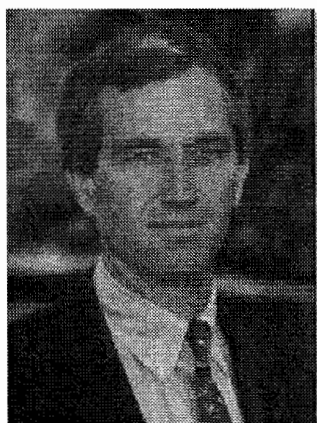

Who Speaks for the Environment?

Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

In May 2000 Karen Kraft Sloan Member of Parliament for York North organized an EcoSummit conference which brought together scientists, academics and parliamentarians for a two-day meeting on the impact of water borne pollutants on human health. The following is an edited version of the keynote address to the EcoSummit.



Let me begin by acknowledging progress made by the environmental movement since Earth Day in 1970. When I was growing up, before Earth Day, I remember the Cuyahoga River burning for a week with flames so high no one could find a way to put it out. I remember when Lake Erie was declared dead. I remember not being allowed to swim in the Hudson, the Potomac or the Charles rivers. I

remember Washington D.C. when black smoke billowed out of the stacks so that on some days you could not see a city block.

I am a falconer and have been interested in birds since I was three years old. When I was nine or ten we lived in Northern Virginia and I could go down to the Justice Building once or twice a week with my father or occasionally visit my uncle at the White House. Whenever I went to Washington, I would always look down Penn-

sylvania Avenue to the old post office building. On the roof lived a pair of eastern anatum peregrine falcons. They were the most spectacular predatory bird we had in North America. A sub-species of peregrine falcons, it was salmon pink, and had a beautiful white coverlet over its nair. It could fly 200 miles an hour.

I would watch these birds come off the roof of the post office and fly down Pennsylvania Avenue picking pigeons out of the air some forty feet over the pedestrians. To me, a sight like that was much more exciting than visiting the White House. But that sight is one my children will never see because that bird became extinct in 1963 from DDT poisoning. A creature that took a million years to evolve disappeared in the blink of an eye because of ignorance and greed.

In 1970, an accumulation of such insults drove twenty million Americans — ten percent of our population into the street in the largest demonstration in American history. They demanded that our political leadership return to the people the ancient environmental rights taken from our citizens during the previous eighty years. The political system responded.

Republicans and Democrats got together and passed an extraordinary deluge of environmental laws — 28 major laws over the next ten years, to protect our air, our water, our endangered species, our wetlands and our food supply. Those laws in turn have become the model for over one hundred and fifty nations around the planet which had their own versions of Earth Day and started making their own investments in environmental law.

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The Democratic Dimension

Unfortunately there are nations which have not done as much to protect the environment. These are countries that do not have strong democracies. The environment cannot be protected under a system that does not have democracy because the fishes and the birds and the environment cannot vote. They do not participate in the political process and neither do our children. The only way to give them a voice in the political process is by creating democratic mechanisms that allow people at the community level to speak for them. Where those mechanisms do not exist, you see huge environmental degradation.

There is a direct correlation around the planet between the level of environmental injury in specific countries and the level of tyranny.

The Soviet Union, for example, had no environmental laws because it had no democracy. We have the *National Environmental Policy Act*, our most important environmental law. It was the first one passed after Earth Day. It requires all government agencies to perform environmental impact studies prior to disposing of or destroying major environmental resources.

They did not have that in the USSR, so the Aral Sea, the largest fresh water body on earth after the Great Lakes, is now a desert. They did not have a *Clean Water Act* so the Sea of Azov, which was the richest fishery on earth after the Chesapeake Bay, is now a biological wasteland. They did not have nuclear regulatory review requirements of the kind we passed in the United States following Earth Day 1970, so one-fifth of Belarus is now permanently uninhabitable because of radiation contamination.

In Turkey they do not have a *Clean Water Act*. Three hundred species have disappeared from the Marmara Sea over the past fifteen years. The Black Sea will be dead within the next ten. In Thailand, they do not have a *Clean Air Act*, and you can see people on any street in Bangkok with gas and particle masks. The *New York Times* recently reported that the average child in Bangkok who reaches the age of six has permanently lost seven I.Q. points because of the density of airborne lead contamination. They did not have a *Clean Air Act* that said that you have to get the lead out of the gasoline. In China, they lose a hundred thousand people every year from smog events. One of the growth industries in Beijing is oxygen bars, where people go to get a breath of fresh air. In Mexico City, if you own an automobile, you can legally drive it three-and-a-half days a week. Smog inversions kill 10,000 peo-

ple a year and shut down their principle state industries, sometimes for weeks at a time.

