CHAPTER 1

The Green Revolution

It is Tuesday, June 23, 1999. Capt. Joseph Hazelwood dons apron and gloves at the Bean's Cafe soup kitchen in Anchorage, Alaska. He works silently emptying lettuce into a container as part of his 1,000-hour community service sentence. Monday he loaded a truck with abandoned auto parts and assorted junk thrown along Anchorage roadways. He has a month to go, working off 200 hours of his sentence, one month a year for five years. By the end of his sentence he will be fifty-eight.

It began more than ten years earlier, at 9:12 in the evening on Thursday, March 23, 1989. Harbor Pilot William Murphy "had the conn" of the *Exxon Valdez* as she departed the Trans Alaska Pipeline terminal. With the help of a harbor tug, he guided her safely through the Valdez Narrows seven miles out. By 11:25 Murphy had yielded the conn to Captain Hazelwood and departed the ship. Hazelwood reported this fact to Vehicle Traffic Center and also reported the presence of many burgy bits—small icebergs from nearby Columbia Glacier—in the shipping channel. To avoid problems with the ice, he obtained permission to divert his track from the normal outbound channel across the separation zone into the inbound channel, and then he turned the bridge over to Third Mate Gregory Cousins. Before leaving the bridge, Captain Hazelwood instructed Cousins on exactly when to return the ship to its designated outbound shipping lane. The time was about five minutes to midnight.

Good Friday was just a few minutes old when Third Mate Cousins plotted a fix and determined that he should bring the *Exxon Valdez* back on track. About the same time, Lookout Maureen Jones reported that Bligh Reef light had appeared broad off the starboard bow. It should have been off the port bow; Cousins ordered a sharp right turn. Unfortunately, the *Exxon Valdez* was not yet up to normal cruising speed. She was sluggish in responding to Cousins' turn order. He was reporting the dire situation to Captain Hazelwood over the bridge telephone when the *Exxon Valdez* came to a jolting, grinding stop, hard aground atop a pinnacle at the edge of Bligh Reef. Eight of her eleven cargo tanks had been ripped open. The wind was blowing from the north at ten knots; it was just above freezing with a slight drizzle of rain and snow. Visibility was ten miles. Three hours and fifteen minutes later, 5.8 million gallons of crude oil had washed into Prince William Sound.

According to authorities, the final toll in southeast Alaska was 1,300 miles of beaches fouled by 10.8 million gallons of crude oil. Workers counted more than 35,000 dead birds and 1,000 dead sea otters after the spill, but since most carcasses sink, this is considered to be a small fraction of the actual death toll. The best estimates are: 250,000 seabirds, 2,800 sea otters, 300 harbor seals, 250 bald eagles, up to 22 killer whales, and billions of salmon and herring eggs.

A federal jury has slapped Captain Hazelwood and Exxon with civil penalties of close to a billion dollars for their alleged part in the Prince William Sound oil spill. Although Captain Hazelwood was charged with three counts of felony criminal mischief, and misdemeanor charges of operating a vessel while intoxicated, reckless endangerment, and negligent discharge of oil, he was convicted only of negligent discharge of oil, which normally would receive no sentence. In an

apparent reaction to public outcry, Captain Hazelwood was awarded 1,000 hours of community service over a five-year period.

On October 9, 1991, the U.S. District Court approved the settlement among the State of Alaska, the United States government, and Exxon. The settlement resolved various criminal charges against Exxon as well as civil claims brought by both federal and state governments for recovery of natural resource damages.

Exxon received the largest fine ever imposed for an environmental crime: $150 million. Recognizing Exxon's heroic actions in cleaning up the spill and its voluntary payment of certain private claims, the court forgave $125 million of that fine. Exxon paid $12 million to the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund and $13 million to the national Victims of Crime Fund. Exxon also agreed to pay $100 million as restitution for the injuries caused to the fish, wildlife, and lands of the spill region. Finally, Exxon agreed to pay another $900 million over a ten-year period. This settlement contains a provision allowing the governments to claim as much as $100 million more to restore damaged resources, where that damage could not have been anticipated from data then available.

