



Good-bye Property Rights

Since the early 1970s there has been a systematic and deliberate effort to destroy private property rights in America through the warm and fuzzy goal of sustainable development. By Michael S. Coffman, Ph.D.

David Rockefeller co-founded the Club of Rome in 1968 as an elite, somewhat occult think tank. The club published “Limits of Growth” in 1972, which called for severe limits on human population and state control of all development in the world to achieve “sustainable development.” Sustainable development was eventually formalized into a United Nations’ global action plan called Agenda 21, which President George H.W. Bush committed the United States to at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. President Clinton put it into action by the creation of Sustainable America in 1996. If fully implemented, private property rights will be a thing of the past.

Concurrent to “Limits of Growth,” New York’s Gov. Nelson Rockefeller introduced legislation to create the Adirondack Park Agency in 1971 patterned after “Limits of Growth.” It was so successful that Nelson’s brother Laurence commissioned and led a study entitled “Use of Land: A Citizen’s Policy Guide to Urban Growth” as a set of goals for America. Published in 1973, the nationally based “Use of Land” was a companion to the Club of Rome’s internationally based “Limits of Growth.” “The Use of Land” was edited by

William Reilly, who would later be appointed by President Bush as the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency in 1989. Reilly also attended the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, where he advised the president to sign the U.N.’s global action plan, thereby committing the United States to Agenda 21.

Although utterly evil, the Rockefellers’ effort to destroy the constitutional basis of property rights was brilliant. The thrust of the “Use of Land” report supported the premise that development rights of private property should be at the discretion of the government for the “good of society”: “Landowners expect to be able to develop their property as they choose, even at the expense of scenic, ecological, and cultural assets treasured by the public.... [However], with private property rights go obligations that *society can define and property owners should respect.*” (Italics added)

This verbiage could be ripped from the pages of Jean Jacques Rousseau’s description of the general will in his Social Contract, Book 1, written in 1762. In this approach, the government, not the individual, defines the property rights permitted the individual. In exactly the same way, the “Use of Land” envi-

ronmental protection would occur “not by purchase but through the police power of the federal government.” The “Use of Land” goes on to say: “It is time that the U.S. Supreme Court re-examine its precedents that seem to require a balancing of public benefit against value loss in every case and declare that, when the protection of natural, cultural, or aesthetic resources or the assurance of orderly development are involved, a mere loss in land value is no justification for invalidating the regulation of land use.”

Think about that. “Use of Land” recommends that the Supreme Court throw away 200 years of constitutional law to justify constantly changing regulatory law. This backdoor revision of the Constitution would allow the government to pass laws and create legislation at the whim of some arbitrary natural, cultural, or even aesthetic reason.

Wait a minute! Isn’t that what most environmental laws in the past 50 years are based on? Not only that, but the book’s recommendations are precisely what the Supreme Court has done since it was published. Page after page of the “Use of Land” describe what has happened to create the state control of private property in America today.

The Adirondack Park Template

Preceding all this, Laurence Rockefeller teamed up with his brother, Gov. Nelson Rockefeller, to launch a study in 1968 that led to the creation of the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) in upstate New York three years later. Laurence provided foundation funding to a dozen activist environmental organizations which joined to form The Adirondack Council. In turn, the council demanded state control over land use within Adirondack State Park—roughly 55 percent of which was privately owned. At the same time, the governor provided the political hammer to force the APA bill through the New York Legislature.

To cap it off, the progressive *New York Times* promoted blatantly false propaganda to a largely ignorant but politically powerful urban majority in New York City. The *Times* falsely asserted that unless the APA bill get passed immediately, development would overrun the Adirondacks. Although more than 80 percent of Adirondack citizens were against the bill, the cartel's machine prevailed and the APA Act passed in 1971.

This “unless we do it now the world is going to end” Hegelian Dialectic is standard operating procedure for the global elite specifically, and progressive Republicans and Democrats in general. Three recent examples are TARP (Troubled Asset Relief Program) in 2008, the Stimulus Bill in 2009, and the increase in the debt cap in summer 2011, all together totaling some \$3.5 trillion.