In those nations, and in many others, environmental injury has matured into economic catastrophe. That is what would have happened in Canada and in the United States if we had not made the investment back in the seventies and early eighties, and it is what will happen if we allow foolhardy legislatures and government officials to dismantle the investments which we made back then. Or if we allow provincial officials and state officials to stop enforcing federal laws, which is another trend we are seeing all around.

One of the other things we hear on Capitol Hill and I am sure in Ottawa as well is: "We are going to get rid of the big federal government, and return control to the provinces and the states, and after all, that is local control, and that is the essence of democracy. The provinces and the states are in the best position to defend, protect and understand their own environment." But the real outcome of devolution is not community control—it is corporate control.

Let me tell you a story about community control from the Hudson valley in the 1960s. This is a tale that has been replayed ten thousand times across the continent in communities all over Canada and the United States. The General Electric company came into the town of Glens Falls, New York and said to the town's fathers, "We will build you a spanking new factory and we will bring in fifteen hundred new jobs and we are going to raise your tax base, and all you must do is waive your environmental laws and let us dump toxic PCBs into the Hudson River and persuade the state of New York to write us a permit to allow this. If you do not do this, we are going to move to New Jersey, across the river, and we are going to do it from over there, and we are going to pay taxes over there."

Glens Falls took the bait. Two decades later, GE closed the doors on that factory, fired the workers and left a two-billion-dollar clean-up bill that nobody in the Hudson valley can afford.

Federal environmental laws were meant to put an end to that kind of corporate blackmail. To stop these corporations from coming in and whipsawing one community in New York against another in New Jersey, or one in Quebec against another in Manitoba in a race to the bottom to recruit dirty industries in exchange for a few years of pollution-based prosperity. We ransom our children's futures in the process.

Federal environmental laws democratised our countries in a remarkable way. If you look at all the social movements in the history of the United States, the women's movement, the labour movement and the civil rights movement, they were all about democratising our

country, making us more democratic, spreading out power to more and more people, the most vulnerable people, and allowing more and more people to participate in the dialogues that determine the destinies of our community. I would argue that none of them have done this in the way that the environmental movement has.

If you are an American in almost any state, and some big company tries to put a landfill or an incinerator in your backyard, or tries to do bulk transfers of water near you, and you really really want to stop them and you are willing to devote your life's energy to doing it because you think it is going to destroy your community, you can almost certainly do it. You have the right to demand a full environmental impact statement in which the proponent has to disclose all the costs and benefits of that project over time to your community. You have a right to a hearing on that EIS in which you can cross-examine witnesses and bring in your own witnesses, and to a written transcript of that hearing and to a judicial decision based on a rational interpretation of that transcript. If you do not like the decision you can appeal.

If there is a polluter in your back yard, and the government fails to enforce the law, any citizen can step into the shoes of the United States Attorney and drag that polluter in front of a federal judge for penalties of twenty-five thousand dollars a day in injunctive relief. We have these toxic inventory laws and right-to-know laws that make government and industry more transparent on the local level, and force them to disclose what kind of activities they may be doing to harm our local communities.

I have to say this, because I love this country so I feel I can say it, but in a lot of places in Canada those mechanisms are missing. People say, "Well it's a smaller country and we know each other and we are a more gentle people," which is true. But you cannot afford to go on without these mechanisms.

In March, the Natural Resources Defense Council filed a complaint with the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, which is part of the NAFTA agreement, and it is the one good thing that we got out of NAFTA. It made NAFTA palatable to the environmental community. The commission was supposedly created to allow citizens to force their own governments to begin to enforce their environmental laws. NRDC filed a complaint with this commission saying that the federal fisheries act was being violated because of logging practices in British Co-

lumbia. But we found out after filing this that the Canadian government was engaged, at its own initiative, in talks with the US government and the Mexican government trying to erode the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, and trying to make it very difficult—almost impossible—for citizens to get access to that. So the one thing that we got out of NAFTA, Canada—along with the cooperation of Mexico and the government of the United States—is now in the process of trying to steal away from us. This is something that we all have to be very wary of and we should demand that these talks stop immediately.