The Big Lie

Shortly after the spill in Prince William Sound, one news report described it as the worst manmade disaster since the bombing of Hiroshima. National headlines ranted against the huge, faceless, greedy corporation—the ogre that fouled the precious environment to save a few pennies on substandard ships and captains. The Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, and other groups pounced on the apparent villains,

focusing their anger on Exxon and Captain Hazelwood. They even organized "cut-ins," where everyone cut up their Exxon credit cards. They laid plans to bring about the indictment of corporate officers on criminal charges. It became the media event of the decade. More than ten years later, the Microsoft Encarta Online Encyclopedia joined the fray, reporting that "in March 1989 the *Exxon Valdez* oil tanker struck a reef in Prince William Sound and caused one of the largest oil spills in history." While these things make terrific news copy, and the headline boys love it, does this reflect reality?

Immediately after the Coast Guard arrived at the *Exxon Valdez* spill scene, the senior Coast Guard officer present requested that Captain Hazelwood remain aboard his ship to supervise ballasting to minimize the spill. He later testified that the captain was sober, alert, and fully capable of carrying out this task. In interviews conducted around the world following the spill, Captain Hazelwood was repeatedly described as the "finest tanker captain afloat," "one of the best, if not the best" ship's captain in the world, the "best captain I have ever served under," and "the best officer I have had serve under me." Admiration for this captain was unanimous and came from across the industry. From where, then, comes the nearly universal perception of this brilliant seagoing officer as an incompetent, lazy drunk?

The Alyeska Pipeline Service Company operates the oil terminal in Valdez. This company was formed by seven oil-producing firms. At the time of the spill, 50 percent was owned by British Petroleum through BP Pipelines, which controlled the company and was responsible for its operations. Sometime before the spill, Alyeska unaccountably removed thirty-six tons of cleanup equipment from the response barge located in Prince William Sound and stowed it ashore. Neither

the Coast Guard nor the Port of Valdez raised a question when this happened. Subsequent investigation has revealed that all decisions concerning cleanup equipment and its maintenance and stowage were made in London by BP, *not* by Exxon.

Where was the Coast Guard when this equipment was moved ashore and put into storage?

Where were the Port of Valdez and the State of Alaska when London decided that keeping cleanup equipment at the ready was an unnecessary precaution?

What Really Happened

Exxon, of course, was on the scene. The men running this corporation sensed how the wind was blowing and made practical decisions. They spent more on the initial cleanup than the annual budget of several nations. Exxon deserves praise and respect for its actions following the spill. As it turned out, this was finally recognized by the court when it excused $125 million of Exxon's fine because of these actions. Nevertheless, the civil penalties levied against Hazelwood and Exxon are outrageous examples of how justice can be miscarried when emotion overcomes logic and opinion replaces fact.

Here are the facts.

Only 200 miles of Prince William coastline were significantly fouled, not 1,300 as "officially" reported, but this information appears only in the fine print at the end of the report. The remaining 1,100 miles received nothing more than possibly a light sheen of oil in one or two places along the beach.

While the general visibility was reported as ten nautical miles, the local visibility near Bligh Reef at the time of the grounding was near zero.

Far from being one of the largest oil spills in history, as reported in Microsoft's Encarta Online Encyclopedia, the Prince William Sound spill ranked a distant fifty-fourth. The *Amoco Cadiz* spilled nearly 70 million gallons of oil off the coast of Brittany, France, on March 16, 1978, over six times the oil spilled by the *Exxon Valdez,* and yet even this spill ranks only sixth. On June 3, 1979, the exploratory well IXTOC I blew in the Bay of Campeche off Ciudad del Carmen, Mexico, spewing 140 million gallons of oil into that beautiful bay. And even this ranks only number two. The all-time "winner" is former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, who caused the deliberate release of over 40.5 billion gallons of oil into the Persian Gulf, over 3,750 times the size of the Prince William Sound spill.

