in stopping it.

As members of the IUCN that developed Agenda 21, these federal agencies began to prepare implementation of Agenda 21 as early as 1993 when an EPA internal working document laid out the plan: "Natural resource and environmental agencies... should...develop a joint strategy to help the United States fulfill its existing international obligations [e.g., Convention on Biological Diversity, Agenda 21]. *The executive branch should direct federal agencies to evaluate national policies...in light of international polices and obligations, and to amend national policies to achieve international objectives.*" (Boldface added)

The Convention on Biological Diversity has never been an "existing international obligation" because it was never ratified by the Senate. This author plus three others stopped its ratification an hour before the scheduled cloture vote for the treaty. More importantly, nowhere in the U.S. Constitution does it allow federal bureaucrats to "amend national policies to achieve international objectives." But that is exactly what happened. President Obama has made this approach to policy formulation the keystone of his administration today under the red herring that he "can't wait for Congress to take action." This is pure lawlessness and should alarm all citizens. But it hasn't.

Secretive Agenda 21

Meanwhile, Agenda 21 was being implemented in the United States by stealth through a new anti-property rights federal policy called Sustainable America, published by the Clinton administration in 1996. Birtthed in June 1993 when Clinton created the President's Council on Sustainable Development, it was no accident that half its 25 members also belonged to the IUCN. The latter guided the process from start to finish in near secrecy and the PCSD's purpose was "to begin translating the vision of Agenda 21 into U.S. action." Once Sustainable America was completed, it was broken into seven subdocuments: (1) Eco-Efficiency; (2) Energy

and Transportation; (3) Population and Consumption; (4) Public Linkage, Dialogue, and Education; (5) Sustainable Agriculture; (6) Sustainable Communities; and (7) Natural Resources.

Members of the PCSD, in its document, "Toward a Sustainable America," urged every federal agency to immediately begin implementing Agenda 21: "Upon receiving the report, the president asked us [the PCSD] to begin implementing our recommendations. Among our first actions, the Council worked in partnership with the federal government to support the efforts of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National Association of Counties as they created the Joint Center for Sustainable Communities in 1996."

Without the name Agenda 21 or Sustainable America even being mentioned, programs with sizable cash grants were announced to local governments. Each one was heavily promoted using the theme of becoming more "prosperous and desirable places to live." The American Planning Association and the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives had dozens of templates and manpower to help cash-strapped communities "plan" for the 21st century.

These local government officials were happy to take the money and had no understanding of what was happening to them, or cared that they were implementing Sustainable America and Agenda 21. When concerned citizens accused elected officials of implementing Agenda 21, they could adamantly say they were not, because they really didn't know they were.

Since the 1990s, most, if not all, planning grants from any federal agency have been linked back to Sustainable America and Agenda 21. They are always wrapped in motherhood-and-apple-pie rhetoric like prosperity, livability and environmental harmony, but in fact they transfer private property rights to the government.

If the plan is regional, the regional body (made up of bureaucrats and nongovernmental environmental organizations) sets priorities and policy and is almost never accountable to the citizens because members are not elected by those citizens. At the same time, the elected local government officials no longer have control over what happens in their community, they will only have one representative on a regional council of 10 to 20 members and the council can pretty much do what it wants while remaining

unaccountable to the citizens over whom it has authority to do and enforce almost anything it dreams up and implements.

The strategy used to implement Agenda 21 in the United States through Sustainable America can only be classified as a diabolical way to strip American citizens of their property rights and liberty. Don't expect Congress to do anything because it is controlled by progressives on both sides of the aisle who agree with this absolute control. It is time to expose and stop it community by community across America. ■

Dr. Michael Coffman is president of Environmental Perspectives Incorporated (epi-us.com) and CEO of Sovereignty International (sovereigntyinternational.org). He has had more

than 40 years of university teaching, research and consulting experience in forestry and environmental sciences and now geopolitics. He has led a multimillion-dollar research effort on climate change and was one of four who stopped the ratification of the U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity one hour before the Senate cloture vote. He has authored numerous books and videos, the two newest being "Plundered: How Progressive Ideology Is Destroying America" and "Radical Islam in the House." Both books can be found at AmericaPlundered.com. He can be reached at 207-945-9878 or epinc@roadrunner.com.

