

# The *eco•logic* Powerhouse

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## The Bureau of "Nature Conservancy"

*By Joyce Morrison*

**I**t would almost appear that The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has been given bureau status with the United States government. They don't need appropriations to run their bureau, as they are funded from grants given to them by their close partnerships, Memorandums of Understanding, agreements, and other connections to government agencies - as well as public donations.

One of TNC's most recent actions as a bureau has been the signing of an agreement with the Southwestern Region of the USDA Forest Service by their Arizona and New Mexico Chapters. TNC will also be working with the Bureau of Land Management.

It is reported that TNC was hired through a "no bid" contract to do GIS mapping. The question was raised as to why the Forest Service and BLM did not contact the United States Geological Survey to do this work, but no one has given an answer.

TNC will compile a vegetation database for Region 3 National Forests. Opponents to TNC doing this work say this agreement will:

"... determine the desired future conditions, develop its own new standards for data interpretation, interpret old and new data by these new self-created standards, establish hypotheses, and evaluate them under the adaptive management and monitoring system."

This will mean that TNC intends to make up their own rules as they go along, and they will be training Forest Service employees.

Opponents are speaking out loud and clear that they believe:

"... the next 20 or more years of Forest policy will be founded on the work of an immensely wealthy private corporation (the world's largest private landowner) with its own selfish agendas, minimal, if any, financial transparency, a checkered reputation, and minimal, if any, public accountability."

Legislators tried to get the contract pulled by the appropriations committee, but couldn't get the job done. There are concerns that access to this information could be readily available, and could be used against farmers and ranchers.

It is well known that The Nature Conservancy has close ties with the U.S. Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other government agencies - and they are well paid for their connections.

TNC has often been called the real estate agent for the United States. They have a history of purchasing land, and then selling it to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife, or some other government agency ... at a profit. The National Park Service and the Forest Service are also ready to grab more land held by private property owners.

"We do work closely with USFWS," said William Weeks of The Nature Conservancy. "We buy these properties when they need to be bought so that, at some point, we can become the willing seller (to the government.) This helps the government get around the problem of local opposition."

TNC purchases farm land to be developed into wetlands. Somehow, they seem to find enough donations from government and private sources to pay for the property, and develop the wetlands. Later, they will, most likely, sell the property back to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife, or another government agency, and double their investment.

Although The Nature Conservancy, a non-profit organization, is deeply entrenched in almost every government agency, no one seems to know why.

If there is any validity to the rumor floating around, it appears TNC's Chairman of the Board of Directors could be heading the United States Treasury Department. John Carlisle, of the National Legal and Policy Center, in his article, *Goldman Chief is too Green for Treasury*, said:

"Rumors are swirling that Treasury Secretary John Snow is on his way out, and one of the names mentioned is Henry Paulson, chairman and CEO of the Goldman Sachs Group."

Carlisle reported:

"In November 2005, Goldman adopted an "Environmental Policy" that neatly reflected the controversial agenda of the Nature Conservancy, the nation's wealthiest environmental organization, with \$4 billion in assets. The Goldman/Nature Conservancy agenda includes reducing manmade greenhouse gas emissions."

Carlisle said:

"The National Legal and Policy Center, an ethics watchdog group, filed a shareholder proposal that was considered at the Goldman annual meeting on March 31. NLPC wanted Paulson to explain Goldman's unusually tangled relationship with the Nature Conservancy."

This is the same Mr. Henry Paulson being considered for the job of United States Treasury Secretary. This appointment could be like putting the fox in the hen house.

TNC is an organization that is like a magnet to the wealthy. Their [board of directors](#) and high ranking members are mostly the elite. One member, who served on the Illinois TNC Board of Directors in the 1990s, was billionaire Warren Buffett's son, Howard.

According to a *Bloomberg* report, Buffett, 75, said his son Howard, 51, would be appointed as the future chairman of Berkshire Hathaway, Inc. Warren Buffet said his son would be "a double protector of the culture."

*Bloomberg* said Howard Buffett has been an environmental activist and photographer, while appearing to be a dirt farmer on his 840-acre farm in Central Illinois.

*Bloomberg* reported:

"Buffett has also served on the boards of Archer Daniels Midland Co., the world's largest grain processor, and Coca-Cola Enterprises, Inc., the largest soft-drink distributor. He is currently on the board of ConAgra Foods, Inc., the third largest U.S. food company."

[Range Magazine](#) did a special disclosing the unethical practices of The Nature Conservancy:

"Unless we as a people are willing to accept the continued loss of not only private property and individual rights, but of large portions of our national culture and customs as well, the Nature Conservancy must be brought to heel. Right now, it is a well-fed and generally admired beast, leading us in a wild run that is as destructive in its seemingly friendly character as it is in its seldom-seen attacks. This is no errant clumsy puppy we can finally calm. It is a runaway predator, that will turn on us in defense of its territory. The Nature Conservancy is the wolf we

raised ourselves, the grizzly we fed from the table. The monster we made with indifference. If it is left to go on growing, it will be the master and we the obedient slaves."

And, the [\*Washington Post\*](#) did an investigative series reporting hundreds of shady dealings.

*Washington Post* staff writers Joe Stephens and David Ottaway Tuesday, May 13, 2003; Page A03

"The Nature Conservancy has suspended a range of practices, including the sale of ecologically sensitive land to its trustees as home sites, in the wake of press accounts describing the Arlington-based nonprofit's activities, and concerns expressed by some of its 1 million members."

"The Conservancy, the world's richest environmental group, said it has halted all "conservation buyer" real estate transactions, until the charity's board of governors reviews the practice in June. A *Washington Post* series last week reported that many buyers have been current and former Conservancy state trustees."

Although there was a Senate investigation, which uncovered considerable documentation, proving TNC stretched the boundaries of a non-profit organization, it is still business as usual, and bureau of The Nature Conservancy and their government ties, grow even stronger.

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