The Office of Response and Restoration of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reports on their Web site: "What we have found is that, despite the gloomy outlook in 1989, **the intertidal habitats of Prince William Sound have proved to be surprisingly resilient. Many shorelines that were heavily oiled and then intensively cleaned now appear much as they did before the spill.** Most gravel beaches where the sediments were excavated and pushed into the surf zone for cleansing have returned to their normal shape and sediment distribution patterns. Beaches that had been denuded of plants and animals by the toxic effects of oil and by the intense cleanup efforts show extensive recolonization and are similar in appearance to areas that were unoiled" (emphasis NOAA's).

In its evaluation of the effectiveness of the cleanup methods used after the spill, NOAA says: "Our intent in creating this monitoring program was to study shoreline ecological recovery after an environmental disaster like the *Exxon Valdez* spill, and then to use those lessons as scientific guidance for what we do in

future response actions. At this point in time, our task is incomplete. However, **some of the findings have already changed the way we think about cleaning up oil spills"** (emphasis NOAA's). And then NOAA cites these examples (emphasis NOAA's):

- **More judiciousness in the use of aggressive cleanup methods,** such as hot-water washing, would help to temper the severe effects we have observed in biological communities.
- **Using water to flush an oil-contaminated beach may also wash away fine-grained sediments and nutrients** that small organisms need to successfully colonize; and it can take years for the fine sediment to return.
- Adult animals such as clams may survive in oil-contaminated beaches, but **juveniles do less well.**
- **Oil that penetrates deeply into beaches can remain relatively fresh for years and serve as a source of exposure to nearby animals.**
- After large-scale excavation or reworking of gravel beaches, **it can take many years for the beach sediments to recover.**
- **Rocky rubble shores should be of high priority for protection and cleanup** because of the potential for deep penetration and slow weathering.

What NOAA is really saying here is that the original problem was significantly exacerbated by the intensive cleanup efforts, however noble and well intentioned. It doesn't take brilliant insight to understand that oil covering the surface of rocks and sand is much less a problem than oil heated to low viscosity and forced down into the sediment by high-pressure, hot steam. This steam not only cleaned the rocks, it permanently destroyed the lichens and other vegetation that resided on them. As it turns out, most of these would have survived the oil had they simply been left alone.

The oil floating on the cold Prince William Sound

water tended to congeal into larger clumps of a tarlike substance. These clumps typically grew until they became sufficiently dense that they sank to the bottom, where they eventually were covered with silt. While this certainly poses some threat to the bottom critters near the clumps, for the most part the problem is relatively benign. By spraying the surface oil with detergents, however, the clumps never form. Envision television detergent ads wherein detergent-treated dishwater holds grease in suspension so that it does not stick to plates. In the ocean, detergent disperses oil in the same manner: the oil suspends in the water instead of floating on top, where it could be skimmed away. Consequently, it gets ingested by birds and fish. Even after as much oil as possible is soaked up into rags and other mop-up devices, sufficient detergent-dispersed oil remains in the water to do great harm.

As with the *Amoco Cadiz* spill, the IXTOC I spill, and even the Gulf War disaster, after five years, only a concerted effort could show that a spill had ever happened. After ten years, unless you knew about the spill, you probably could find no evidence at all.

Even ten years after the *Exxon Valdez* spill, I could find only one news reporter willing to tell the truth about it. On Sunday, March 14, 1999, Eric Nalder wrote for the *Seattle Times* an accurate rendition of what happened and the role Captain Hazelwood played. While there may be other truthful articles somewhere, they are well buried. Over and over again one reads about 1,300 miles of ruined beaches, a drunken captain, the largest manmade disaster in history, ad nauseam. Spin has replaced historical fact. Fiction has conquered truth.

Why? The news media reaction was knee jerk as always—this requires no astute insight. It is far more dramatic to thunder about 1,300 miles of polluted coastline than it is to explain that the environmental

damage was really fairly slight and that the "good guys" caused at least as much damage as the evil polluters. On the other hand, the environmental groups who so cold bloodedly attacked Exxon and Captain Hazelwood may have been following an agenda that was established well before the Prince William Sound spill.

On Being Green

"It's not easy being green," crooned Kermit the Muppet to an entire generation of tykes. Columnist Alston Chase quoted a German Green politician who had been recently elected to the *Bundestag*—the German parliament: "Grass-roots democracy sounded wonderful before we were elected to Parliament. But now we are in power, centralized solutions seem far more effective."

