

resolution suggests that it should be considered morally binding. Of special note was the role that Greenpeace International played, which, as a nongovernmental observer, worked for the adoption of either an amendment or a moratorium resolution.

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Contributions of Young People to Environmental Improvement

There is a growing recognition among environmentalists that the preservation of remote and beautiful habitats may depend on decisions taken in industrialized cities far from the threatened areas. As a result, much effort is going into involving communities in caring for their locality, and particularly into interesting young people in practical conservation work as both a leisure and an educational activity.

South Yorkshire is an industrialized part of Northern England which is characterized by mining, quarrying, and steel-making. These activities, operative over more than 200 years, have had a devastating effect on the environment. Now, with the encouragement of local government, ordinary people are taking it into their own hands to clear up unsightly rubbish, and, by tree-planting and construction work, are making their surroundings



Fig. 1. A group of enthusiastic youngsters clearing blocked ditches near Doncaster.

more pleasant and attractive to wildlife than has been the case for a long time past.

The recently published *South Yorkshire Schools Project Report 1982/83** illustrates the ways in which schoolchildren and youth groups have made practical contributions that are of benefit to the whole community. Within the County, which comprises mainly Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham, and Sheffield, 85 school- and youth-groups undertook 72 conservation projects, involving over 2,200 volunteer workdays. The opportunities available to interested teachers and youth leaders are illustrated by case-studies in the report, for example:

School Nature areas:—The creation of Nature-study areas within school grounds, designed to be bright and attractive to children and wildlife alike. Heavier work can be undertaken by parents, by people on job-creation schemes, and by local adult conservation volunteer groups.

The school in the community:—A number of schools have improved their standing with local residents by small projects in the neighbourhood; for instance, clearing rubbish from derelict sites, planting trees and shrubs, and providing benches, can soon create an informal community garden. Clearing blocked ditches can also help (Fig. 1).

Youth and the wider landscape:—The frequent overlaps between practical conservation work and other outdoor pursuits has enabled youth groups to tackle more ambitious projects—for instance for the Forestry Commission, and including weekend residential experiences.

Such activities have been stimulated by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), which is a national charity of more than ten years' experience which aims to involve people of all ages and types in practical work of conservational benefit. The BTCV acts in an advisory capacity, teaching people how they can best implement their own practical project.

A series of benefits can result from this approach: e.g.

- 1) In terms of pure conservation, urban environments should not be underestimated, as (a) the rapid growth of cities has often resulted in the 'stranding' of now-relict habitats which, with sensitive management, can still be maintained as worth-while wildlife refuges, and in a way that can be enjoyed by local residents, and (b) the techniques for creating a rich and attractive Nature area on derelict wasteland are well understood and tested.
- 2) For the individuals who participate, there is considerable personal satisfaction in seeing improvements taking place, and in feeling that one is acquiring competence in a practical skill.
- 3) Happy urban communities chiefly exist where people feel a sense of belonging and commitment to an area, and also to their fellow residents. BTCV fosters this spirit, through regional offices covering the whole country. Further details may be obtained from: BTCV Headquarters, 36 St Mary's Street, Wallingford OX1 0EU, England, UK.

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