

Environmental indicators dip for soil, water, wildlife

LANCASTER — After a year in which the "quality of life" remained virtually unchanged in the United States, halting a 10-year decline, four environmental indicators resumed their downward trend in 1980, the National Wildlife Federation reported in its 12th annual Environmental Quality Index survey.

Among the seven natural resources measured, water, wildlife, living space, and soil all suffered losses during the past year, the EQI study found.

The other three—minerals, air, and forests—remained unchanged.

For the first time in five years, none of the indicators showed any improvement.

Thus, this year's report, covering 1980, was gloomier than that for 1979, a year in which four of the indicators—water, wildlife, soil, and forests—held their own, while one—air quality—showed an improvement, and the remaining two—minerals and living space—declined.

Air quality is the only environmental indicator that is higher today than when the first survey was made in 1970, the National Wildlife Federation noted.

The EQI is an estimate of the quality of life in the U.S. based on a combination of objective measurements and the subjective judgments of the NWF staff in consultation with government experts and academic researchers. Five federal agencies—the Bureau of Land Management, the Council on Environmental Quality, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Forest Service, and the Soil Conservation Service—now cooperate with the Federation in the collection of resource data.

According to the 1981 EQI, last year conservationists anticipated the new decade with a "growing sense of trepidation."

A number of factors, including double-digit inflation, expensive energy supplies, urban decay, and soaring unemployment, caused the growth of popular sentiment against "overregulation," including some environmental rules and restrictions. Conservationists worried that many of their hard-won gains of the past ten years might be rolled back overnight.

"There were positive developments on a number of fronts in 1980," the EQI report notes. "But the thunderclouds are still building. The nation's current political climate may well signal even more stormy weather for

environmental programs in the months and years ahead."

Summaries of the 1981 EQI reports on the seven resources follow.

WILDLIFE

Down. While 1979 was U.S. wildlife's best year in a decade, last year the long downward slide resumed. The main reason: habitat loss.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reported that up to two million acres of habitat will disappear annually between now and the year 2000. The implications for wildlife are staggering.

We're already down to nearly half of the 200,000 square miles of wetlands that once existed in the Lower 48, and we've lost 20 million of the 25 million acres of hardwood bottomlands along the lower Mississippi River.

In some parts of the country last year man-made and natural disasters caused a decline in wildlife populations. Water tables in the Dakotas, western Minnesota and southern Canada were so low that waterfowl had a poor nesting year.

And in the Pacific Northwest, the eruption of Washington's Mt. St. Helens killed about 1.5 million wild animals.

The country's worsening economic situation didn't help wildlife last year.

Congress appropriated little cash for new refugees—the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's special fund for acquiring wetlands was slashed from a proposed \$31 million to \$18.5 million.

On the bright side, Congress passed and the president signed a bill authorizing up to \$5 million annually to help states pay for nongame and other wildlife conservation plans.

MINERALS

No Change. As it has every year since the 1973 Arab embargo, oil dominated the minerals scene in 1980.

With only six percent of the world's population, the U.S. continued to gobble up fully a third of all oil consumed last year—around 40 percent of it imported from other countries, which are steadily depleting their own resources.

One encouraging sign is that more and more Americans began making energy conservation an

important part of their daily lives. Here and there, entire communities waged war on waste last year, possibly heralding the advent of a nationwide conservation crusade.

But last year's passage by Congress of a costly (\$20 billion for the first five years) "synthetic fuels" program worries some conservationists who point out that extraction of a relatively small amount of oil and gas from shale, sand, and coal could cause massive environmental degradation.

AIR

No Change. Air quality continued to improve in many parts of the country last year, but pollution in some rural areas worsened as a result of a rapidly increasing phenomenon: acid rainfall.

Meanwhile, to head off mounting pressure to soften air-pollution regulations, EPA rolled back several deadlines, giving the slumping U.S. auto industry more time to meet exhaust standards and granting Ohio's utilities more time to burn local supplies of high sulfur coal without installing costly scrubbers.

These decisions were made despite evidence that acid rain—which occurs when coal or auto pollution combines in the air with water—has increased fiftyfold in the last 25 years over the eastern half of the country.

WATER

Down. Over much of the country, polluters have stopped dumping wastes directly into rivers and lakes and as a result many U.S.

waterways have become swimmable and fishable again.

But now there's an appalling new threat: unable to dump their toxic wastes into rivers and lakes, many industrial polluters have illegally buried or stored them on land. This has increased the flow of dangerous chemicals into the earth, and pollution of the ground water people use in their homes is increasing.

Last fall, a House subcommittee released a list of 2100 places around the nation where industrial wastes may be contaminating the water. Even ocean water is not safe these days.

Right now poisoned dredge soils are regularly dumped in 130 places off the coasts of 15 states.

In some parts of the U.S. ground water depletion, rather than pollution, is the main problem. Thirty years ago, Americans were using about 20 billion gallons per day from underground supplies. By last year, the amount had increased to nearly 90 billion gallons.

FORESTS

No Change. For the fourth consecutive year, the EQ trend for forests remains level, but the situation is far from stable.

A world timber shortages grow, there's mounting pressure to cut more wood. And although a depressed U.S. construction industry is keeping domestic demand low for now, consumption is expected to leap from 13.3 billion cubic feet in 1976 to 20.3 billion in 1990 and 28.3 billion in 2030.

There were some heartening developments in 1980. The federal

government proposed to reserve about 15.4 million acres of national forest as wilderness, with possible future additions of as much as another 10.6 million acres. And the government also pledged its support for less dependence on national forests for commercial timber, more incentives to increase production on private timberlands.