The Adirondack Park Agency perfectly reflects the “Use of Land” and Rousseau models of state control of private property. It controls all land-use activity on private property within the 6.1- million-acre park, including the more than half that is private property. The act dictates the number of acres required per home (up to 40 acres), all new home construction or renovation, the color of the home, and a host of regulations that have stifled most development.

Except in exempted cities and communities, driving through the Adirondacks today is like driving through a 1960s' landscape. Urban New Yorkers who want a bucolic

experience may love the effect in order to sooth their hyperstressed nerves, but the APA has locked Adirondack citizens into a European-style socialist time warp that has denied them the rights enjoyed by other American citizens. The raw, ugly power of the APA would shock most Americans.

Intoxicated by the successful effort to control land development in the Adirondacks, the APA model became the template for sustainable development originally envisioned by the Club of Rome, as well as current efforts to achieve environmental justice across America and around the world. Without knowing it, residents in the New Jersey Pinelands had the APA template applied with the creation of

the New Jersey Pinelands Commission in 1978. Likewise, residents of the Columbia River Gorge in Oregon had the APA model forced on them with the creation of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area in 1986.

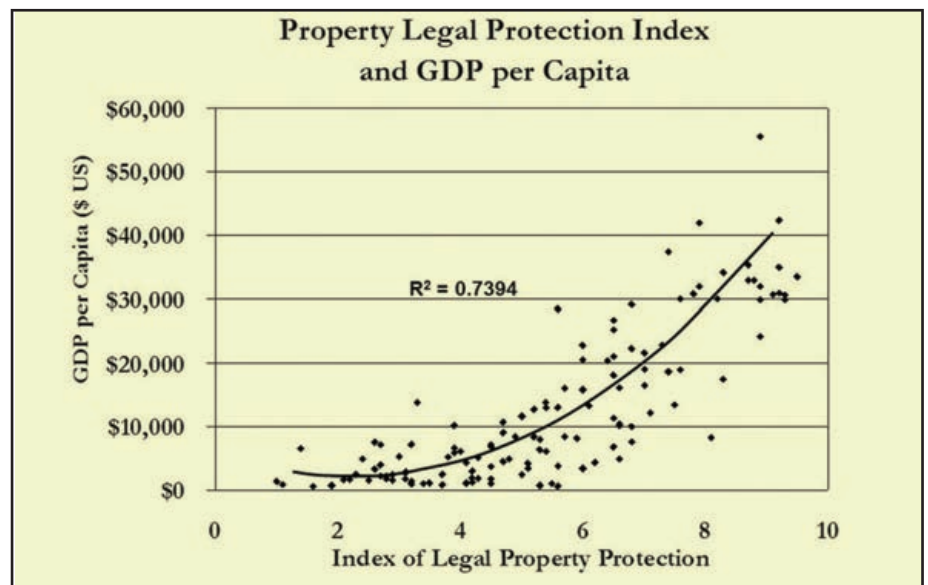
The federal government then attempted a two-pronged effort in the 1990s to advance

the APA model on a regional scale. The Northeast had the Northern Forest Lands encompassing 20 million acres almost forced on them by the federally driven Northern Forest Lands Council. At the same time, the federal government attempted to swallow up the entire Interior Columbia River Basin with the proposed Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP) during the Clinton administration. ICBEMP is the biggest effort to date, encompassing most of Washington, Oregon and Idaho, plus parts of Montana, Wyoming, Utah and Nevada. Both the Northern Forest Lands Council and ICBEMP were eventually rejected by the people, but neither has been fully deactivated. They live on like latent cancer cells waiting for the moment they can once again metastasize.

