

A Case for Conservation



Alene N. Case

Do you get confused by the term "water quality?" Do you know what substances reduce the quality of water? Can you list actions that might improve the quality of water? If you are like most Americans, you probably have a general impression based on various things you have read or heard on the subject, but you hope you are never called upon to give a definition in public. Since I have spent the past 20 years or so as a water quality technician, perhaps I can share some insight and a few tidbits of information that will help you begin to understand this very important environmental concept.

The first thing to understand about water quality is that there is no single definition that is applicable in all situations. Consider the effects of discarding a pot of boiling water onto the petunias outside your back door—the water could be exceptionally pure, but the petunias will die because it was too hot. Therefore, boiling water is not high quality water if one is a petunia.

According to America's Clean Water Foundation, "water pollution is defined as the degradation of water quality that limits the use of the water for some purposes." So, before one can define water quality in any particular situation, one must know how the water will be used and what kinds of organisms will be doing the using. The cool, clear, well-oxygenated water

The basics of water quality

appropriate for the reproduction of trout may contain *Giardia* cysts that would lead to illness if I drank the water. Conversely, as anyone who has set up an aquarium knows, the very chlorine that prevents widespread illness among humans is mortally toxic to fish.

As with many environmental concerns, the water quality issue was first raised in relationship to human consumption. Over a century ago, outbreaks of typhoid and cholera were epidemic in many parts of the United States and Europe. Many towns and cities began to filter (through sand) and/or chlorinate their water supplies and to protect those supplies from inputs of sewage. Between 1900 and 1928, the death rate from typhoid dropped from 36 to 5 per 100,000 people in the USA. Unfortunately, bacterial contamination of water supplies is still the major human environmental problem worldwide. The World Health Organization estimates that 25,000 people die each day from drinking contaminated water that has not been properly disinfected. That is equal to 166 deaths per 100,000 people per year. In other words, the worldwide water quality problem is worse today than the US problem was in 1900.

But, you ask, what about all those chemicals I spent so much time analyzing in the laboratory? Things like iron, manganese, pH, alkalinity, heavy metals, hardness, nutrients and the like? Well, here again, the acceptable level depends in large part on the use to which the water can be put. Hardness is a measure of the amount of calcium carbonate and magnesium in the water. Soft water has very little of these compounds and is better for laundry because soap rinses out more easily. But, there is evidence that hard water is better to drink. Manganese is not a known health

hazard in humans, but I have known people who were irate about high levels of manganese causing dark spots on white clothing. Low pH is not necessarily dangerous to human health, but acid water passing through copper or lead pipes can dissolve enough of those metals to cause a problem.

Nutrients such as phosphate and nitrate continue to be major water quality problems in the United States. Nitrate levels in drinking water above 10 parts per million are considered dangerous to infants because its metabolites tend to block oxygen uptake in the blood and lead to the "blue baby" syndrome. It can also be dangerous for people on dialysis. It enters the ground water mainly from agricultural fields and is the major chemical cause of ground-water degradation worldwide. Both phosphate and nitrate can cause excess growth of algae and bacteria in streams and lakes. This leads to a reduction of oxygen levels which is, in turn, detrimental to many forms of aquatic life.

When I was a child, I used to swim in a clear mountain stream prized by trout fishermen. A few miles downstream, this same river was brown with sediment from the mining of mica and feldspar. Visitors used to wonder why the local residents took this situation in stride. As a result of laws passed by North Carolina and the federal government, these mining wastes must now be settled in large lagoons before they can be discharged into the river and the Toe River again flows clean and clear along its entire length. Now visitors only wonder at the beauty of the mountain valleys.

Since all life on this planet ultimately depends on water, let us resolve never to take this resource for granted. We should try our best to protect its quality for all who use it.

J.W.J.



John W. Johnson

Subsidies pay farmers to raise crops we don't need

grain, rice, cotton and tobacco farmers receive more than \$5 billion a year in subsidy...and all of this without any obvious or compelling need for subsidy to continue.

There is no need for subsidy to insure the continued flow of food-stuffs to market; in fact, it is the minority of the agricultural industry which receives subsidy. Somehow those who produce beef, eggs, chickens, pork and most fruits and vegetables do so without subsidy.

The bottom line problems is that those who receive the subsidy are now addicted to it, and are able to marshal sufficient lobbying efforts to continue the myth that it saves the family farm.

In 1960 there were more than 1,200 working farms in Wayne County; today there are slightly less than 400...so much for farm preservation.

If the intent of subsidy to dairy farmers was to ensure that a necessary and wholesome form of nutrition would always be available—and be available in all areas—then that goal has long been achieved.

If, however, there was a dual goal of ensuring the product availability and keeping the small farmer in business so he or she could then ensure available supply, then we have failed to reach that goal.

A reasonable question to ask when pondering the subsidy-supply problem is: Is it a proper role of government to intervene in the free market to insure the survival of any business?

If freedom and the ability to act upon ingenuity-spawned opportunity is the goal, then the answer to that question is no.

However, because government has contributed so much to the problems of business with capital-draining regulation and taxes that end up in, for example, free enterprise killing subsidized housing programs, perhaps it is

only fitting that government intervene.

With today's rapid transportation and overabundance of production, there is no longer a need to subsidize milk to ensure its availability rather, the subsidy keeps some farmers in business, while the corporate farms get rich from tax dollars and, concurrently, are responsible for a majority of the surplus, problem.

