

our environment

Kennicott Grove May Be Saved Yet!

One of the last remaining prairie groves in Illinois may still be saved from the hands of real estate developers, if local conservationists have anything to say about it. Kennicott Grove, a 240-acre tract that lies within Glenview Park District, just north of Chicago, is the subject of a bill introduced April 17 before the Illinois state legislature. The bill, proposed by Rep. John E. Porter (R-Evanston), would authorize the Illinois Department of Conservation to acquire the land for a state park. Porter estimates the land would cost about \$4,500,000. The bill has already received the endorsement of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee of the House.

Several large companies in the Kennicott Grove area have indicated an interest in providing funds for purchase of the land as a public tract, if such funds are needed. The Glenview Park District has also expressed interest in acquiring 100 to 125 acres; such a move would be determined by referendum. (For more on the history of Kennicott Grove, see the September, 1973, *Bulletin*.)

Public Meetings Held on Migratory Bird Hunting

The first of two annual public meetings to set migratory game bird hunting regulations for the 1974-75 season was held in Washington, D.C. on June 25. Proposed migratory shore bird and upland game bird hunting regulations were discussed. A second conference to discuss waterfowl hunting regulations will be held on August 6.

The June 25 conference heard reports from wildlife biologists on the status of mourning doves, woodcock, bandtailed pigeons, white-winged doves, rails, gallinules, and common snipe. The conferees also discussed a proposed set of regulations setting seasons and bag limits for these birds. Conference participants included regional and state fish and game officials plus representatives of the International Association of Game, Fish, and Conservation Commissioners, the Wildlife Society, the National Audubon Society, National Wildlife Federation, Izaak Walton League, Outdoor Writers Association, and the Wildlife Management Institute.

The public is invited to attend the August 6 waterfowl meeting. Those interested should

notify the director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C., or call (202) 343-6025. Written statements from the public should be sent to the director. To the extent that time permits, the committee will hear oral statements from the public at the completion of the agenda provided written copies are provided for the record.

Pollution "Threatens" Florida Coral Reef

Hen and Chickens Reef—a coral structure covering a few square miles just off the Florida Keys—appears to be dying a slow death, according to Lee Purkerson, Everglades National Park biologist. The reef, which lies in about 20 feet of water 75 miles south of Miami, is already 80 percent dead. Colonies of coral-forming polyps—which make up the remaining 20 percent—are slowly being killed by man, says Purkerson. Silt from dredging activities and the dumping of sewage favor the growth of algae on the coral, which is then deprived of light and food. Death for a reef also means death for the myriads of creatures that live on and around it. Among these are commercially important lobster and yellow tail snapper.

Spot checks of other reefs that make up the 160-mile arc of the Florida Keys reveal that Hen and Chickens is not the only imperiled coral reef. While some appear still healthy, other reefs are nearly dead.

Quieter Jets Sidelined by Fuel Shortage

Fuel shortages brought on by the energy crisis may be adding to the giant energy headache—*literally*. According to a recent study by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), some major airlines have replaced fuel-hungry 747s with more economical—but noisier—707s and DC-8s on certain routes.

Gaseous Fuel from Manure

Fuel from dried cattle manure is nothing new—it has been so used in many parts of the world for centuries. Modern technology has put a new twist, however, on this ancient resource. A Colorado firm has come up with a commercially feasible method of extracting methane gas from the manure, and using it to replace natural gas.

Monfort of Colorado, Inc., the world's largest cattle feed supplier, also has a large slaughtering and beef-packing operation—a by-product of which is 450,000 dry weight tons of manure from its feedlots each year. According to company spokesmen, 4,000,000 cubic feet of methane could be produced from the manure daily. The fuel value of this amount would be equal to the quantity of natural gas required to heat 10,000 homes. A Denver engineering firm has been granted an option by Monfort to produce the methane, which in turn would be used by Monfort to heat its packing plant, provide fuel for its tallow-rendering works, and steam-cook corn that is used for cattle feed.

Solar heat would be used to heat the manure to the proper temperature for bacteria growth. The bacteria chemically break down the manure, producing methane.

Cloud Seeding Used as U.S. Weapon in S.E. Asia

Weather modification, as a military weapon, was used by the U.S. Air Force from 1966 to 1972 over North and South Vietnam and Laos, the Department of Defense admitted recently. At a March 20 briefing, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was given a detailed report of military cloud seeding by DOD officials. Military officers at the briefing reported that cloud seeding had reduced the infiltration of North Vietnamese troops along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, especially in June 1971. They denied, however, that cloud seeding had been responsible for the massive floods that occurred in North Vietnam later in that year.

Chicago Air Getting Cleaner

The amount of airborne dust over Chicago is about 30 percent less than what was measured 5 years ago. According to the Department of Environmental Control, a daily average of 120 micrograms of atmospheric dust per cubic meter occurred during 1969, compared to an average of about 84 micrograms in 1973. (In 1966 a seasonal high of about 133 micrograms had been recorded.)

Since 1969 a progressive drop in the atmospheric dust has been noted. What these figures point to is this: At the present rate of air cleanup it appears that Chicago air will meet the federal air quality standard set for 1975. The target level is 75 micrograms per square meter.



1974. "Cloud Seeding Used as U. S. Weapon in S.E. Asia." *Field Museum of Natural History bulletin* 45(7), 10–10.

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