"Green" is an idea whose time has come. It is impossible today to find a politician who will disavow "the environment." From every side of the political spectrum, long-term members and candidate wannabes alike decry radical actions by fringe Greens, while giving lip service to their so-called underlying principles. Does "Green," as *Time* magazine says, merely mean "our stand on the planet is that we support its survival"? Or is there something behind the rhetoric of survival, beyond National Wildlife calendars, beneath Hollywood movie-star environmental protests?

David Brower, who at eighty-eight succumbed to cancer on November 5, 2000, was widely considered to be the "Archdruid" of the American environmental movement. In their 1993 book *Trashing the Economy,* Ron Arnold and Alan Gottlieb quote Brower: "I founded Friends of the Earth to make the Sierra Club look reasonable. Then I founded Earth Island Institute to

make Friends of the Earth look reasonable. Earth First! now makes us look reasonable. We're still waiting for someone to come along and make Earth First! look reasonable." (Earth First! is the group responsible for spiking trees, sabotaging logging equipment, and undertaking other terrorist activities in the name of the environment.)

Brower was arguably the most influential of the environmental activists. He set the tone for the international Green movement: strident and extreme. In her 1990 book *Trashing the Planet,* the late Dixy Lee Ray quotes Brower: "Childbearing [should be] a punishable crime against society, unless the parents hold a government license. . . . All potential parents [should be] required to use contraceptive chemicals, the government issuing antidotes to citizens chosen for childbearing." Catherine Foster writing in *The Christian Science Monitor* on April 8, 1991, quotes Brower: "More is a four letter word. . . . I'd like to declare open season on developers. Not kill them, just tranquilize them." Dixy Lee Ray quotes his mantra in 1993 in her book *Environmental Overkill:* "While the death of young men in war is unfortunate, it is no more serious than the touching of mountains and wilderness areas by humankind."

Wendell Berry, an eloquent agrarian admired by Greens, writes: "In living in the world by his own will and skill, the stupidest peasant or tribesman is more competent than the most intelligent workers or technicians or intellectuals in a society of specialists." Stephanie Mills, the Green journalist, puts it this way: "[Recreation activities of young moderns] may not cultivate the endurance necessary for the kind of labor required to dismantle industrial society and restore the Earth's productivity." Elsewhere she writes, "The ecofascist in me finds it hard to trust even the outcome of a democratic process." She goes on to imply

that the only way to save the Earth is for an elite group of biology-smart ecologists to rule the rest of us with benevolent firmness. She concludes that a major element in bringing this about is totally abolishing private ownership of land.

Is this beginning to sound familiar?

The Green Agenda

The Greens are a loosely knit group of people that is being led by a smaller cadre of ideologues who learned social science from Marx and physical science from popular science writers. On this shaky foundation they have built an anti-freedom, anti-democratic, anti-science worldview.

From Marx they learned about the collective, the dialectic, and centralized control, without understanding the lessons from current history following the breakup of the Soviet Union and the worldwide collapse of Communism. From the life sciences they learned about a connection between chemicals and cancer, without understanding the nature of minute dangers and minuscule concentrations or how they translate from the researcher's micro world to the macro world in which we live. From physics and the highly nonintuitive implications of relativity and quantum mechanics they learned that reality is not always what it seems to be. With the help of several misguided physicists, they drew misinformed analogues to Eastern mysticism, connections that reinforced their radically subjective and intuitive (contrasted with experimental and scientific) approach to deep ecology. From a marriage of Marxist theory with a misunderstanding of the second law of thermodynamics, which states that the total energy in the universe never increases, they developed a political-economic system

that incorporates no private land ownership and the principle of never expending energy. From a misapplication of quantum physics they derived a new world order that denies the cause and effect of market economics. From scientist ecologists they gained a superficial understanding of the oneness of global processes and the living Earth. Out of metaphor they created reality. The living Earth became a goddess.

