



Western Washington University  
Western CEDAR

---

Huxley College Newsletters - Historical  
Collection

Huxley College of the Environment

---

10-17-1995

## Huxley Hotline, 1995, October 17

Traci Edge  
*Western Washington University*

Huxley College of the Environment, Western Washington University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://cedar.wvu.edu/huxleynewsletters>



Part of the [Environmental Sciences Commons](#), and the [Environmental Studies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Edge, Traci and Huxley College of the Environment, Western Washington University, "Huxley Hotline, 1995, October 17" (1995). *Huxley College Newsletters - Historical Collection*. 23.  
<https://cedar.wvu.edu/huxleynewsletters/23>

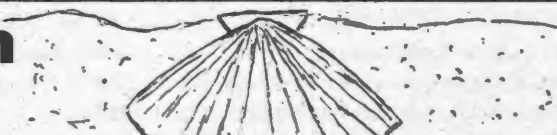
This Issue is brought to you for free and open access by the Huxley College of the Environment at Western CEDAR. It has been accepted for inclusion in Huxley College Newsletters - Historical Collection by an authorized administrator of Western CEDAR. For more information, please contact [westerncedar@wwu.edu](mailto:westerncedar@wwu.edu).

The

# Huxley Hotline

October 17, 1995

## In Search of Research The Work of Suzanne Giles



"The tides determine my day," answered Suzanne Giles, a Huxley graduate student, after I asked when could I interview her about her Samish Bay water quality thesis project. Enthusiasm for research exerted a force, too, and in a moment she was at the marine chart on her office wall pointing out the features of the bay she now knows well.

Samish Bay is approximately ten miles south of Bellingham Bay. It is bounded to the west by Lummi Island and on the south by Samish Island. Where tidal lands once blended into marsh to the east, dikes now demarcate farm land. The Chuckanuts lie to the Northeast. Blanchard and Edison are towns sitting quietly at the edge of the bay.

A set of tables that list the status of shellfish beds throughout Washington State tell a story of pollution, lost jobs and lost profits. Giles points to the labels "Approved to Prohibition" and "Rural non-point" next to another location in Puget Sound. "Agricultural contamination and failing septic systems have made portions of the bed unusable for oyster production", she says.

Pollution in the bay has grown over the past ten years to the point where it threatens the oyster farming. A couple of figures illustrate the importance of shellfish to Washington State. In 1993 shellfish were harvested commercially at nearly three hundred locations in Puget Sound. In 1982 oyster farming alone brought in over \$20 million to the economy. Giles said, "We need to know the sources of the fecal loading that threaten this industry."

Throwing grapefruit into Samish Bay doesn't sound like research. They do not seem to harm wildlife, however, and their color and moderate buoyancy makes them useful markers for tracing the currents in the water.

Tracing the currents and developing a feel for how they change with the tides and the flow of Samish River is the

important first step to studying the Bay. This circulation model will tell us how water borne contaminants should be distributed around the bay. Giles is finding that currents generally run counter-clockwise in the bay with the flow from Samish River dominating the southwestern third.

After the circulatory study comes water sampling. There are five fresh water sources to the bay. Giles will have 10 to 15 sample sites. The failing septic systems, as well as, numerous agricultural contamination sources are suspects in the pollution mystery. However, a clear problem is the outfall from the town of Edison.

At the turn of the century Edison built what was then a state-of-the-art sewage system—raw effluent pouring into a stream. Recently, a success story of citizen action resulted a plan to handle the sewage safely.

The agricultural sources as well as failing septic systems may account for the rest of the problem. The purpose of this research is to point to the hot spots, and to form a baseline to assess changes in water quality.

Giles began this work in the summer and plans to complete the study by June of 1996. Her work may be the first circulatory survey of the bay. When done she will be the "expert" on Samish Bay.

Before coming to Bellingham, Giles received a bachelor of science degree in biology from Bates College in Lewiston, Maine. The following summer she collected data for a baseline study of Boston Bay after a law suit forced Massachusetts to clean up the harbor.

When she completes her master's work, Giles would like to be involved in coastal zone management. "Blending human use with the needs of the ecosystems must be addressed, and addressed well," she said.