**See Special Report: Part II
"Implementation by Stealth,"
on next page.**

MARCHING TOWARD TYRANNY

Agenda 21 is a 40-chapter document to control human activity. Its goals cover "social and economic dimensions," "conservation and management of resources for development," "strengthening the role of major groups," and "how to implement." Here are some of the goals and highlights:

International cooperation to accelerate sustainable development in developing countries and related domestic policies. ■ Combating poverty. ■ Changing consumption patterns. ■ Demographic dynamics and sustainability. ■ Protecting and promoting human health conditions. ■ Promoting sustainable human settlement development. ■ Integrating environment and development in decision-making. ■ Protection of the atmosphere. ■ Integrated approach to the planning and management of land resources. ■ Combating deforestation. ■ Managing fragile ecosystems: combating desertification and drought. ■ Managing fragile ecosystems: sustainable mountain development. ■ Promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development. ■ Conservation of biological diversity. ■ Environmentally sound management of biotechnology. ■ Protection of the oceans, all kinds of seas, including enclosed and semi-enclosed seas, and coastal areas and the protection, rational use and development of their living resources. ■ Protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources: application of integrated approaches to the development, management and use of water. ■ Environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals, including prevention of illegal international traffic in toxic and dangerous products. ■ Environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes. ■ Environmentally sound management of solid wastes and sewage-related issues. ■ Safe and environmentally sound management of radioactive wastes. ■ Global action for women towards sustainable and equitable development. ■ Children and youth in sustainable development. ■ Recognizing and strengthening the role of indigenous people and their communities. ■ Strengthening the role of nongovernmental organizations: partners for sustainable development. ■ Local authorities' initiatives in support of Agenda 21. ■ Strengthening the role of workers and their trade unions. ■ Strengthening the role of business and industry. ■ Scientific and technological community. ■ Strengthening the role of farmers. ■ Financing sustainable development. ■ Technology transfer. ■ Science for sustainable development. ■ Education, public awareness and training. ■ Capacity building in developing countries. ■ International institutions. ■ International legal instruments. ■ Information for decision-making.

Nice ideas, if you don't care about private property rights and personal liberty.

SPECIAL REPORT: PART II

Implementation by Stealth

How Agenda 21 works. By Michael S. Coffman, Ph.D.

The federal agencies...express a very different view of property rights," says Bob Solari, county commissioner of Indian River County in Florida. "In short, they believe that property ought to be used in ways consistent with its best use for the collective. Indian River residents still believe that while understanding and appreciating the needs of the community, it is the individual who should, in the final analysis, determine what is in the best use of her property."

Agenda 21 is spreading across America like wildfire. It is deeply entrenched within federal agencies and increasingly in state and local agencies and departments. It uses tax dollars to implement "sustainable" federal programs locally that destroy private property rights. Very few of the elected officials embracing the tenets of Agenda 21 and its

U.S. enabling policy, Sustainable America, know they are actually implementing an international agenda.

Past articles in *RANGE* have discussed many aspects of Agenda 21 schemes such as the global warming/green energy and biodiversity debacles. President Obama is dogmatically and recklessly determined to destroy America's economy by forcing Americans to use the same failed green-energy policies that are destroying Europe. (See "The Disconnect," *RANGE*, Fall 2013.) Similarly, millions of acres are being regulated out of human use to satisfy a pantheistic belief that nature is god and her biodiversity must be protected at all costs. (See "Watch Out" at www.rangemagazine.com/Winter 2011.)

Global warming (or climate change) and biodiversity are but two chapters of 40 in

Agenda 21. (See sidebar on page 33.) Other chapter themes also have a huge impact on America.

Smart Growth Plus

Smart growth/comprehensive planning and watershed management seek to preserve land in a natural or agricultural state by packing people into denser communities. The problem is that smart growth does none of the things it's alleged to do and it actually accelerates the ills it is supposed to cure.

For one thing, land-use zoning has a devastating impact on the cost of land. The Harvard Institute of Economic Research showed that city zoning dramatically increases the cost of land in urban areas using comprehensive planning ordinances. Its study found that in cities employing smart growth and comprehensive planning, real estate costs for a quarter-acre lot skyrocketed by hundreds of thousands of dollars. "In these areas," the study claims, "only a small percentage of the value of the lot comes from an intrinsically high land price; the rest is due to restrictions on construction."

Another in-depth study by Randal O'Toole published in "The Planning Penalty" found that, in 2005, smart growth and other land-use restrictions cost U.S. homebuyers at least \$275 billion. Almost all the 124 metropolitan areas experiencing affordability problems in that year were directly caused by comprehensive planning and smart growth. Most enlightening, the report found that "more than 30 percent of the total value of homes in this country is attributable to prices inflated by planning-induced housing shortages." This contributed to the wild increases and speculation in housing prices from 2000 to 2006, which inevitably led to the housing crash between 2007 and 2012, and the financial crash of 2008.

These are only two of many studies that have shown smart growth is a fraud and anything but smart.