Democracy in the short term is more expensive. It is awkward and unwieldy, it is expensive and inefficient, but in the long term there is no system which is more efficient. In the United States, back in the fifties and sixties and seventies, before we had these laws in place, there was a couple of people who sat in a room in Washington and said, "Let's start a civilian nuclear program." They did not have to do any environmental assessments, and they did not have to answer the question, "What are you going to do with the waste when these plants are decommissioned thirty years from now?" Because they did not have to answer those questions, they went ahead and did it. They brought us into a cul-de-sac where we spend, in our country in just cost overruns on nuclear power plants, over a trillion dollars. That is money that could have been spend on good things, from solar energy to helping the poor. That is a trillion dollars that was thrown into that nuclear incinerator. *Forbes Magazine* calls it the single biggest financial disaster in history. It happened because we did not have these environmental safeguards.

A lot of people on Capitol Hill and in Ottawa, a lot of the political leaders will say that you need to get rid of the environmental regulations because we want to have a free-market economy. The best thing that could happen to the environment would be if we did have a true free-market economy. The whole point of environmental laws is to impose a free-market economy. If you look around you, the most egregious environmental injury comes not from the free market, it comes from the suspension of free-market principles. It comes from a fat cat using political clout to escape the discipline of the free market. Let us look at the economic issues in more detail.

The Economic Dimension

If we want to measure our economy, we ought to be measuring how it produces sustainable, dignified communities. How does it produce jobs and the dignity of jobs over the generations. We must not do what some in Big Business and on Capitol Hill in Washington and here

in Ottawa are always urging us to do—treat the planet as if it were a business in liquidation, convert our natural resources to cash as quickly as possible in order to have a few years of pollution-based prosperity. We can create the illusion of a prosperous economy, but our children are going to pay for this joy ride. They are going to pay for it in denuded landscapes and huge clean-up costs which they simply will not be able to afford and that amplify over time.

You show me pollution and I will show you someone who is not paying their own way, someone who is stealing from the public, someone who is getting the public to pay their costs of production. The worst example is the western resource issues that have driven the environmental movement in our country over the past three or four decades. The water, grazing, mining and lumber industries.

We sell water for 11 cents an acre/foot to any farmer who wants it so they can grow rice in the desert. The true free market value of the water is \$800 an acre/foot if you put it over the dam for hydropower or if you send it to the city of Los Angeles for drinking water. Because these guys get it for free—unlimited amounts, as much as they want—they grow rice in the desert, they put the Louisiana rice farmers out of business. They have sucked every river in Idaho dry. There has not been a salmon season in Idaho in fifteen years.

Environmental injury is deficit spending, it is passing the cost of our generation's prosperity and loading it onto the backs of our children.

It is the same for lumber. If you want to cut old growth timber in the US, you have to come to us, the federal tax payer. We own it all. In the Tongass National Forest, there are trees that were growing when Christ walked the earth. There are five-hundred-year-old Sitka spruce and cedars, thirty feet around at the base, that have a value on the stump of forty thousand dollars. What do we sell them for? A dollar and eighty-nine cents apiece. The Tongass was cut by Alaska Pulp and Paper, which is 100 percent Japanese owned, and we did not even mill the logs in our country. They took them over to Japan with the bark still on them, where I saw them last summer stacked on the beach in Osaka, stacked under the water for the next generation. We, the US taxpayers, spend two hundred and fifty million dollars a year building logging roads so that these cut-and-run timber companies can get up to the last inaccessible parts of our national forests and cut the last of our children's trees.

Mining subsidies are even worse. If you find any gold or silver on any federal land in the United States, you get it all for free. You get the gold, taxpayers get the shaft. Companies leave behind huge piles of toxic waste because they have such exquisite political clout they write themselves waivers to all the federal environmental laws.

The same thing with ranching. If you want to graze a cow on my property in any of the western states, you are going to pay me \$18.00 a month. What if you have the political clout to get on the federal land? You pay a dollar and sixty-one cents a month. You pay these farmers a \$16.39 subsidy for every animal they have every month. Because they get the resource for free, they use it wastefully. They overgraze the land. They have turned a million acres of our federal land into desert. They have put the Oklahoma cattlemen out of business because they do not have federal land in Oklahoma.

By the way, these are not the poor, rural cowboy, the icon of American culture that everybody wants to preserve. Seventy-five percent of the grazing leases in Idaho are controlled by a tiny handful of families. These are the richest people in America. These are the same people who financed this revolution on Capitol Hill in 1994, the Gingrich revolution. They still have indentured servants in the United States capital demanding that we have capitalism for the poor, that we get rid of the school lunch programs and medicare at the same time that they are fighting as hard as they can to preserve this same system of socialism for the rich, for these welfare cowboys in the Western states. They get thirty billion dollars a year in environmental subsidies that we give them.