Richard Navas

### In this Issue...

ANWR - What will happen to 1002?.....	2
The Editor's Opinion.....	3
The Referendum 48 Debate	
Eco Events/Announcements.....	4

#### Editors note

A lot of good science goes on at Huxley College. The *Hot Line* staff realizes the importance of reporting that research. The previous article was the first in a weekly series that presents highlights of research projects and the people behind those projects at Huxley.

# Alaska Drilling Threatens Wildlife

## What will happen to section 1002?

Do the letters "ANWR" mean anything to you? They stand for Arctic Northern Wildlife Refuge - a refuge created in 1980 by the Alaska Lands Act. As of today, section 1002 is being considered for further oil exploration and drilling. It is a 30-mile-wide and 100-mile-long land mass lying along the Arctic Ocean. So what if drilling occurs here, its in the middle of nowhere and too cold for any plants and animals to live there, right?

Wrong, it is an abundant source of biological wealth, almost unfathomable to biologists. Twenty-five different herds of caribou migrate to section 1002 every spring to calve and feed on the plethora of summer vegetation that virtually explodes with the summer solstice and throughout the intense 24-hour photoperiod of summer. An enormous interconnected food web of plants, flowers, insects, birds, ground squirrels, lemming, hares, wolves, bears, and caribou are dependent upon each other for their survival in the frenzy of feeding that happens in the summer months. Some 2000 migratory birds fly here each summer (some from as far South as Antarctica) to reproduce and feed, while the caribou may travel as far as 27 miles a day, crossing the Brooks Range. It is part of an instinctual and age-old process in the cycle of life for the caribou, something occurring which is bigger than life, bigger than anything humans can comprehend. Some 800,000 caribou converge at the Northernmost tip of Alaska - an awesome spectacle it seems meant only for nature to witness.

So why drill in section 1002? This land is a relatively small land mass compared to the rest of ANWR, which encompasses 19.5 million acres. Why make a big stink about this particular area? Well, 1002 is an area the caribou occupy and also need for protection from predators. The waters of this region, including the Arctic ocean, are necessary for escaping the billions of mosquitoes that could otherwise kill the animals. This area is lush with vegetation the caribou need for

their massive treks along their migratory routes.

The first step towards creating ANWR was in 1960, when conservationists and the petroleum industry constructed an agreement together to not immediately designate section 1002 as wilderness, leaving it open for possible oil exploitation in the future. This was in exchange for labeling the bulk of the preservation as "wilderness," which is hands off to any kind of development: no roads, mining, or petroleum development. "...an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain..." (Wilderness Act of 1964). Legally, if Congress allowed it, drilling could happen here now. Reagan in 1987 and Bush in 1990 asked Congress to open up the land, but as of July this year, no decision has been reached.

The infuriating point about the possible drilling is that experts have examined the region without finding any definite evidence that a worthwhile amount of petroleum will even be found. The U.S. Secretary of the Interior reported: a 19 percent chance of finding a 3 billion barrel deposit and a 5 percent chance of finding a 9 billion barrel deposit. If either of these amounts were in fact discovered, they would last only 4.8 years and 14.5 years, respectively. Also necessary for consideration is the impact drilling would have on the area. An EIS (environmental impact statement) created by the U.S. Department of the Interior estimated the following would be necessary: a major pipeline 100 miles long, 120 miles of main roads and 160 miles of spur roads, 2 large permanent airfields and 2 smaller air fields, 50-60 drilling pads, and 10-15 gravel-mining sites!

So when is the U.S. government going to stop putting off the inevitable fact we need to utilize other sources of energy for our addicted society? It is sickening to me, as a fellow traveler and lover of Alaska, that the drilling in 1002 is so close to happening. Alaska is a wild and beautiful land. Being there is enough to

humble a person for an entire lifetime. It is the last untamed frontier and deserves to remain a sacred place. There is no way to describe these feelings, evoked by Alaska, to a city person and unfortunately, that is whose shoulders this vital decision lays upon.

Bob Marshall, a native of New York, explored Alaska between 1929-1939 and discovered a love for the untouched wilderness: "I was happy in the immediate presence of nature in its most staggering grandeur, in living intimately with something so splendidly immense that all life seemed trivial in its presence. No doubt too, there was the joy that here was something which mankind with all its mechanical power could not possibly hope to duplicate." Marshall's book, *Arctic Wilderness*, is an uplifting account of his travels and explorations and his beautiful descriptions of the scenery and the powerful spell that he felt there. Marshall was one of the early conservationists who worked to create a protected wilderness through his writings.

