

UNEP/UNESCO Postgraduate Training Course for Developing Countries

This year for the eleventh time, the UNEP/UNESCO International Course in Ecological Approaches to Resources Development, Land Management, and Impact Assessment, in Developing Countries is being given at the Technical University of Dresden, German Democratic Republic. The Course is a result of the second phase of an ongoing project which is being run by UNEP, UNESCO, and the Government of East Germany through the Centre for Protection and Improvement of the Environment (CPIE) of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Water Management, coordinated by Professor Dr E. Seidel. Since its establishment in 1977, this Course has been followed by about 170 professionals in different fields from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. They came from a total of 51 of the less-developed nations, including Brazil, Burundi, China, Cuba, Ghana, Guyana, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Sudan, Tanzania, Thailand, Venezuela, and Vietnam.

Out of a great number of applicants, a Selection Committee, headed by a representative of UNEP, selects the most suitable candidates according to certain fixed criteria, and with the proviso that each application bears a clear statement of support from the government concerned, as well as indications of appropriate university education and previous experiences in the field of environmental management. Priority is given to applicants who are already in a senior administrative position in their respective countries and seem likely to have an effective influence on the decision-making process after their return home.

The scientific training programme of the Course, held over a period of ten months (from October to July), comprises lectures, seminars, study tours, field-work, and laboratory exercises, in the following fields: environmental strategies, ecological fundamentals, agro-ecosystems, land-

use planning and food production, animal husbandry and the environment, forest resources management and agroforestry, management of aquatic ecosystems, and environmental economics.

During study tours to other European countries, the participants have an opportunity to study in detail certain environmental issues. For example, in the course of an educational stay at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (Laxenburg, Austria), the participants acquaint themselves with methods of ecological modelling and its practical use in the process of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

Assessment of the participants themselves is based on examinations and the evaluation of a final paper, including its presentation at the end of the Course. The theme of the final paper is selected by the authorities of the respective countries, and is related to a main environmental problem in those countries.

The UNEP/UNESCO Postgraduate Training Course represents a unique opportunity for professionals engaged in different environmental fields to update their knowledge in order to be able to support appropriate decision-making by incorporation of environmental issues in development policy, plans, and activities. It also provides a chance to stimulate the development of conservationists' attitudes and strategies in the less-developed countries, in order to promote the rational use of their natural resources.

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International Dawn Chorus Day

The sixth of these annually recurring events, which were started by the Urban Wildlife Group in 1984 in an attempt to bring together people internationally through their mutual enjoyment of a unique wildlife experience, has been scheduled for Sunday, 30 April 1989, when people throughout the world are asked to open their windows widely at dawn and listen to the chorus of birdsong. The object is not only to make people enlighteningly aware of the beauty and diversity of their natural environment, but also to impress on them the uniqueness of wildlife even in many an urban setting. Following on from the success of previous years, it is hoped that we can make this a truly international event and actually link the world in global appreciation of birdsong.

In Birmingham, the Urban Wildlife Group functions as an agency for public awareness of the enormous variety of wildlife that exists in the city, while also campaigning to

prevent needless destruction of wildlife areas. In addition, urban conservation is concerned with creating new landscapes for people and habitats for wildlife. Our team of experts cover all major aspects of environmental conservation, from publicizing important issues to the practical application of landscaping techniques.

Since its inception in 1980, the Urban Wildlife Group has had great success in transforming the way in which people think about their urban surroundings, so that it is being spoken of as one of the leading urban conservation concerns in the United Kingdom.

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International Lake Environment Committee (ILEC)

Objectives

Lakes are so sensitive to changes in their watersheds that rapidly expanding human activities around lakes are causing the deterioration of water quality and other environmental conditions, productivity, and landscapes, around lakes and reservoirs all over the world. Changes in lakes'

hydrological regime, eutrophication, toxic contamination, etc., may proceed sometimes very rapidly and sometimes rather slowly; but the ultimate damages caused are generally difficult or even impossible to remedy.

Nevertheless few organizations have attempted to reorganize and synthesize the existing vast accumulation of

relevant scientific knowledge and pertinent technological/administrative experience into environmentally sound management strategies for lakes and their watersheds. Accordingly ILEC was founded in 1986 to fill the void, in response to the appeal by Dr Mostafa K. Tolba, Executive Director of UNEP, in his keynote address at the 1st Conference on the Conservation and Management of World Lake Environments, which was held at Otsu, Japan, in 1984. One year later it was given the status of a Scientific Committee of the newly-established ILEC Foundation—a nongovernmental organization with its headquarters in Otsu on the shore of Lake Biwa, which is Japan's largest lake by far.