Florida's Seven/50 plan

The Seven/50 plan is supposed to be "a blueprint for ensuring economic prosperity and



The southeastern Florida Seven/50 plan, funded by federal grants, claims it has nothing to do with Agenda 21, yet it is a cookie-cutter example of thousands of similar plans across America that are right out of the Agenda 21/Sustainable America playbook. SOURCE: <http://seven50.org/>.

the best-possible quality of life for southeast Florida.” It is a 50-year plan for seven counties that gushes with emotion-laden slogans like “leverage resources,” “drive competitiveness and prosperity,” “greater opportunities,” “sustained job creation,” “open space,” “transportation options,” “environment-friendly,” ad nauseam.

As with the thousands of other efforts to implement Agenda 21/Sustainable America across the United States, the process starts with a federal grant or grants. In this case it was from the federal Sustainable Communities Program of U.S. Housing and Urban Development, Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Transportation. The \$4.25 million grant for the Seven/50 plan sets up a nonelected regional council made up of a federal/state management team and an executive committee comprising nonelected people from within the community.

In other cases across the nation, the council may have one commissioner (or equivalent) from each county or city council. In any event, the council is not accountable to the people who will have to submit to the plans and pay the supporting tax dollars to fund the council’s sustainability plans.

A series of workshops are held in different areas, allegedly to get input from citizens. However, the workshop conclusions are set in advance using the Delphi technique to herd citizens to a predetermined outcome.

“The moment the idea is admitted into society, that property is not as sacred as the laws of God, and that there is not a force of law and public justice to protect it, anarchy and tyranny commence.”

—JOHN ADAMS, 1787

The first step is to get citizens to form a “vision” of what they would like to have their community look like in 25, 30, or, in this case, 50 years.

The attendees of the workshops are split up into breakout groups of citizens, government (federal and state) officials, and project supporters. Each group goes through a set of pictures—one aesthetically pleasing matched with a drab, uninviting one. The pleasing



Urban growth boundary in Portland, Ore. Land inside the boundary increases in value by as much as 20 times (inset) because developable land becomes artificially scarce while land on the other side can never be developed, denying the farmer any chance at realizing increased value. It opens the door to corruption if speculators can pay off the planner to learn where the line will be drawn; they can then purchase the land at above market prices and still get fabulously rich. This is found in almost all Agenda 21/Sustainable America plans. SOURCE: Google Earth

picture is invariably picked by the group. Of course the only way the regional government could ever hope to accomplish this vision is by controlling everyone’s property rights.

Commissioner Bob Solari wrote a scathing letter to the executive director of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, which sponsored the Seven/50 plan. In it he charged that citizens felt manipulated and “that the entire exercise was simply an attempt to justify the already arrived-at decisions.” At no time “was there [any] discussion of cost to the community.” It was obvious the workshop organizers had “no knowledge of our local community” and that the goals of the plan “are often the antithesis of the values, goals and objectives of the majority of the citizens of Indian River County.... The process was driven by the federal government.”

National Blueways System

Another Agenda 21/Sustainable America program is the National Blueways System, a part of President Obama’s America’s Great Outdoors initiative. Created by former Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar on May 24, 2012, the National Blueways System joins water and land together for protection of entire

watersheds covering multiple states. It integrates the smart growth/comprehensive planning/biodiversity goals of Agenda 21, as well as its freshwater and integrated management. All wisdom, it seems, flows from Washington, D.C.

Past Federal Efforts

President Clinton attempted to implement similar programs in the mid-1990s, including the American Heritage Rivers Initiative (AHRI) and the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP). The AHRI’s objectives were environmental protection, economic revitalization, and historic and cultural preservation—the same as all Agenda 21/Sustainable America goals, but because of negative citizen feedback, it never got off the ground.

ICBEMP was birthed in 1993 and coordinated by the U.S. Forest Service (FS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM). It attempted to swallow up the entire Interior Columbia River Basin and is the biggest effort to date, encompassing 145 million acres that included most of Washington, Oregon and Idaho as well as portions of Montana, Wyoming and Utah. Although people rejected ICBEMP in 1997, the project



The goals of the 1993 Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project are the same as the National Blueways program today. It is the largest effort to date, occupying some 145 million acres in six states. Although citizens derailed it in 1997, it was reactivated in 2008 by federal agencies.

MAP SOURCE: USGS

never died and lived on with insidious malignancy like latent cancer cells. It quietly began to metastasize again when the FS, BLM, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the EPA quietly signed a Memorandum of Understanding in January 2008. The plan was to gradually implement it regardless of citizens' objections, beginning with federal lands.

