



COLORADO ENVIRONMENT 2000

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Colorado's Environmental Future: Where We Want To Be and How We Want To Get There

"What do we want for our environment, not only now but in the year 2000?"

Trying to define what we want for the environment is often at the bottom of our agenda. We try to solve the immediate problems, often just looking at separate pieces of the puzzle and not the whole problem. If we are to really make a difference in protecting Colorado's environment, we must set goals.

A goal is a purpose toward which an action is directed. Our actions in the environment need to have a longer term purpose and direction; we need to aim toward a target.

"I'm worried about the environment, but I just don't know what to do."

It is not enough to just articulate goals. We must put an action plan in place to realize them. The Colorado Environment 2000 project defines steps for action as initiatives. The project calls for everyone to display exceptional enterprise on behalf of the environment.

Colorado Environment 2000 has moved goals and initiatives to the top of the agenda. Inherent in the project's purpose is a recognition that we must continue to solve the immediate problems but that we must also focus on future well-being.

The Governor has charged the Citizen Advisory Committee of the Colorado Environment 2000 project with writing environmental goals and initiatives for the state. The Citizen Advisory Committee started work in July 1989, first learning about Colorado's most pressing environmental problems from a group of technical experts. (See *October Newsletter*.)

The committee then discussed their wish list for Colorado. They brainstormed the question, "Without imposing practical considerations, what do you want for Colorado's environment in the year 2000?"

At the next two meetings, the committee refined their wish

list, this time introducing the practical sides of the issues. The committee went from abstract wishes to concrete desires.

Each of these preliminary goals and list of initiatives is being reviewed by subcommittees of Citizen Advisory Committee members and further researched and refined. The work of these subcommittees will continue through December.

In mid January, Citizen Advisory Committee members will meet in an all-day session to finalize as many goals as possible. The rest will be wrapped up in a final meeting in February.

The goals cover almost every part of Colorado's environment, from recreation to air quality to environmental education. Some draft goals specify numeric standards to achieve by the year 2000, such as a 25% decrease in some pollutants. Other draft goals recommend more extensive environmental education or greater awareness of environmental issues in economic development activities.

Once we know where we want to be in the year 2000, we need to figure out how to get there. Each goal the Citizen Advisory Committee outlines will have an extensive list of initiatives or steps to achieve realization.

The success of goals and initiatives does not lie solely with state government or any other groups. Care for the environment does not fall to a selected few. Ultimately, all of us must take responsibility

for our environment. That is why initiatives for individuals, neighborhoods and businesses, communities and local governments, and the state are all listed. Everyone in Colorado has a vital role in making the goals for Colorado's environment a reality.

The Citizen Advisory Committee will present its work to Governor Romer and all Coloradans in February and March of 1990. From there, it will be up to all of us to ensure a healthy environmental future for Colorado and for Coloradans. ❖



Colorado's Environment: What the Citizen Advisory Committee Members Think

The Citizen Advisory Committee of Colorado Environment 2000 is a diverse group. In the words of Stan Shafer, Yuma County Commissioner, the CAC is a "...broad cross section of people, from a local housewife, clear to corporate personnel." In an effort to highlight this diversity—and to get some opinions on the project, Colorado, and the role of the CAC—we interviewed four Citizen Advisory Committee members: Renny Fagan, State Representative from Colorado Springs; Betsy Marston, Editor of High Country News; Greg Hobbs, a partner in the law firm of Davis, Graham & Stubbs; and Stan Shafer, Yuma County Commissioner.

◆ I. WHAT DO YOU FEEL ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN COLORADO TODAY?

B E T S Y M A R S T O N

Making a living in Colorado without continuing to damage natural resources. A second, more theoretical, question is how we change our thinking about environmental issues. We are not here to dominate or subdue but to get along...and figure out how to co-exist without exploiting. There are places that really cannot be replaced or reproduced...you can't destroy them and then mitigate. I think we have to come to that realization. (We must) develop an environmental ethic, a new way of looking at the way we live.