All environmental pollution is a subsidy. If you look at what General Electric did to the Hudson River, when they dumped PCBs they were avoiding one of the costs of bringing their product to the marketplace, which was the cost of disposing of a dangerous process chemical. In avoiding that cost, they were able to out-compete their competitors and to enrich their shareholders and board, but the cost did not disappear. It went into the fish and it put the men out of work, it made the people sick and it took the land off the tax rolls and it dried up the barge traffic. All of those impacts impose costs on the rest of us that should, in a true free market system, have been reflected in the price of the product when it made it to the marketplace. But what GE did, like all polluters, is they used chemical ingenuity and political clout to escape the discipline of the free market.

As an environmental advocate I try to re-impose the free market. To get people to pay their own way. That is what all federal environmental laws are about. They impose the free-market economy so companies are not allowed to internalise their profits and externalise their

costs. When the free market fails, what happens? The people who get hurt are the poorest people in our societies. Environmental injury lands hardest on the shoulders of the poor. This is always true in every environmental controversy. You see the people who have to pay are always the poorest people in our society.

In the United States, for example, toxics are one issue. Where do the toxics go when we are done with them? Everybody knows that there is nothing safe that can be done with them. If you incinerate them, they are going to go into the air and people that are nearby are going to breathe them and they are going to get sick. Put them into landfill, they are going into the groundwater unless you repeal the law of gravity. If you live in a wealthy neighbourhood, you are not going to allow them to build an incinerator or a landfill in your backyard. So where does it go?

It moves around until it lands in a neighbourhood where the people are too poor to call the city councillor or their Member of Parliament or to get an attorney to keep it moving. That is why four of every five toxic waste dumps in the United States are in black neighbourhoods. The largest toxic waste dump in America is in Emelle, Alabama, which is eighty-five percent black. The highest concentration of toxic waste dumps is the south side of Chicago. The most contaminated zip code in California is East L.A. Where do the uranium tailings go when they are done? To the Indian reservations, and this is true all over the place.

But it does not just hurt the poor, it hurts all of us, because we own these resources. That is what the law says. It says that the people of the province, the people of the state, own the resources of the state. You own the waters, you own the fisheries, you own the air that we breathe. It says that everyone has a right to use them, that no one has the right to use them in a way that will diminish or injure their use and enjoyment by others. This is ancient law. It goes back to Roman times, to the code of Justinian. It is called natural law. These are rights that no human being, no human institution can take away. If you were a citizen of Rome, whether you were rich or poor, humble or noble, the emperor himself could not stop you from fishing. He could not sell monopolies to the fish. You had rights to all the public trust assets, those assets that are not susceptible to private ownership. The running waters, the wandering animals, the fisheries, the shorelines, wetlands, the air that we breathe, those belonged to all the people. Everyone has a right to sue, nobody can use them in a way that will diminish or injure their use and enjoyment by other people. This right was embodied again in the Magna Carta and came down to the states and the provinces when the British law moved to these countries.

The Riverkeeper Project

I do not want to leave the impression that protection of the environment can only be assured by large well funded national organisations or political parties. For the last few years I have been working for a movement called Riverkeeper, founded by a blue collar coalition of commercial and recreational fishermen who mobilised on the Hudson back in the early sixties to challenge the polluters for control of the river. They were not your prototypical tweed-jacketed, pipe-smoking, bearded, affluent environmentalists who were trying to preserve distant wilderness areas in the Rockies. They were blue-collar workers. They were carpenters, factory workers, lathers, electricians. Half of them were employed in some respect on the commercial fishery on the Hudson, crabbing or fishing.

The commercial fishery on the Hudson River is one of the oldest in the United States. Many of the people I represent come from families who have been fishing the river continuously since Dutch colonial times. It is a sustainable, traditional gear fishery. They use the same methods, the small open boats, the ash poles, the gill nets that were taught by the Algonquin Indians to the original Dutch settlers of New Amsterdam and then passed down through the generations. One of the enclaves of the commercial fisheries on the Hudson was a little village called Crotenville which is 35 miles north of New York City. Most of the people who lived there in 1966 had very little expectation that they would ever see Yosemite or Yellowstone or the Everglades or the national parks, or have the resources needed to take their families on those kinds of trips. For them, the environment was their backyard. It was the bathing beaches, the swimming holes and the fishing holes of the Hudson River. Richie Garrett, the first president of what was then called the Hudson River Fishermen's Association—it later became the Riverkeeper—had this to say about the Hudson: "It's our Riviera, it's our Monte Carlo."