The common thread within the Green movement is "stasis," or "sustainability" in their jargon. Their Earth doesn't change; it shows little or no effect from human activity. They want to destroy human infrastructure—our markets, our cities, our communication networks, the very essence that makes us human. They propose to limit human movement by curtailing modern communication methods and transportation. According to Green prophet E. F. Schumacher, the ideal world is where people are "relatively immobile . . . [where] the movement of populations, except in periods of disaster, [is] confined to persons [with] a very special reason to move, such as . . . scholars." In short, it is a place where only the intellectual elite—the eco-bosses—can move about.

Theirs is a simple world. People would not need to understand anything more complex than a shovel or a horse-pulled plow. According to them, if the world is sufficiently simple, ordinary people can understand it in its entirety, and with this understanding comes contentment. Failing this, if the world is sufficiently subjective, ordinary people will be unable to understand it. In the first case, there will be no complexities like nuclear power or space exploration. The ordinary citizen can instead be concerned about how much flour to make, or not tracking horse manure into the house. In the second, ordinary people can be duped by earnest leaders of the eco-movement into opposing things they don't understand until stasis is reached.

Not one new nuclear power plant has been ordered

in the United States since 1979. States like California and Nevada are experiencing severe power shortages. Cut back, citizens are told; cut back on power consumption. Echoing position papers authored by Green activists, our leaders are urging conservation. There is nothing wrong with conservation, but conserving the resources we already have does not solve anything. The only way we can avoid a power outage on a cataclysmic scale is to find and develop new energy sources. Conservation simply will not cut it. Yet that is the preferred solution. And so we inch ever closer to stasis, and the end of progress.

David M. Graber is a research biologist for the National Park Service. He wrote in the *Los Angeles Times* that humans have become a plague upon the Earth, and he suggested that unless Homo sapiens rejoin nature, "some of us can only hope for the right virus to come along." Graber's implications are astonishing. To take his statements seriously is naive, of course. In George Orwell's words: "You have to be an intellectual to believe such nonsense. No ordinary man could be such a fool." Nevertheless, it is only a short step from wishing for the appearance of the right virus to creating and distributing one. A relatively small amount of anthrax virus in the Los Angeles water system would kill the entire population of Southern California.

I have had personal experience in dealing with avowed Greens, in the field during direct confrontations with members of Greenpeace in the high Arctic and down south on the Antarctic continent, and in committee in the Pacific Northwest. There is no way that these people have the collective ability to pull off a widespread conspiracy such as is implied in many of the above quotes. Often, in fact, their leaders have difficulty relating their immediate experiences to objective reality. Here are six cases in point.

The Five-Minute Pirate

In 1982 while I was in Boulder, Colorado, being debriefed following a year at the South Pole, I attended a meeting of Denver Scuba divers. The guest speaker was the then area coordinator for Greenpeace. Between one and two hundred sport divers and other interested individuals attended the weeknight meeting, dressed in business and casual business attire. For the most part these were people who were moderately well off, with a higher than average interest in maintaining the environment. The speaker arrived unwashed, unkempt, and badly needing a change of clothing. The audience politely listened to his story of how he chained himself to the handrail of a Russian whaling ship in a Peruvian port. He said he did this in order to prevent its departure on the next leg of an extended whaling voyage. He was arrested by Peruvian authorities and charged with piracy. It turned out that Peru had no anti-piracy laws, and the Greenpeace member was released. The total cost to Greenpeace for the venture was $30,000. One of the attendees stood after the presentation to ask how long he had delayed the ship's departure. The answer: five minutes.

Dogging NOAA

While working with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, I was assigned in the late 1970s to the Outer Continental Shelf Environmental Assessment Program to help determine an environmental baseline against which future environmental impacts could be measured. This kind of study is crucial to a complete understanding of the Arctic and should have been high on the Greens' list of good things to do.

Greenpeace dogged us every step of the way, placing

their inflatable outboard boats in the path of our research vessel, forcing us to turn towards icebergs in an obvious attempt to sink us. We never did figure out why they were so opposed to our presence. Perhaps they thought we were a whaling ship—although the letters *NOAA* were prominently displayed on our bow. We were, after all, the "good guys."