R E N N Y F A G A N

I think the most significant issue is, "How will Colorado plan for and respond to environmental problems?" We must foster cooperation between local and state government, different communities, west and east slopes, in order to achieve joint solution for such areas as land use patterns, transportation needs, air and water quality, solid waste disposal, and water resource management. Environmental concerns cut across political or regional boundaries, but our efforts for solutions often lack the same common approach. Working together, we can mobilize our resources and our will to effect difficult solutions.

G R E G H O B B S

Front Range urban air pollution is our single biggest environmental problem. It directly affects over three-fourths of Colorado's population. Fifty percent of the brown cloud can be traced to mobile sources using petroleum products as a fuel. Air quality, transportation planning, and land use must be tied together with the goal being a significant reduction in the growth of vehicle miles traveled. DRCOG (Denver Regional Council of Governments) has projected doubling of VMT (vehicle miles traveled) by the year 2010, from 32 million miles per day to 64

million miles per day. This kind of vehicle growth would require a huge financial commitment to roadways and cause a deterioration of the brown cloud—results we cannot afford as citizens. Our target for air quality, land use, and transportation planning purposes should be a 20% reduction of the total, or 50 million VMT for the six-county metropolitan area. We should shift our transportation investment into transit, paratransit, bikeways, and pedestrian walkways, and simultaneously adopt financial, governmental, and regulatory policies that will reinforce the use of alternative transportation. High-speed rail transportation from Fort Collins to Boulder with links to the metropolitan airport and livable urban areas with open space, well-planned activity and residential centers, an integrated system of bikeways and walkways, special transit for the elderly and handicapped—this could be a vision to match an unobstructed view of our glorious Front Range peaks in the next century.

S T A N S H A F E R

The most important issue facing our local community, as well as the state and nation, is solid waste disposal.

◆ 2. WHAT RESULTS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE FROM THE COLORADO ENVIRONMENT 2000 PROJECT?

B E T S Y M A R S T O N

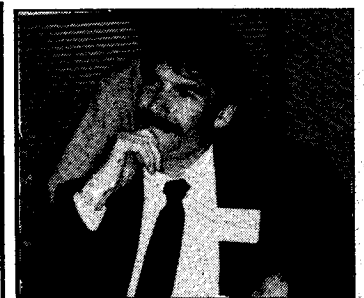
The first positive thing that is coming out (of the Colorado Environment 2000 Project) is the emphasis on identifying what actions we can take as a state and as individuals, instead of always looking to the federal government. The focus is on us as a state, and I think that's wonderful.

The next thing is education. I like the idea of a state commission that would give a general environmental report card every year. Romer has the power to start an annual review of the environment. The commission should address these issues:

Recycling. The commission could reach out to various communities because there are so many grass-roots efforts



Betsy Marston



Renny Fagan

springing up. The leaders in recycling are the people and they're way ahead of the state.

Environmental Education. What Romer says could become a reality, (that)...Colorado should be the national leader in environmental protection and awareness.

How do we make that happen? For example, there could be an environmental curriculum developed by the state that examines water usage. Where does our water come from? What is the link between rural communities and cities in terms of water supply, power supply, and roads? We should better understand the relationship of our lives to natural resources.

R E N N Y F A G A N

I hope that the Colorado Environment 2000 Project will identify both short and long-term environmental problems and map a strategy to solve them. This strategy may involve proposing policy changes at all levels of government, but the strategy must include individual and community efforts. Our planning should focus on educational efforts both during and after the schooling years to enable citizens to make sound environmental choices in their own behavior, like recycling, reducing automobile trips, and purchasing products made and packaged in an environmentally sound way. A citizenry making such choices can also influence the passage of regulation, when it is necessary.

G R E G H O B B S

Good hardheaded recommendations and policy suggestions that protect the air, land, and water of Colorado as an overall resource for the use and enjoyment of the citizens of the state—in their agricultural, municipal, commercial, and recreational pursuits—and preserving living space for all creatures who share this state with us.

S T A N S H A F E R

One, we could offer a good set of recommendations to the regulatory and legislative bodies that would lead to an environmental control and that would be practical and economically feasible for everyone, from local communities to all levels of government. Control would still provide clean water and air and maintain our scenery and so forth.

