

Goldman Environmental Prizes

The Goldman Environmental Prizes comprise the world's largest environmental prize programme, as they provide annually US \$60,000 to an outstanding environmentalist from each of the six inhabited continents. To the best of our knowledge there are no other major awards which recognize outstanding achievement from each of the inhabited continents in any such manner. This not only illustrates that environmental work on any one continent is likely to be as important as environmental work on any other continent, but it also implies that environmental problems are very much interrelated.

The six awards are presented annually to outstanding 'grassroots' environmentalists, which announcement emphasizes that this is not an award for scientific or academic achievement, nor is it an award that will primarily go to those who are already noted in their field.* The following brief descriptions of our first-year winners illustrate this point quite well.

Africa:— Michael Werikhe, widely known as the 'Rhino Man', is a security supervisor at an automobile assembly plant in Kenya who has walked across Africa and Europe to raise funds and public awareness to help save the Black Rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*).

Asia:— Harrison Ngau is a member of the Kayan community of Sarawak, the Malaysian state on Borneo. He has been jailed and placed under house arrest for his effort to prevent the logging of the Malaysian rain-forest.

Australia:— Dr Robert Brown, of Tasmania, gave up his medical practice to devote his full time to help save the Franklin River, which was threatened by an unnecessary dam. Not only was the dam project stopped but, as a result in part of Dr Brown's efforts, preservation of the environment became a popular issue in Australia.

Europe:— Janos Vargha led the successful battle to prevent the Gabčíkovo–Nagyamaros dam which was

planned for the Hungarian portion of the Danube.

Latin America:— Janet Gibson, working as a volunteer, led the successful effort to have the government of Belize establish the first marine sanctuary (the Hol Chan Reserve) in all of Central America.

North America:— Lois Gibbs, a housewife in the United States, led community efforts resulting in the evacuation of 800 families living next to 22,000 tons of toxic waste in Love Canal, New York.

Nominations for a Goldman Prize can come from either of two sources. The first is a consortium of 18 internationally known environmental organizations. These include such large organizations as the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the United States National Geographic Society, and such small, yet effective, organizations as the Rainforest Action Network and the International Rivers Network. Nominations can also come from any one of 36 invited but anonymous nominators who are based practically throughout the world. Final selections of the winners is made by a jury which includes several prominent environmentalists.

The first Goldman Prize ceremony was held on 16 April 1990 in Herbst Theatre in San Francisco, the site of the signing of the United Nations Charter. The six winners were then flown to Washington, DC, to meet with US President George Bush, who said: 'The Goldman Prizes will recognize ordinary people in six continents who have gone to extraordinary lengths to protect the planet we all share — not because the law demands it, but because they hold a personal environmental ethic which recognizes a responsibility to ourselves, our neighbours, and our children.'

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* Instead it is a major — surely to be warmly applauded — attempt to persuade the 'other ranks' and general public throughout the world to do their utmost, at least locally, to safeguard some significant feature or component of our beleaguered world. — Ed.

The World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC): What it Is and What it Does

With the steady increase in pressure upon natural resources, especially in developing countries, the need has never been greater for reliable up-to-date conservation data to promote enlightened development and land-use decisions. Recognizing this need, the three partners in the World Conservation Strategy — IUCN, WWF, and UNEP — have signed an Agreement for the future development of the IUCN Conservation Monitoring Centre. This Agreement pledges the three organizations to the restructuring of the Centre, so that it can effectively fulfil its role as the central repository of data on the world's biological diversity and allied features. Renamed the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), the new Centre is registered in the UK as a company limited by guarantee, and has been approved for tax-exempt charitable status. Executive authority for the WCMC programme, budget, and strategic development, is vested in a Management Board comprising two representatives of each partner, although the staff will remain IUCN employees seconded to WCMC.

The mission of WCMC is to support international programmes for conservation and sustainable development through the provision of reliable scientific data particularly on the world's biological diversity. Under the new partnership, the level of core funding provided by IUCN will be equally matched individually by both WWF and UNEP: this will enable the Centre to commence the systematic review and updating of its data, to redesign its databases to meet the evolving needs of its information-users, and to incorporate the recent advances in information technology. This major programme of restructuring will greatly enhance the data-handling capabilities of the Centre, resulting in a greater diversity and flexibility of integrated information outputs to meet the changing needs of the conservation and development community.

To cover the world's biological diversity, WCMC is developing an integrated relational database covering the following major themes:

- data on *plant and animal species** of conservation value, including threatened species,* medicinal and