ILEC now consists of 17 scientists, planners, and administrators, from 13 countries, who work for the promotion of rational lake management that is consistent with sustainable development policies.

Ongoing Projects

Abundant and world-wide information on the present condition of lake environments, together with the experiences of both successes and failures in lake management, is above all needed for the pursuit of ILEC's objectives. Existing information is scattered in a great variety of published and unpublished sources, and is often hardly accessible. A joint ILEC/UNEP venture for 1987–89, the Survey of the State of World Lakes, aims at a breakthrough in this situation. It is intended to publish two kinds of data-book, one dealing with a limited number (150–200) of lakes, for which detailed geographical, limnological, socio-economic, and managerial, data are available, while the other will be a compilation of simpler information on as many

large lakes as possible. The first one-third of the former book, *Data Book of World Lake Environments*, has now been printed and is being distributed.

A series of guideline booklets on various aspects of lake management will also be published. The first volume on general principles (Editors: Professor S.E. Jørgensen & Dr R.A. Vollenweider) is expected to appear within this year. ILEC is also sponsoring, in 1988–90, together with the UN Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD) and UNEP, expert-group workshops on the River/Lake Basin Approach to Environmentally Sound Management of Water Resources. Local scientists and environment managers in Brazil, Kenya, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, China, and Japan, are carrying out case-studies on lakes of their countries—to supply materials for discussion and synthesis in the workshops.

ILEC also plays a steering role in organizing the biennial Conference on the Conservation and Management of World Lake Environments, initiated by the Government of Shiga Prefecture, in which Lake Biwa is located. The second and the third of these conferences have been sponsored and held, respectively, by the Michigan State Government (USA) on Mackinac Island in Lake Huron in 1986, and by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Bureau of Environment Protection at Keszthely on the shore of Lake Balaton in 1988.

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Appeal of the Initiators of 'The Green Wave' of Voluntary Ecological Action*

To live in harmony with Nature and with each other has always been, and remains, the eternal aspiration of Mankind. Today this aspiration is clouded by the threat of nuclear war and global ecological catastrophe, while the destruction of Nature and of cultural values is evoking ever-greater protest. Now the time has come for concrete, constructive action.

We, representatives of the Association of Soviet Esperanto-speakers, of the Union of Soviet Societies of Friendship and Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries, of the Association 'Ecology & Peace', of the Soviet Peace Committee, of the Soviet YCL, of the Geographical and Philosophical Societies of the USSR, of the All-Russian Society for Protecting Nature, of the Youth Environmental Council of Moscow State University, and of the Moscow Society of Explorers of Nature, propose to hold annually henceforth an International Green Wave of Voluntary Ecological Action—beginning in April in honour of the first flight of Man into Space when, through the eyes of Yuri Gagarin, people saw for the first time our Planet as their common and only home, and ending on World Environment Day (5 June).

The ecological actions entitled 'The Waves of Peace' provided the model for 'The Green Wave'. Social organizations of the USSR and other countries, and the inhabitants of many towns and villages, took part in them. On that day of 10 October 1986, in a park in Moscow, the First International Ecological *Subbotnik* took place. Several thousand volunteers came to help in the park, tidying the area, planting trees, taking part in ecological discussions, and unanimously adopting an appeal to save the Losiny Ostrov area.

We call upon all, to whom the fates of peace and Nature are dear, to restart 'The Green Wave' as early as possible in April of each year. Look for like-minded people and a situation that requires your remedial efforts. It may be a major feature such as a national park, a limited one such as a grove of trees or a stream, or no more than a bush in a courtyard—any part of living Nature that needs your care.

We hope to hear soon of the good deeds of The Green Wave. Let us do all we possibly can, so that in the coming years our movement may become a truly global one, actively backing-up our slogan of 'acting locally but thinking globally'. For the smallest unit of Nature is still a part of our life-supporting Biosphere, and consequently may be important.

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* Edited version of a handwritten petition handed to us by a courageous young man who mounted the platform at the end of the Vernadsky Commemoration 'Round Table' in the Culture-Hall of Moscow State University on the evening of 12 March 1988, which was the 125th Anniversary of V.I. Vernadsky's birthday and the day of founding of the [International] Vernadsky Foundation—see also the account on page 177 of our Summer issue and the illustrated report on pp. 187–9 of the same, preceding issue.—Ed.