LIVING SPACE

Down. Conservationists became alarmed last year over a new grass-roots movement out West, called the Sagebrush Rebellion. This revolt against land-use controls on about 400 million acres of public western lands is more than a regional conflict. In some ways it's a symptom of nationwide discontent with government regulations.

What the rebellion boils down to is an attempt by special-interest groups in Nevada, Arizona, and elsewhere to transfer federal lands to state ownership. But conservationists point out that while federal management of our public lands is far from perfect, states would find the cost of properly managing the land unbearable.

As if the "rebellion" weren't enough, U.S. living space declined further in both quality and quantity last year.

The National Park Service reports that already overburdened parks are deteriorating because of overcrowding and pollution. Meanwhile, wasteful water projects continue to destroy pristine areas.

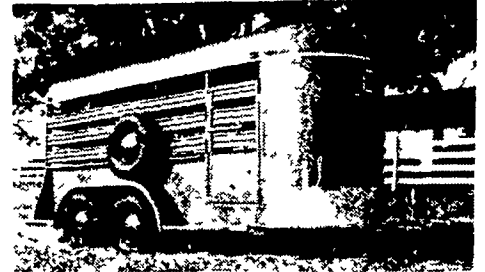
(Turn to Page D11)

FISHER AND STOLTZFUS TRAILER SALES

Call 717-768-3832 between 7 a.m. & 9 a.m.
or call 717-354-0723 after 6 p.m. East of New Holland, Pa.

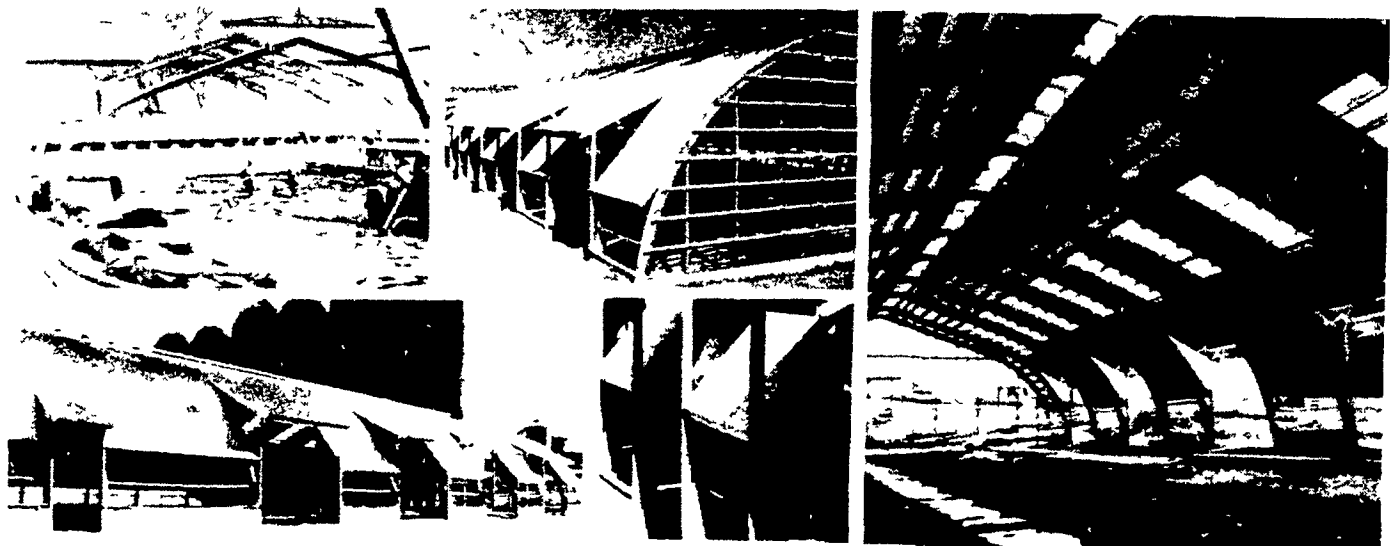


STANDARD LIVESTOCK TRAILERS WITH
METAL TOPS IN FRONT
COMES IN 14, 16, 20, 24' LENGTHS



SPECIALS - 6x16 BUMPER TRAILER
w/CANVAS — \$2395
Small Trailers For Tractors

This is what Laminated Rafters are all about...



Calf Nursery Animal Tending Cow Hospital

A VERY FUNCTIONAL BUILDING designed especially for the care of young stock and the individual attention a cow needs. Only the laminated arch provides this satisfying design with both flexibility and strength.

When a very satisfactory day-to-day operation is a must, Turkey Hill Farms, Lancaster County find their 68x168 foot Calf Nursery meeting their needs, with many features serving this building's intended purpose.

Rigidply Rafters, Inc.

Telephone (717) 866-6581

P.O. BOX 189A — RICHLAND RD 1 PA 17087

(301) 334-3977 OAKLAND RD 2 MD 21550

COMPLETE FARM PAINTING

INDUSTRIAL

RESIDENTIAL



COMMERCIAL

We Use Quality Paint

AERIAL LADDER EQUIPMENT

- Modern and Efficient Method
- Reasonable Prices
- Spray On and Brush In Method
- Sandblasting if Necessary

For Free Estimates Write or Call:

ESH SPRAY PAINTING

717-687-7007 or 687-8262

(Daniel S. Esh - C. Ralph Miller)

SPRAY-ON AND BRUSH-IN PAINTER

637 Georgetown Rd
Ronks, PA 17572