McMurdo Shenanigans

While I was at McMurdo Station on the Antarctic continent during the austral summer of 1981 and 1982, Greenpeace showed up with video cameras. Their obvious intent was to capture footage of the terrible environmental damage done to the pristine Antarctic landscape by the evil U.S. Navy polluters. What they discovered, however, were neatly stacked fifty-five-gallon oil drums awaiting transport back to the United States. In fact, the area was a poster-child example of how to manage the environment effectively.

As a precaution, base commander Navy Captain Schoomaker assigned a photographer's mate to tag along with the Greenpeace group. When the Greens could find no obvious polluting activities, they brazenly tipped over the stacks of oil drums, deliberately spilling fuel oil all around the area. They were hoping then to record what they would claim was wanton disregard of the environment by the navy. As it turned out, the most interesting record of that afternoon was made by the photographer's mate, who captured their misdeeds on film.

Antarctic Nuclear Madness

The mindset of Green deep ecology would be amusing

if its consequences were not so drastic. For example, when the U.S. Navy first established its modern year-round operation at McMurdo Station in Antarctica, to supply power, officials initially installed a nuclear reactor of the same type used in U.S. nuclear submarines. These small Westinghouse plants have a perfect safety record. The installed unit should have been able to meet station power requirements indefinitely, with absolutely zero environmental impact. Worldwide condemnation, spearheaded by the Greens, of this U.S. introduction of nuclear power into Antarctica eventually led to shutdown and removal of the reactor. It was replaced by an oil-fired plant that, in the ensuing years, has severely and irretrievably polluted over one hundred thousand square miles of this pristine landscape.

The RTG Fiasco

A radioisotope thermoelectric generator, RTG for short, is a small, very long lasting power source—an outgrowth of the nuclear power program. About the size of a thermos bottle, it can supply useful power for very long periods of time. Because it has no moving parts, it is more reliable than most other power sources, and because it is not dependent upon any outside element, it can supply power where nothing else will work.

RTGs are incredibly simple and safe. Certain substances are naturally radioactive—the atoms of these substances spontaneously change from time to time into simpler substances. When these changes happen, one or more relatively high energy neutrons are released. Because of their high energy, these neutrons can be harmful to living matter, just as bullets or forcefully thrown rocks can be. This natural process of atomic change is called radioactive decay.

One group of substances generates an especially large number of neutrons during this decay process—plutonium and some of its oxides. This is why plutonium is used in nuclear explosives. When a sufficiently large amount of plutonium is concentrated in a special way, neutrons can be forced into a very rapid chain reaction where each neutron creates more neutrons, so that in a fraction of a second incredibly high energies are produced.

Under normal circumstances this cannot happen. In an RTG, a small amount of plutonium dioxide (essentially plutonium rust), far less than the critical mass for a bomb or even that needed to sustain a reactor, is placed inside a container designed to trap the emitted neutrons as heat. With the plutonium, a simple electrical device having no moving parts, called a thermocouple, produces electricity when it gets warm. Since the plutonium can produce heat for a hundred years or more, RTGs can produce electricity that long.

RTGs are especially useful in deep space probes. Solar power could be used, of course, but the collector panels are less efficient, are subject to damage from external sources, and only work well near the sun.

In the mid-1990s, several "environmental" groups expressed serious opposition to using RTGs in space. They publicly decried the "dangers" of nuclear energy, and they insisted on keeping space free of such "dangers." On one hand they seemed to know nothing of the true nature of the space environment: the sun is a continuously exploding hydrogen bomb millions of times the size of the whole Earth; our solar system is filled with high-energy particles, neutrons, cosmic rays—at times it is like the inside of a nuclear reactor. Nothing humans could ever do would have the slightest effect on this environment.

On the other hand, they seemed equally ignorant of the benign character of RTGs. The only possible risk

from RTGs could be scattering the thimbleful or so of plutonium into the atmosphere. This is a non-problem for two reasons: RTGs are designed to withstand an uncontrolled return through Earth's atmosphere without breaking up; and even if one did break up, the amount of plutonium is so small that it is extremely unlikely it could even be detected, let alone harm anybody.