Drilling in section 1002 would no doubt have serious affects on the animals, plants, and tundra that encompass the environment. The problem is, no one can accurately predict how negative they will be and how long-term. Let's hope it never has to occur. Write to the Alaska state congressmen: Senators - Ted Stevens and Frank H. Murkowski.

Liz Allen



# Improving the quality of the Environment

While watching television last Friday night, I saw a new commercial. I know, new commercials are constantly being created, it's an advertising nightmare out there. But this one was really new.

The ad begins as a Volkswagen bus comes into view, then a good-looking guy pushing the bus, so I thought, "It's just another car ad." But then they shift to this pretty blond woman pushing the bus, "It's a beer commercial," I think. No... they zoom in on the rear of the girl's jeans, "It's got to be a commercial for 'Guess' or one of those jeans-makers." Suddenly, the camera has shifted to a dirty-looking guy working at a gas station, so it's got to be a gas or service station ad. But then they push the bus right past him. That's when I got too confused and gave up. In the end, they pushed the bus into a Mohawk station.

Mohawk? What the heck is Mohawk? "It's better for the environment and better for your car," the voice in the commercial answers.

If what the commercial says is true, the Mohawk company has taken a step in the right direction. The world contains billions of people on it — and too many cars. Cars that are contributing to the pollution of the environment, the crowding of the streets, and the rising cost of living.

Will humans ever stop driving? Probably not in the near future, so the only thing we can do is improve our cars, our fuel and our attitude.

Instead of each individual getting into his/her car every morning, many people are getting into carpools, buses, or shuttles. This helps reduce the pollution, but cleaner cars would help, too.

The night before I saw the Mohawk ad, there was another ad on that showed a car driving down the road. Viewers see it coming, then, WHOOSH, it's gone.

"In the road of life, there are drivers and there are passengers," a voice said, then the screen went blank. The words "drivers needed" appeared on the screen.

Where do these people get their information? This world is overpopulated already — drivers are *not* needed.

I have to point out that great commercial where the truck tears through a forest, once calm and quiet and undisturbed. That is a disturbing ad.. I can not imagine buying a car and going out to enjoy destroying nature and killing wildlife.

Having a gasoline that is better for the environment is definitely a good idea. I hope more companies seriously buy into it. I also hope Mohawk really does what it says it does.

Among the most watched technologies today are television and cars. It would be great if the quality of cars and their ads were improved, lessening their damaging affect on the environment. I personally don't mind seeing new commercials like Mohawk's, and I certainly wouldn't mind driving a more environmentally sound car.

Traci Edge

## The Environment for the "Taking"

Washington passed a law that requires the taxpayer, to compensate businesses, corporations, and landowners for the land that they cannot build on because of environmental regulations. Initiative 164 was passed April 18, 1995. Section 4 of the initiative states every time a landowner wants to build or develop on a piece of land and that land is protected by environmental laws, the government (i.e...taxpayers) is "required to pay full compensation of reduction in value to the owner, or the use of the land by the owner may not be restricted because of the regulation or restraint."

This issue was debated by representatives from both sides in a debate last Wednesday, which took place in the Viking Union Main Lounge. Joseph Bowen, a Mount Vernon attorney and opponent of the initiative, and Skip Richards, a graduate of Western and supporter of the Wise Use movement and

Initiative 164, debated the pros and cons of the referendum for two hours.

"This law is not a citizen's initiative, but a corporate business initiative put in front of legislative hands for self-interest reasons," said Bowen. He stressed that this is *not* a law that benefits the citizens of Washington; on the contrary, taxpayers will have a \$300 million "penalty" to pay if this law goes into effect. The "penalty" the government would be pay is for the research to determine how much the restricted land is worth, and for the compensation to the landowner for the restriction. All of this comes out of the citizen's pocket in taxes.

Richards, who is for the initiative, said, "We have to protect the human nature to protect mother nature..." He believes that this initiative is a citizens law because it protecting's citizens' Constitutional right to own property and benefit from it. Landowners still obey envi-

ronmental laws under this initiative, but the government is compensating them to do so.