Blueways Goals

Not surprisingly, the National Blueways program goals overlap with those of AHRI and ICBEMP: "Establish a program to recognize river systems conserved through diverse stakeholder partnerships that use a comprehensive watershed approach to resource stewardship. River systems designated as a National Blueway shall collectively constitute a National Blueways System. The National Blueways System will provide a new national emphasis on the **unique value and significance of a headwaters-to-mouth approach to river management** and create a mechanism to encourage stakeholders to integrate their land and water stewardship efforts by adopting a watershed approach." [Boldface added for emphasis]

Like the rest of the Agenda 21/Sustainable America ideas, the concept qualifies for motherhood-and-apple-pie status. Yet, like all other federal programs based on Sustainable America, it must destroy private proper-

ty rights to succeed. After all, to be "comprehensive," the federal government must have the power to force landowners into a very small box of land-use alternatives that protect the watershed and its values for everyone but the landowner.

The program allows a nonelected group of stakeholders, made up mostly of nonelected bureaucrats and nongovernmental environmental organizations, to set priorities and policy. Many if not most of these stakeholders do not live in the watershed itself, yet claim the right to say what landowners can do with their land. And, as with all regional governance resulting from Sustainable America programs, there may be the token representation of a county commissioner or city councilman to give the appearance of accountability to taxpayers.

The National Blueways program has been billed to the public as "voluntary." However, like so many other things that the federal government does not have constitutional authority to do, it entices the states into doing what the federal program dictates by offering huge financial grants. Even conservatives cannot refuse huge amounts of money dancing before their eyes.

The danger once the program is implemented is that grants for human infrastructure and sustainable programs can be offered to urban areas while grants for, say, highway maintenance and new highways are no

longer offered to suburban or rural areas. Only nature-based improvements are funded in these areas. And since human infrastructure improvements must be made to maintain economic prosperity, the theory goes that rural and suburban populations will get discouraged and move into town.

The ability to control state and local governments with this feudallike power is exactly why the Founding Fathers restricted the federal government to 18 enumerated powers in Article 1 of the U.S. Constitution—none of which were remotely related to land-use management.

By mid-2013, only two watersheds had been nominated as a blueway. The first is the 410-mile Connecticut River Basin that includes 7.2 million acres of Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut. The second is the 722-mile White River Basin that includes 17.8 million acres in southern Missouri and much of Arkansas. As with all Sustainable America programs, they promise prosperity and enhanced livability. Since private property rights are the foundation to wealth creation (see Part I), increased prosperity and livability cannot happen if private property rights are denied. Many more river basins are undergoing—or will undergo—similar National Blueways program nomination unless this destructive program is stopped.

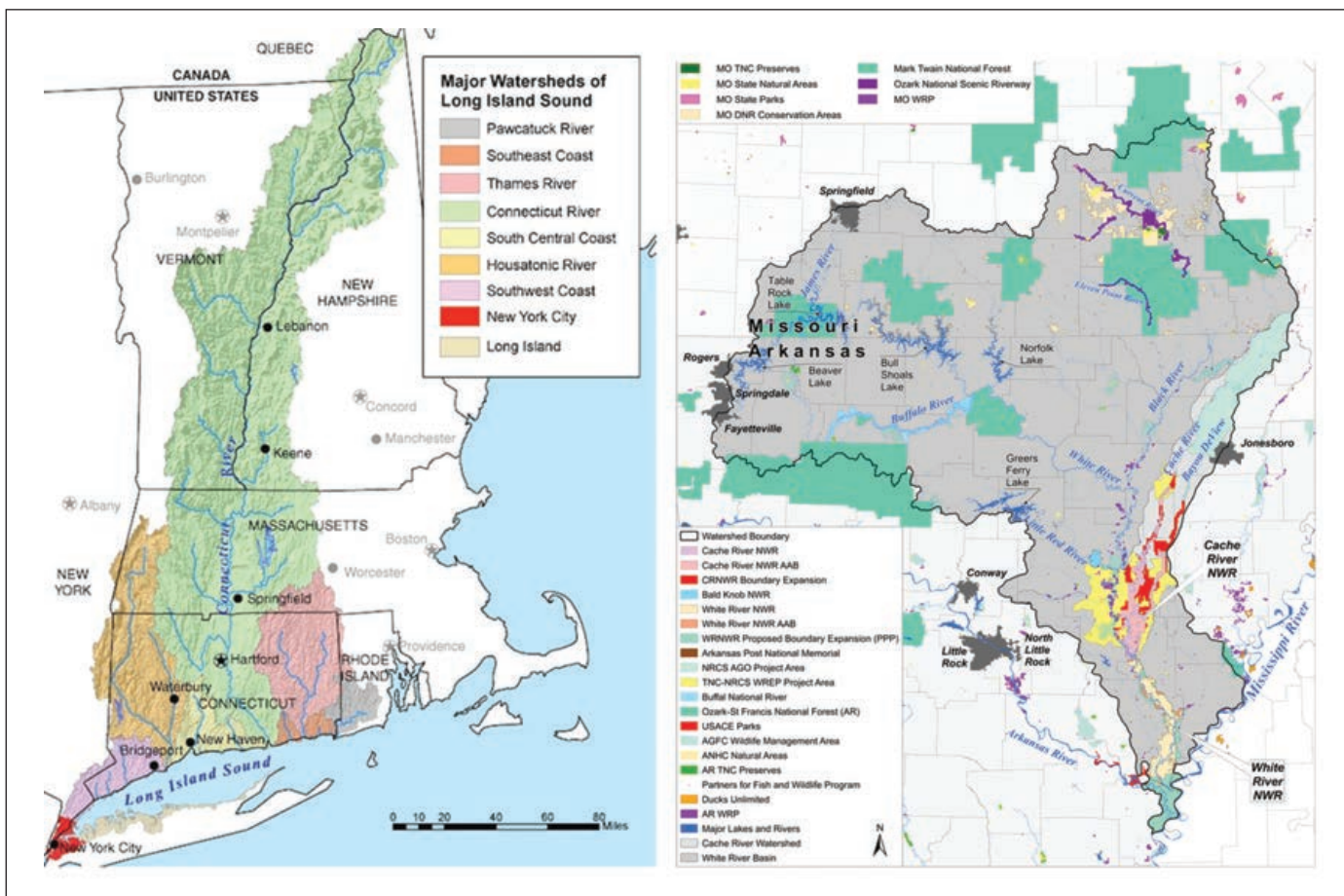
White River Blueway Derailed?

