

THE REPUBLICAN BUDGET: THE ENVIRONMENT

After running up the largest deficit in our nation's history, Congressional Republicans are attempting to appear fiscally responsible by cutting \$6.3 billion in domestic discretionary spending below last year as part of their \$2.6 trillion budget resolution. These cuts are not large enough to have any meaningful effect on the projected \$390 billion budget deficit, but they will cause great harm to millions of Americans. This fact sheet summarizes the effect of the Republican budget cuts on the environment and national parks.

CLEAN WATER. According to EPA, about 250 million Americans get their drinking water from a public water system and the main Federal investment in keeping that water safe comes from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. Two years ago, then Republican EPA Administrator Christine Todd Whitman issued a "Water Gap Analysis" which revealed a massive shortfall in funds for upgrading America's aging water systems of at least \$388 billion. Yet, the Republican budget cuts Clean Water State Revolving Fund by \$363 million and this cut comes on top of a \$251 million cut last year.

CONSERVATION TRUST FUND. Millions of acres of America's most historically important or environmentally sensitive lands are in danger of development. In response, a bipartisan coalition in Congress worked to establish the Conservation Trust Fund to help preserve America's natural beauty for future generations. That legislation promised to increase conservation funding from about \$1.2 billion in FY 2001 to approximately \$1.8 billion by fiscal year 2006. Yet, the Republican budget provides only \$800 million for the Conservation Trust Fund.

SUPERFUND. Superfund toxic waste sites are not just dirty – they are deadly. They are polluted with toxic wastes that kill people, retard child development, and cause serious birth defects in infants whose mothers are exposed during pregnancy. While the Clinton Administration completed 87 clean-ups in four years, the Bush EPA has only completed 43 sites, despite the fact that the funding for Superfund has remained level since the Clinton era. Yet, the Republican budget provides only a \$32 million increase for Superfund.

NATIONAL PARKS. America's national parks – the "jewels in the crown" of America's conservation efforts and the legacy of Teddy Roosevelt and John Muir – are badly tarnished. Funding shortfalls for the 388-park national system have become so severe that regional Park Service managers have threatened, out of necessity, to close parks on weekends and holidays. The backlog of deferred maintenance projects continues at over \$5 billion despite the President's campaign promise in 2000 to completely eliminate the shortfall in five years. Yet, the Republican budget cuts the National Park Service by \$66 million.

PUBLIC LANDS. The backlog maintenance problem in the Forest Service is estimated at \$13 billion, including \$5 billion just for roads. Most wildlife refuges are abysmally understaffed with 200 of the 544 refuges having no staffing at all. Yet, the Republican budget cuts the U.S. Forest Service funding by \$173 million.