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Cover
Plowing with buffaloes in Indonesia, one of many nations with impaired agricultural productivity due to serious soil erosion. See page 255. United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization photograph.

The Soil Conservation Society of America is dedicated to promoting the science and art of good land use, with emphasis on conservation of soil, water, air, and related natural resources, including all forms of beneficial plant and animal life. To this end, SCSA seeks through the *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* and other programs to educate people so that mankind can use and enjoy these natural resources forever.

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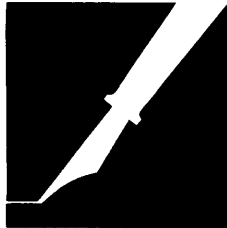
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PEN POINTS

An inappropriate "viewpoint"

Is the JSWC running short of "viewpoints?" Guy Kelnhofer's editorial, "Inland Navigation and the Environmentalists" (July-August 1981, pp. 184-185), is...both inadequate and inappropriate for publication in our JSWC. Kelnhofer fails to relate waterway transportation growth to our concerns for soil and water conservation, and thus he has little to say to us. Furthermore, his arguments are so general and isolated from specific waterway projects that we have no way of evaluating his attack on unnamed environmental groups. Viewpoints in the past have featured both pro and con perspectives on an issue. Such

an approach would have been preferable for the issue of waterway development. Our Society is proud of its holistic approach to problem-solving. Our JSWC should not be the vehicle for others to attack "certain environmental groups."

My interest in who opposes waterway development and why has been aroused. Please give equal time to the "certain environmental groups" that Kelnhofer speaks of. A recent newspaper article on the Tennessee-Tombigbee waterway gave me the impression that concerns for environmental damage of waterway development are not coming from persons "ideologically committed to resist all forms of industrial growth" as Kelnhofer implies.

William H. Doucette, Jr.
Raleigh, North Carolina

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Halting farmland conversion

In the last issue of the JSWC and in others I have noted despair over the loss of prime farmland to housing and business developments.

Let me suggest a possible solution to this problem, a solution that I really do not like but probably the only one or type of one that will effectively stop the destruction of farmland.

What we need is legislation that would place a per acre fine on destroying farmland. A fine of perhaps \$5,000

per acre could be assessed on any land taken out of crop production and put into homes or any other development that destroyed the capacity of the land to produce a crop. This money would then be used to purchase low-class, nonfarmable land in the county and divide it for business and home locations, on the basis of perhaps 50, 60, or maybe 70 percent of the original purchase price. This would inhibit the destruction of farmland and promote the placement of dwellings and businesses on marginal land. The amount of the fine for the destruction of farmland could vary on the classification of the land down to zero on class five land perhaps.

As I stated, I dislike this solution very much, but there is little chance of getting voluntary compliance, and one of these days the need for farmland will become so great that it will be necessary to destroy the homes and buildings that have occupied the farmland so that we can again put it into production.

Richard E. Diggs
General Irrigation Company
Carthage, Missouri

CCC alumni, where are you?

The National Association of Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni (NACCCA) is trying to locate about two million former members and persons who were affiliated with the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) during the 1930s and 1940s.

I am sure that many of your readers have often wondered what became of the CCC. You can tell them the CCC lives again in the NACCCA. It is a young and growing organization with chapters in practically every state in the nation, and one of its major objectives is to reinstate a permanent CCC II.

The conservation work performed by the CCC men throughout the nation is still most evident after these many years.

Anyone interested in the organization can write to NACCCA Headquarters, 7900 Sudley Road, Suite 418, Manassas, Virginia 22110, for further information.

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were established to regulate. In practice, no state has pushed controls strongly opposed by local citizens. "It has become obvious that doing so would be administratively impossible and politically disastrous."

Other problems have also emerged as land use agencies have become parts of "the bureaucratic landscape." Delays in processing and requirements for multiple permits have cost developers considerable time and money. Some of these problems are caused by failure on the part of "small government" to provide agencies with sufficient staff and funding to do their jobs. Administrative requirements generally favor large developers, who have numerous projects and staff assistants to fill out forms. These same requirements create major problems for small developers. Elimination of forms, accelerated approvals, and one-stop approval arrangements could help developers, but would often defeat the adequate and open review of programs.

In his economic analysis of land use programs, Popper finds that the programs can affect development markets by (1) delaying or preventing projects, (2) tying developers to long-term plans that discourage their use of new techniques and materials, (3) affecting the availability of financing, and (4) favoring a standardization of project designs. He also finds that the programs have never stopped developments because operators have always been able to accept the regulations, build in nonregulated areas, or operate at an uncontrolled threshold level. Compliance with regulations has probably raised construction costs by 10 percent, an increase passed on to buyers.

Most benefits of the programs have been environmental. Programs have operated both directly and indirectly to prevent unwanted developments and to improve the quality of new developments by raising standards and by forcing developers to do their planning homework better. Programs also have raised the public's level of environmental awareness. Public tolerance of shoddy developments has diminished, while expectations concerning environmental impacts have risen.

Popper concludes that the land use reform movement has been a mild success. It has produced desirable benefits, but it has also reduced the availability of housing, favored large developers, and done lit-

tle to stop exclusionary zoning. Problems have emerged because the movement has run counter to traditional attitudes, the popular view of private property rights, and the widespread expectation that developers and speculators can use land as they wish to make a buck. The movement also has suffered because of the brash arrogance of the early environmentalists and the recent resurgence of political conservatism. New nonregulatory approaches must be emphasized if land use objectives are to be secured at the present time. New program proposals should emphasize land consumerism. Consumers want lower cost land, adequate supplies of land for needed uses, low taxes, fair returns on investment, and policies that will provide growth and jobs.

This book ignores significant aspects of land policy, such as the legal and property rights issues, and it touches only lightly on others, such as options in policy and appropriate levels of administration. But Popper must be commended for what he has done. He has provided an interesting, perceptive, penetrating analysis of the politics of land use reform. He describes the problems and pitfalls groups face when they seek land use legislation, the pressures and obstacles they encounter, the compromises and concessions they must accept in the political accommodation process, the complications that affect the administration of programs once they are accepted, and the sometimes disappointing results that can be expected. Overall, the book provides excellent coverage of an often neglected topic; it is must reading for students of land policy and anyone else interested in the promotion of land use legislation.—*RALEIGH BARLOWE, Department of Resource Development, Michigan State University, East Lansing, 48824.*

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