Real World Consequences

When strangling socialist regulations encumber property rights, there is little-to-no equity, and therefore little-to-no capital with which to create wealth. Without wealth, a nation cannot protect the environment. A family whose primary focus is to put food on the table is not going to care about anything else. The contrast between the United States, Europe and the Third World is striking. Although they are rapidly disappearing, the United States has some of the best defined property rights in the world and its citizens

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When the per capita Gross Domestic Product is plotted over an index of legal property protection, there is a 74 percent correlation between the per capita GDP and the strength of the nation's property rights. While other factors are involved, property rights show the strongest correlation and the greatest importance. (The index is made up of judicial independence, impartiality of the courts, legal protection of property rights, level of military interference, integrity of the legal system, legal enforcement of contracts, and the regulatory restrictions on the sale of real property. While the exact components of the index can be argued, most indices generally use similar inputs.)

SOURCE: JAMES GWARTNEY AND ROBERT LAWSON, "ECONOMIC FREEDOM OF THE WORLD—2005 ANNUAL REPORT"

had an average income of almost \$47,000 in 2010. In contrast, the average income for socialist Europeans was only \$34,000, and between \$1,000 and \$10,000 for Third World nations.

Economic impact is not the only problem. Without pride of ownership, there is no motivation to care for or optimize property held in common with millions of other citizens. Everyone sinks to the lowest common denominator, the economic structure stag-
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nates, and the infrastructure collapses. That is what happened in the former Soviet Union. Although private property owners receive the blame for environmental destruction in the United States, ironically, mid-20th century Americans polluted their air and waterways because no one owned them. It was cheaper to dump pollution into the air or water since they were in the public domain.

The inevitable adverse consequence of common ownership to a large degree explains why Communism and Marxism have been dismal failures. The environmental

devastation revealed in Eastern Europe and Russia as the Iron Curtain and the Soviet Union collapsed in the early 1990s shows a lack of motivation to protect the environment. America's waterways and air, unlike its land, are not under John Locke's model of property rights. America's Founders based the Constitution on the writings of Locke, a 17th-century British philosopher who recognized that private property rights were the foundation of liberty and wealth creation.

Property rights, Locke maintained, allowed the creation of a large and prosperous middle class. Tragically, America's middle class is shrinking as an avalanche of questionable regulations diminishes property rights, thereby making the cost of production more expensive. In turn, this forces businesses to move offshore—taking middle-class jobs with them.

Most Americans are unaware of the rapid loss of legally protected private property rights in the United States and the devastating consequences it will bring. If the government can give itself the right to tell us what

we can and cannot do with our property, once-sovereign citizens will not only lose their ability to create wealth, but they will also lose their liberty. ■

This article is excerpted from Dr. Coffman's newest book, "Plundered: How Progressive Ideology Is Destroying America" (AmericaPlundered.com). Michael S. Coffman is president of Environmental Perspectives Incorporated (epi-us.com) and CEO of Sovereignty International (sovereignty.net) in Bangor, Maine. He has had over 30 years of university teaching, research and consulting experience in forestry and environmental sciences and, now, geopolitics. He was one of four who stopped the ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity one hour before the United States Senate cloture vote. The Biodiversity Treaty is one of the major treaties promoted by Agenda 21. He produced the acclaimed DVD, "Global Warming or Global Governance" (warmingdvd.com), disproving man-caused global warming—another major theme of Agenda 21. His last book, "Rescuing a Broken America" (rescuingamericabook.com), is receiving wide acclaim. He can be reached at 207-945-9878 or epinc@roadrunner.com.

Agenda 21...It's Already Here

The effort by the United Nations to control land and property rights is long and complex. While property rights were being attacked in America from the early 1970s (see "Good-bye Property Rights"), the same effort had been underway at the international level. The motherhood-and-apple-pie concept of sustainable development originally conceived by the Club of Rome had evolved into a 40-chapter U.N. plan called Agenda 21. President George H.W. Bush signed on at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro even though Agenda 21 represents the single-greatest attack on America's constitutional principles ever made.

