

ACID NEWS

Quarterly Newsletter on Acid Rain

3/82

What can NGOs do in the fight against acidification ?

In our last issue of Acid News we presented the conference on acidification called by the Swedish government in June this year. Through this conference, the question of acidification will acquire a prominent rôle in official work at the international level. It is therefore particularly important that the issue should not pass by in silence, and that a debate, and an opinion, should be created in the different countries cocerned. And in this respect the non-governmental organisations concerned with nature conservancy and environmental management must play a prominent rôle.

In this Newsletter we are sending you three documents, all of which can be used in the fight against acid rain. They originate from a seminar organised in February of last year by the European Environmental Bureau in Brussels. This seminar was attended by some 65 representatives of environmental organisations and the mass media in the European Community, and a number of Scandinavian delegates.



1. The EEB meeting in Brussels adopted a declaration on acidification, which is an important document and a good platform for our continued work. This document should be spread to the greatest extent possible, and preferably, where possible, be translated into the language of the country concerned. This declaration is particularly important in that it also raises the question of acidification as seen in a broader social perspective, which is something absolutely necessary if the environment movements are to gain a hearing politically.
2. We also enclose the address given by Mr Mats Segnestam, Executive Director of the Swedish Society for Conservation of Nature, at the opening of the Brussels Seminar.

"The Acid Rain problem is an evil problem," said Mr Segnestam, and went on: "I bet the devil is laughing heartily down there - he must be delighted with the Acid Rain... The acidification of land and water is perhaps Europe's most serious environmental problem in the Eighties."

This address - published in pamphlet form - puts the facts on acidification in a nutshell. The reason why we believe it important that it be widely spread is that there has been a lack so far of short, lucid documents giving the facts about the injurious effects of acidification.

3. The third document is the address to the Brussels Seminar given by Mr Tom Burke - a well-known English profile in the environment movement, and in charge of information at the EEB. Mr Burke's address is extremely valuable on the subject of what the environment organisations can actually do about acidification. It constitutes what is almost a small manual in the work of organisation.

"It is perhaps," Mr Burke observes," one of the most important intellectual functions of NGOs to bring together from many disparate sources the implications of Acid Rain so that they can be seen as a whole. Our goal here must be to identify the significance of the problem for our society".

The material included in this Newsletter will in due course be published, together with other material from the seminar, directly by the EEB. We are extremely grateful, however, to the EEB for having given us even at this point an opportunity to spread these very important papers among a broader readership.