In 1966, Penn Central railroad began vomiting oil from a four-and-a-half-foot pipe in the Croten Harmon railroad. The oil went up the Hudson on the tide and up the Croten. It blackened the beach and made the shad taste of diesel so they could not be sold down at the Fulton fish market in New York City. All of the people of Crotenville came together in the only public building in the town—the American Legion Hall. This was a very patriotic community. Almost every home in Crotenville had an American flag on the roof. All of the original founders and board members of Riverkeeper were former marines. They were combat veterans from World War Two and Korea. In fact, Crotenville and the town of Ossining, New York had the highest mortality rate of any commu-

nity in our country during World War II because so many of the young men joined the marines very early in the war.

These were not radicals, they were not militants, they were people whose patriotism was routed in the bedrock of our country. But that night they started talking about violence. There were three hundred people in this room, and they talked about blowing up pipes on the river because they saw something that they thought they owned—the fisheries of the river, the purity of its water, resources which their families had exploited, in some cases for generations—being robbed from them by large corporations over whom they had no control. They had been to the government agencies which were supposed to protect Americans from pollution, to the Army Corps of Engineers and the Coast Guard and the conservation department, and they had been given the bum's rush. At one point, Richie Garrett and another former marine named Art Glowka had been on twenty separate occasions to the Corps of Engineers' offices in Manhattan, begging the colonel in charge to do his job, which was to shut down that Penn Central pipe. Finally, the colonel told them in exasperation, "These are important people," speaking of the Penn Central Board of Directors. "You cannot do that to them. We cannot treat them this way."

This evening, in March of 1969, virtually everybody in Crotonville had come to the conclusion that the government was in cahoots with the polluters and that the only way that they were going to reclaim the Hudson for themselves was if they confronted the polluters directly. Somebody suggested that they put a match to the oil slick that was coming out of the Penn Central pipe and blow up the pipe. Somebody else said that they should roll up a mattress and jam it up the pipe and flood the railyard with its own waste. Somebody else said that they should float a raft of dynamite into the intake of the Indian Point power plant, which at that time was killing a million fish a day, taking food off their families' tables. Then a guy named Bob Boyle stood up. He was another former marine and the outdoor editor of *Sports Illustrated* magazine. He was a great fly fisherman and was one of the gurus of dry-fly tying in the States.

In researching an article, he had come across an ancient navigational statute called the 1888 *Rivers and Harbours Act*. That statute said that it was illegal to pollute any waterway in the United States, and that you had to pay a high penalty if you got caught polluting. But also there was a bounty provision which said that anyone who turned in a polluter got to keep half of the fine. He had sent a copy of the law over to the libel lawyers at Time, Inc., and he asked, "Is this still good law?" They sent him a memo back saying, "In eighty years it has not been en-

forced a single time, but it is still good law, it is still on the books."

That evening, when all of these men were talking about violence, he stood up in this room and he waived a copy of this law and the legal memo and said, "We should not be talking about breaking the law. We should be talking about enforcing it." He persuaded them that night to start a group to mobilise and to track down polluters and bring every polluter on the river to justice.

Eighteen months later, they collected the first bounty in United States history under this eighty-year-old statute. They shut down the Penn Central pipe for good, and they got to keep two thousand dollars. In Crotonville, New York in 1968, that was a huge amount of money. There were two weeks of wild celebrations in the town, and they used the money left over to go after Ciba Geigy and Tuck Tape, American Cyanamide and Standard Brand, and the government agencies that then and today are the biggest polluters on the Hudson.

They went after the New York National Guard for filling a wetland in Westchester County, and for dumping toxics at Croton Point. In 1973 they collected the highest penalty in United States history against a corporate polluter: \$200,000 from Anaconda Wire and Cable for dumping toxics at Hastings, New York. They used that money to construct a boat which is called the Riverkeeper, which today patrols the Hudson tracking down polluters. In 1983, they used bounty money again to hire the first full-time riverkeeper, an ex-commercial fisherman named John Cronin. They hired me a year later as the prosecuting attorney for the group. A year-and-a-half later we started at Pace Law School in White Plains, New York, an environmental litigation clinic which I supervise now with my partner Karl Coplan.