Two, we could encourage more in-depth research on disposing of solid waste and hazardous waste. I feel that there has got to be a better way than just burying it or sealing it up and putting

it away somewhere. Maybe we could even recycle some of this hazardous waste back into a usable substance of some kind.

♦ **3. IF YOU COULD MAKE ONE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE IN COLORADO, WHAT WOULD IT BE?**

B E T S Y M A R S T O N

I would not call for immediate change, but an opportunity to travel to the past. I would go back to the year 1800 and look at Colorado as it was before extensive settlement. We could see what we've lost through degrading it, through exploiting it, and through developing it.

Looking to the future, whenever we discuss the new airport, in same same breath we have to say nonpolluting mass transit. We have to say light-rail, we have to build in a nonpolluting component to any major development. At worst we are always going to stay the same, but at best we make it better, make it a really livable city, so you have a way to get to that airport, but a fast and a nonpolluting way.

R E N N Y F A G A N

The immediate change I would prefer is implementation of a greater coordinated long-range planning between governmental entities to resolve common problems, particularly air quality, solid waste management, and water resources.

G R E G H O B B S

Sales taxes are the primary component of local government income. This makes local municipalities and counties compete with each other for the available economic opportunities. As consumers, we don't really care about local jurisdictional boundaries when we go shopping, and we all suffer the environmental deterioration that results from poor and competing land use decisions. Some local communities thrive while others wither. Our taxing policy should share Colorado's economic pie and reward livable communities.

S T A N S H A F E R

If I was going to "flip a switch"... I would...get rid of our brown cloud over Denver. I live 180 miles from Denver, but it's still a concern of mine. And then, of course, we've got to keep our water pure and clean from now on. ♦

COLORADO ENVIRONMENT 2000

Dept. of Natural Resources
1313 Sherman St. Room 718
Denver, CO 80203
(303) 866-3311

Colo. Dept. of Health
4210 E. 11th Ave. Room 350
Denver, CO 80220
(303) 331-4510

Staff:
Kate Kramer, *Project Manager*
Tina Nielsen, *Economist*
Steve Norris, *Senior Analyst*
Andrew Sussman, *Assistant*



Stan Shafer

Citizen Advisory Subcommittee Tackles Problems of the Future

The Emerging Issues Subcommittee, a special subcommittee of the Colorado Environment 2000 Citizen Advisory Committee, met for the first time last month. Chaired by former Governor Dick Lamm, the subcommittee is addressing the environmental problems, or emerging issues, that have not yet appeared in Colorado but are likely to be of significant concern in the future.

These key questions were asked at the first meeting: What are the emerging issues we should address? How do we distinguish between current and emerging issues? How do we analyze the impact of the issues on Colorado? What steps can we take now to minimize those impacts? What should the group's final product look like? The group made good progress answering the first question and framed a general approach to answering the others. Subcommittee members will consider these questions further before the next meeting on January 4.

Transcending the more specific questions was a review of the major changes in environmental trends during the past 20 years. Subcommittee members identified about a dozen fundamental changes that will dramatically affect the way individuals, businesses, and governments develop solutions to emerging environmental problems.

The most pervasive changes relate to the nature of environmental problems, the difficulty of finding and implementing solutions, and the role of individuals in solving the problems. For example, the new generation of problems are global in scale. Such problems derive from activities caused by individuals and not factories. They threaten the very survival of plant and animal species, including *Homo sapiens*.

Although we do not see the devastating impacts of global warming, ozone depletion, or acid rain in Colorado today, we may in the next 20 years. The Subcommittee's task is to identify those serious environmental trends that will most threaten our future health and to prescribe a course of action to mitigate their impacts.

The task before the Emerging Issues Subcommittee constitutes a tremendous challenge. The need for clarity of the issues and direction for future action is great. The information provided by the subcommittee could go a long way toward minimizing future environmental problems.

If you would like more information about the subcommittee's activities and preliminary findings, or if you have information about emerging issues you feel would be useful, contact Colorado Environment 2000 staff member, Steve Norris. ♦

Colorado Environment 2000
Room 350
4210 E. 11th Ave.
Denver, CO 80220

3000 OHEP