Agenda 21 and its existing and proposed enforcement treaties are designed to provide a web of interlocking international laws that would regulate virtually every aspect of human interactions with the environment. It is the primary mechanism by which the progressives in both political parties and the global elite are achieving global governance. Although it is now finally being exposed, most Americans have never heard of Agen-

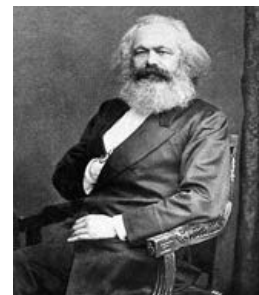
da 21. Supporters have successfully kept awareness of it from the public by viciously attacking anyone who even mentioned it and hapless whistle-blowers were demagogued as ill-informed kooks and conspiracy theorists. However, a Google search will yield nearly 70 million references to Agenda 21, many, if not most of them, pointing out its dangers.

Thanks to the Tea Party, knowledge of Agenda 21 can no longer be suppressed. Several states have passed resolutions condemning it. Alabama has even passed legislation stating, "Alabama and all political subdivisions may not adopt or implement policy recommendations that deliberately or inadvertently infringe or restrict private property rights without due process, as may be required by policy recommendations originating in or traceable to Agenda 21."

Alabama has provided the example for the rest of the states to follow.

At the heart of Agenda 21 is its Marxist ideology that government must control all

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Karl Marx, the father of Communism.

private property rights. This has been the foundation of all U.N. treaties since its 1976 Habitat I Conference in Vancouver, B.C. The preamble to the conference's consensus agreement states: "Land...cannot be treated as an ordinary asset, controlled by individuals and subject to the pressures and inefficiencies of the market. Private land ownership is also



a principal instrument of accumulation and concentration of wealth and therefore contributes to social injustice; if unchecked, it may become a major obstacle in the planning and implementation of development schemes. The provision of decent dwellings and healthy conditions for the people can only be achieved if land is used in the interests of society as a whole. Public control of land use is therefore indispensable.”

Sustainable America

Most conservatives and Tea Party groups are now well aware of Agenda 21, and are actively and successfully protesting against it. When knowledgeable citizens protest at city council, county commissioner or other government meetings, they are told that neither they, nor the United States, are implementing Agenda 21. These elected officials probably believe what they are saying. But they are wrong. They have been implementing Agenda 21 for nearly 15 years.

Agenda 21 was made into U.S. policy in a 1996 document entitled “Sustainable America.” The document and seven subdocuments were written by Bill Clinton’s President’s Council on Sustainable Development. Even before “Sustainable America” was written,

federal agencies were enthusiastically gearing up to implement Agenda 21. An August 1993 Environmental Protection Agency Internal Working Document instructed that “[n]atural resource and environmental agencies...should...develop a joint strategy to help the United States *fulfill its existing international obligations* [e.g. *Convention on Biological Diversity, Agenda 21*].... The executive branch should direct federal agencies to *evaluate national policies...in light of international policies and obligations, and to amend national policies to achieve international objectives.*” (emphasis added)

Let’s not miss it, these federal agencies (read: bureaucrats) were suggesting that *they* make national policy without a single vote in Congress. The Convention on Biological Diversity was never ratified, yet bureaucrats were implementing it. That’s bad enough, but another internal working document written by the Bureau of Land Management on March 30, 1994, proclaimed that “all ecosystem management activities should consider human beings as a biological resource.” In other words, humans are no more important than all the other critters in an ecosystem when considering management priorities. More specifically, it is the

agency’s responsibility to manage citizens for the alleged benefit of nature—preferably without them knowing it. Its legacy came to life in “Sustainable America,” and once that document was published, all federal agencies quietly but effectively changed their mission statements.

No longer was their mission to “serve the citizens” of the United States but to “control citizens and companies” in order to protect the environment and ensure sustainable development. Every grant and agreement made between a federal agency and state or local government has systematically implemented “Sustainable America,” and, therefore, Agenda 21. The changes required meant a complete shift from the constitutional basis of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” for all citizens to one of protecting nature *from citizens* at all costs.

This transformation has been underway since 1994 and even though Alabama is now preventing Agenda 21 from being implemented in the future, it still has had 17 to 18 years of it already implemented. It’s obvious our federal government has gotten so large that it is clearly out of control. Now it’s time to rein it in. Vote wisely in 2012.

—Mike Coffman