Today, the Hudson River, which was a national joke in 1966, is an international model for eco-system protection. It is the richest water body in the North Atlantic, it produces more biomass per gallon, more pounds of fish per acre than any other waterway in the Atlantic Ocean.

We have ten third-year law students, who by a special court order are permitted to practice law under my supervision as if they were attorneys. They can do anything that a lawyer can do. We give them each four polluters to sue at the beginning of the semester. They file complaints, they do discovery, they do depositions, they go to court, they argue cases. If they do not win the case, they

do not pass the course! Since we started this clinic, we have brought over two hundred successful legal actions against Hudson River polluters. We have forced polluters on the river to spend close to two billion dollars on remediation of the river.

The miraculous resurrection of the Hudson river now has inspired the creation of Riverkeepers on waterways across North America. I was in Mobile, Alabama recently, launching our fiftieth Riverkeeper on Mobile Bay. We have them now on every major waterway on the West Coast. We have a picket line of boats that are on the coastline patrolling the waterways, tracking down polluters, prosecuting them on behalf of the local communities.

We launched our first Canadian Riverkeeper about two years ago on the Petitcodiac River. This is an extraordinary river, and an amazing resource. The Bay of Fundy is one of the richest water bodies on earth; the Petitcodiac had one of the largest tidal bores in the world. It is an amazingly important river from the point of view of its richness and the richness of its ocean-going fisheries. The shad populations on the east coast of North America, which all of our estuaries rely on for their own commercial fisheries, start off as a giant school off the St. John's river in Florida and they spend the winter there. When the water hits 51 degrees they begin following this temperature grade, and they go up, small schools of them peel off, they go into the St. John's and they go into the Caroline estuaries, the Roanoke and the New River, and another group goes up the Delaware, another group goes up the Hudson. They go up those to their natal streams and they spawn, and then they speed back down and they join the school on its way north, and ultimately they end up at the Petitcodiac River in the Bay of Fundy.

It is the largest shad fishery in Canada, 150,000 fish, plus one of the greatest salmon fisheries in Eastern Canada — 10,000 beautiful Atlantic salmon every year. In 1968, because of some political clout from wealthy land owners just outside Moncton, a causeway was placed across the Petitcodiac and it immediately began to silt up. An estuary that fifteen years ago was five miles across is now five hundred feet across. In this area the bait shops have closed, the salmon fisheries have collapsed, the salmon have been exterminated, the shad have been exterminated. The only thing stopping us from ripping out this causeway is that the 600 people are powerful enough to convince the provincial and the Canadian government to stop them from doing anything about this it. It is really insanity. With our Canadian associates we are fighting to insure that this causeway is ripped out, and hopefully with the help of the Canadian government we will succeed.

Conclusion

I come from a religious tradition which teaches that Man has been given dominion over nature, but that he has also been given the obligation of stewardship. What does it say about us as a nation when half the species on the face of the planet go extinct during our lifetime? We have a responsibility to the next generation. We are not protecting nature for nature's sake. We are protecting nature because it enriches us. It enriches us economically. It is the base of our economy. The economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment. It enriches us culturally, recreationally, aesthetically, spiritually and historically. It connects us to one another; it connects us to our history and our culture, and human beings have other appetites besides money, and if we do not feed them we are not going to grow up. We are not going to become the kinds of beings that we are supposed to become. We are not going to fulfil ourselves or our destinies. When we destroy nature we diminish ourselves, and we impoverish our children.

I do not want my children growing up in a world where we have lost touch with the seasons and the tides, and the things that connect us to the ten thousand generations of human beings that were here before laptops, and that connect us ultimately to God.

We are not fighting to save those ancient forests in B.C. or in the Pacific Northwest, as Rush Limbaugh loves to say, for the sake of a spotted owl. We are preserving those forests because we believe that those trees have more value to humanity standing than they would have if we cut them down. I am not fighting for the Hudson River, for the Petitcodiac, for the shad or the salmon, the striped bass or the sturgeon. We believe that our lives are going to be richer, our children and our community are going to be richer if we live in a world where there are shad and sturgeon and stripers in the Hudson and huge schools of shad going up the Petitcodiac as they have been since the dawn of time, and where there are fishermen out on the river, where our children can see them out in their small boats doing what they have been doing for generations, and touch them when they come to shore to repair their nets or to wait out the tides. In doing that they connect themselves to 350 years of New York State or New Brunswick history and understand that they are part of something that is larger than themselves.