The irony is that the focus of ULYSSES, the European Space Agency space probe these groups were objecting to, was solar variability and its effect on Earth's atmosphere, most notably the greenhouse effect. This is a crucial concern to everyone on Earth and a special interest to many environmental groups, including those protesting.

Once again, in October 1997, anti-nuclear groups tried to prevent the "contamination of space with nuclear energy," this time objecting to the launching of the Saturn-bound CASSINI spacecraft. Scheduled for launch on October 6, 1997, CASSINI was powered by three medium-sized RTGs. Since this $3.4 billion spacecraft was scheduled to travel near Saturn, almost a billion miles from the sun, RTG power was unequivocally the best choice for this craft. Following its arrival in the vicinity of Saturn in 2004, CASSINI would study Saturn and its satellites for at least four years and parachute a small probe dubbed HUYGENS onto the surface of Saturn's largest moon, Titan. It was the twenty-fourth U.S. space mission to carry RTGs—including the manned Apollo lunar landings.

The problem here is not the twenty-three eminently successful prior RTG-powered missions, nor the CASSINI mission, but the incredible ignorance demonstrated by the leadership of the anti-nuclear environmental coalition that continues to resist these launches. Their legal interference in the launch of ULYSSES delayed its deployment and nearly doubled

its cost. The same kind of legal mischief prior to CASSINI's launch in 1997 delayed that launch by about one and a half weeks.

In a free society, even uninformed people have the right to express their opinions. The leaders of the anti-nuclear environmental coalition have failed to educate themselves even to the most rudimentary level of knowledge regarding RTGs and the space environment. Fortunately, the courts recognized this failure in finding for NASA and the government. Unfortunately, the courts did not place responsibility for the financial cost of the proceedings and the subsequent launch delays where it belonged: Greenpeace, a coalition of Green parties, and other environmental groups.

Power to the Snail Darter and Suckerfish

Fourteen hundred Oregon family farmers located on 200,000 acres in the Klamath Basin are seeing their land dry up and blow away. Yielding to pressure by the Oregon Natural Resources Council, who threatened a lawsuit under the Endangered Species Act, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation stopped the irrigation water the farmers have used since 1909. The Oregon Natural Resources Council claimed that a small suckerfish currently on the endangered species list would be harmed if the level of the Upper Klamath Lake were reduced. They also cited a need to support the coho salmon run, which, they claimed, also needed the higher water levels.

Remember the snail darter in the Tennessee Valley? Following a public announcement of the little fish's apparent demise, there was a worldwide, Green-driven lament. But when the snail darter turned up in significant numbers in other parts of the country, the silence was deafening. In this case, the suckerfish may

be in short supply in Upper Klamath Lake, but it exists far and wide elsewhere. Frankly, even if it were not alive and well—so what? The welfare of 1,400 farmers and their families, and the value of what they produce to the whole nation, far outweighs any possible value of a small fish that plays no role in anything that matters. And the coho salmon run? The 2001 and 2003 runs were two of the largest ever recorded . . . so why even bring it up?

The Endangered Species Act allows any citizen to stop any project anywhere by simply making unsubstantiated claims in a court that is willing to listen. At the time of this writing, only California and Nevada are experiencing severe power shortages. If the Greens go unchecked, however, there are forty-eight states to go. Germany has now given up on nuclear power under pressure from a Green coalition government. It plans to dismantle its plants. France, the world leader in percentage of electricity generated by nuclear power, has stopped building new nuclear plants.

The Greens have lobbied hard for implementation of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind energy. The world's largest power windmill farm is being constructed on the windy heights overlooking the Columbia River Gorge. It is arguably the most environmentally friendly power project ever attempted. Ironically, it is under court challenge—by the Greens.

It seems that the windmill farm threatens an "endangered" condor species . . . go figure.

It really is unlikely that these buffoons will be able to carry out even one of their silly schemes to reorganize and socialize worldwide democracies. What is more probable is that by shouting loud enough for long enough, and gumming up the works while lining the pockets of greedy attorneys, the Greens will lead us to their dream of stasis by default.