

MINNESOTA CONSERVATION FEDERATION

ANNUAL MEETING

September 11, 2011

Deerwood, Minnesota

Resolution #2

The Pressure of Population on Natural Resources

WHEREAS, the world population continues to grow, great pressure is being placed on our land and water resources both in the United States and throughout the world. According to the United Nations, the world is now home to 925 million people, defined as not having enough to eat; the largest number of underfed humans ever recorded. Based on the current rates of reproduction, the world population is projected to double in less than 50 years.

WHEREAS, most of the agricultural land needed to feed the world is now coming from marginal and forest land and that this pressure now accounts for 60-80 percent of the world's deforestation; and thereby produces serious side effects for animals and humans.

WHEREAS, water is critical for the growth of all crops, Agriculture consumes more fresh water than any other human activity. Specifically, over 80% of the world's fresh water is used for agricultural purposes (Pimentel et al., 1996) and is therefore not recovered. In the United States irrigation currently accounts for about 1/3 of our fresh water usage.

WHEREAS, competition for clean water increases as does the population, water resources are under great stress as populous cities, states and countries require and use more water from rivers, lakes, and aquifers every year. Often, the shortage of water is intensified by the increasing lack of clean drinking water. Diseases associated with water are most serious in developing countries, where about 90% are traced to the lack of clean water.

WHEREAS, fossil fuel is another main resource for food production, where high food producing countries are consuming massive amounts of fossil energy for fertilizers, pesticides, and machines; the depletion of fossil fuels is escalated as the world population continues to grow. Projections from the US Department of Energy indicate that the United States, currently importing a large percentage of its oil, which will deplete its reserves. While economists may believe that a strong economic situation will guarantee a ready food supply, estimates indicate the opposite to hold true. For example, if the population in the United States continues to grow to a point of doubling in the next 60 years, then its grain and food resources would have to feed a domestic population, and would cease to be a food exporting country. These assumptions are based on data that

includes projections of population, water and fossil fuel supply as well as the use of current agricultural practices.

WHEREAS, water usage for agricultural purposes is augmented by water usage by industry and public. As urban populations continue to grow in the United States, water used for public usage, continues as well. Consider the urban water problems of Atlanta, Georgia or the Colorado River where the river is nearly run dry before it reaches the border of the United States and Mexico.

WHEREAS, coordinated efforts must be made to balance the use of land, water, fossil fuel and all of our natural resources; our natural resources are still limited and can be exhausted. Unless efforts to curb population growth is part of the dialog, no amount of conservation and/or new technology will meet the demand on natural resources.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Minnesota Conservation Federation, at its annual assembly in 2011, enact this resolution to bring forth to the National Wildlife Federation annual assembly in 2012 resolving that the National Wildlife Federation assume leadership responsibility nationally and worldwide to generate open conversation regarding population growth and its effect on the environment.

Sponsored by Barb Prindle, Life Member, MCF