Groups opposing Initiative 164 collected 180,000 signatures throughout Washington to put it on the November ballot as Referendum 48. They advised people that this law does not benefit the environment.

It's up to the citizens of Washington to decide whether this law is going to go into effect. If it does, Bowen says, "it will keep us from making any land use decisions at all." It would be left up to judges to decide who gets to build on what land and how much taxpayers will have to compensate landowners who can't build on restricted land. Both speakers encouraged people to practice their Constitutional right and vote on November 7.

Angela Rapp



## Eco Events that Count Internship Opportunity

**Wednesday, Oct. 18:** The Peace Resource Center, Nisgua and the Environmental Center present Ana Lorena Robles Rodas, "The Viewpoint of a Labor Activist: Building Sustainable Peace in Guatemala." The event will take place in the Library Presentation Room from 7-9 p.m.

**Saturday, Oct. 21:** Join the Community Forest Issues Workshop, a coalition for all concerned about protecting the quality of life and the natural environment in the Nooksack River Basin/Greater lake Samish-Chuckanut area. The group will meet in the Bellingham Public Library Presentation Room from 2:30-6:30 p.m. For more information, call Steve Walker at (360) 671-2505.

**Monday, Oct. 23:** A WESA rally will take place at noon in front of City Hall. The purpose of the rally is to protest Metcalf's approval of the Young, Pombo bill. Speakers will include Sherilyn Wells, president of the Washinton environmental Council, and County Councilman Ken Henderson.

**Tuesday, Oct. 24:** John Miles, director of environmental studies and geography, will discuss and sign his book, *Guardians of the Parks: A History of the National Parks and Conservation Association* at 7:30 p.m. in Village Books.

**Tuesday, Oct. 24:** Global Rivers Environmental Education Network (GREEN) and the Environmental Education Association of Washington (EEAW) present "An evening with Sue and Col Lennox, Australian environmental educators, and Oz GREEN coordinators." Speakers will discuss tools for community based education and action. The presentation will take place from 7-9 p.m. in the Fairhaven Park Pavilion. For more information, call Karen Clark at (360) 676-8255.

The Adopt-A-Stream Foundation will meet Friday, Oct. 20 to discuss an unpaid internship worth 5 credits. The meeting will take place in the Huxley Conference Room at 11 a.m.

The foundation is looking for a Huxley student to help with the creation of a citizen-based watershed management plan for the Bertrand Creek Watershed (a transborder tributary to the Nooksack River). Their goal is to bring together residents, agency officials, community group leaders and educators from both sides of the border to create a plan that will be presented to governmental decision-makers in Whatcom County and British Columbia.

The internship will include planning and attending meetings in Lynden, WA, and Aldergrove, B.C., investigating and collecting of Bertrand Creek data, creating drafts and the final plan and planning strategies for presentation and implementation.

For more information, attend the meeting or call Tim Northern at (206) 388-3487.

-compiled by Traci Edge

## Hey Hey! It's the SCA! A new program offers forest refuge

The Student Conservation Association (SCA) has positions open in its nationwide Research Assistant program.

The RA program involves living and working in national parks for up to 12 weeks with travel, housing and food expenses paid. Academic credit is also possible through the program. Applicants must be 18 or older.

For more information, call the RA program at (603) 543-1700, or write to:

SCA  
RA Program  
PO Box 550  
Charlestown, NH 03603-0550

### The Hotline Welcomes Environmental Tips and Events!

If you know of an upcoming event or have any environmental tips that you would like announced, the *Hotline* is the place for you!

Just write down the information and send it to the *Huxley Hotline*, MS 9079, or put it the *Hotline* mailbox in the Huxley office, ES 539.

Don't forget to write your name and phone number so we can get back to you!

Deadline for information in the *Hotline* is Friday. The publication comes out every Tuesday. It focuses on events in environmental science and geography.

#### The Hotline Staff:

Editor: Traci Edge

Copy Editor: Richard Navas

Writers: Liz Allen, Erin McMullen, Heather Polson, Angela Rapp, Elissa Torres

Advisor: Scott Brennan

*The Hotline is printed on unbleached, recycled paper.  
The opinions expressed in the Hotline are those of the Hotline staff.*