On June 26, 2013, the Arkansas Legislature and state agencies suddenly agreed to withdraw from the National Blueways System. No public hearings had been held prior to or after the designation of the White River Basin National Blueways program on Jan. 6, 2013. Neither the Arkansas and Missouri state legislatures nor the affected counties were ever informed of the designation. Conservative action groups found out about it in May. Following a meeting with grass roots on May 30 in St. Louis with this author and Tom DeWeese of the American Policy Center, a herculean effort was launched to inform all affected counties within the White River Basin. The deadline in which all comments on the designation had to be in was thought to be July 5.

During the next two weeks, the dangers of the National Blueways program were explained to nearly half the county commissioners at their normal business meetings. Of this half, almost all counties in both states

“The federal agencies...express a very different view of property rights. In short they believe that property ought to be used in ways consistent with its best use for the collective. Indian River residents still believe that while understanding and appreciating the needs of the community, it is the individual who should, in the final analysis, determine what is in the best use of her property.”

—BOB SOLARI, COUNTY COMMISSIONER, INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FLORIDA



By mid-2013, only two watersheds had been nominated in the National Blueways program. The first is the 410-mile Connecticut River Basin (left) that includes 7.2 million acres of Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut. The second is the 722-mile White River Basin that includes 17.8 million acres in southern Missouri and much of Arkansas.

passed resolutions strongly opposing the designation. The resolutions caused a political firestorm and Arkansas legislators called for a June 26, 2013, hearing. This author was asked to testify by Secure Arkansas, one of the most active conservative grassroots groups in the state. Unknown at the time, the firestorm led the Arkansas agencies—perhaps on order from Democratic Gov. Mike Beebe—to withdraw from the National Blueways program.

The agency heads were first to testify at the hearing on May 26, 2013. One by one each painfully announced his/her withdrawal and the involved federal agencies regretfully accepted the withdrawals. The hundred or

so grassroots citizens were ecstatic.

Perhaps the most encouraging part of the Arkansas hearing were the penetrating questions asked by the legislators of the heads of state agencies on how the program would not affect private property rights. After all, the National Blueways program explanation repeatedly used the words “protect” or “restore” back to original conditions, or to “manage” some feature to a desired condition, and much more. With verbiage like that, many legislators embarrassed the agency heads by asking how they thought this program could ever be “voluntary.”

The Arkansas experience should provide

hope for other grassroots groups which will expose and defeat the Sustainable America programs across the United States. So far, more than 150 communities have been successful in throwing out the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives or Agenda 21 from their state or local governments. Even so, the regional/comprehensive/smart growth zoning that is already in place must be reversed and zoning that does not violate the property rights of citizens must be reinstated. To do any of these things requires that candidates are elected who support private property rights.

Perhaps it’s time to think about running for office yourself. ■