On one hand you have a steadily growing surplus, largely provided by the corporate farm, which is subsidized along with the small farmer trying to survive who, in many cases, could not do so without the subsidy. And in 1989, some 60 per cent of agricultural subsidy went to the one fourth of farms which are the wealthiest already.

Caught between these two forces is the taxpayer.

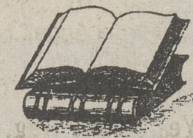
Should corporate farms—say those with more than x number of cows, or which produce more than x pounds of milk, lose subsidy?

Or should more emphasis be placed on allowing the marginal farms to go out of business; that is, the farms which continue to receive constant and ill-advised refinancing of low interest government loans (in addition to milk subsidy) while other farmers scrape by, effectively penalized for efficiency?

Or perhaps there should be a national excise tax on all milk to pay for its promotion and reduce the surplus by increasing consumption, both here and around the world?

But to continue these subsidies, while also complaining about government subsidy in other countries making our products less exportable, will cement Pogo's place as the ultimate prognosticator because we will continue to find our enemy—not without, and spouting Marxist dogma; rather within, and starting back at us from the mirror.

LIBRARY NEWS



By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The Back Mountain Memorial Library will be displaying on the bulletin board in the lobby of the library a beautiful color picture of Natona Mills. This is an aerial view taken by Vick's Sky Prints of Westdale, New York on May 7, 1994. Natona has been an important part of the Back Mountain area since 1946. From a small shop on an alley in Dallas to a company employing between 500 and 600 workers in its heyday, Native Textiles has gone through nearly 50 years of change.

August, 1946, ground was broken for the plant on Route 415, originally in Dallas Township. October, 1946, eight women began working in the thread drawing department; 1947, the plant known as Natona Mills was completed and all operations moved there. In 1958, the Levers lace

Lobby display honors Native Textiles, workers

department and its 15 machines moved to Hightstown, NJ affecting 50 workers; February, 1960, Natona Mills was credited in Women's Wear Daily with making the special mesh suit worn by "Miss Sam", the nation's first monkey in space.

In 1974, the company's name was changed to Native Textiles. March 25, 1995, Carris Brook Industries, the company's owner, announced that the plant would be relocated to Glens Falls, NY, in a consolidation move. Many Back Mountain people have worked at Natona Mills through the years and we will certainly miss the activity that went along with the company. The picture will hang in the library for a few weeks as a tribute to Natona Mills/Native Textiles for all the company has meant to the Back Mountain area. The picture and many clippings of the company will be stored in the lower level of the library for the future.

New books at the library: "The Man Who Cast Shadows" by Carol

O'Connell includes the return of Kathleen Mallory, a wild child whose powerful intelligence is matched only by the ferocity with which she pursues her own unpredictable vision of right and wrong. She will need every bit of that intensity in a case that strikes close to home in more ways than one...a young woman found dead only a few blocks away her skull and hands crushed, her neck snapped, and a label in her jacket that reads "Kathleen Mallory."

"Under the Beagle's Cellar" by Mary Willis Walker is a bone-chilling tale ripped from the headlines and more terrifying than our worst nightmares. Kidnapped by a cult of religious fanatics, an Austin school bus driver and 11 of his young charges have been held beneath the ground of the group's highly fortified compound for 46 days. While a team of federal negotiators begins to lose all hope of rescuing the hostages, crime reporter Molly Cates sets out to discover everything she can about the cult's iron-willed leader.

Open house at KT Ambulance Aug. 20

The Kingston Township Ambulance Association will host an open house August 20, 1-6 p.m. at the ambulance garage on East Center Street. Special features include blood pressure screenings 1-3 p.m., a live vehicle rescue demonstration using state-of-the-art equipment at 3 p.m. and children's I.D.'s by the Kingston Township police, 4-5 p.m. Prizes, a raffle, kids' balloons and refreshments will be available.

FOUR SEASONS GOLF CLUB

EXETER

NITE GOLF TOURNAMENT

Friday, August 25th

7:30 p.m. Registration • 8:30 p.m. Shotgun Start

Captain & Crew

\$22 per person

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Summer Clearance Sale!

Thurs., Fri., Sat.

- 20% Off All Mountain Bikes in Stock
- 40% Off Bike Shorts
- 15% Off All Rollerblades
- 20% Off Protective Gear
- 50% Off Rollerblade Helmets
- 20% Off All Camping Gear

Final 3 days of Closeout Prices on 1994 Ski Equipment

Thurs., 10-6, Fri. 10-8, Sat. 10-5

Country Ski & Sports

Rt. 309 at Blackman St., W-B

824-0541

The Back Mountain's hometown paper ...from people who live here



"To be interviewed by Grace Dove is to end up as a friend, feeling you've known her much longer than it took"

In addition, she writes extremely well, takes a good picture and can fill other newspaper slots in a pinch. Like editing, scheduling, typesetting, layout, reviewing press releases and even that pesky switchboard.

Grace lives in Franklin Township where she cares for Buddy the Beagle and Fancy the Cat. Grace has two hobbies, which seem not to belong together...one is shooting muzzle loader rifles, the other is as an accomplished beadwork artist of

Native American descent. Her work has been exhibited nationally.

If that weren't enough, Grace reads a lot and likes nature photography, when she has time. Her dad, Harry Richie, now retired, lives in Florida and naturally gets The Post every week.

She was a journalism student in high school and is a '72 Wilkes grad.

Grace is another local person who helps put out the Back Mountain's hometown paper, The Dallas Post.

The Back Mountain's Newspaper Since 1889

The Dallas Post