

# **Raindrops Spring '01**

## **Concerns for President Bush's Policies re: Forests, Trade & Energy**

Several of our volunteers went to Washington D.C. for the Inauguration Ceremony to educate supporters and detractors alike about the potential impacts of this administration's forest and energy policies. The new administration has expressed a desire to promote free trade in the Americas at the expense of forests and their peoples. 'Free Trade' is not Freedom for most (humans & other species). In the presidential Debates Bush mentioned only Debt for Nature swaps as a solution to environmental problems in third world countries. We believe he will be using this tool as a means to mask corporate profiteering. Debt for conservation sounds great but current bills in US Congress that claim to alleviate the debt in forested countries have heavy conditions to open markets to corporations thus drastically destroying more forests and their peoples. In addition the debt is barely if ever reduced.

President Bush calls for more oil drilling rather than the U.S.A. utilizing alternative energies which would alleviate dependence on fossil fuels, global warming and spare forests from further drilling by American corporations like Texaco, Mobil, Exxon, Occidental, Unocal. Of course he will use the California energy crisis as one excuse. Bush is looking at only one avenue i.e., more production, instead of conservation and alternatives. We've been here before. Its about time we utilized our technology and brains to diversify our energy portfolio. We tell people to do that in the stock market – why don't we follow this advice in energy use.

President Bush is working to remove gains made by the last administration in preserving roadless areas and old growth in national forests. In a recent article in the New York Times Business section G.W. Bush said that he wants to remove the Environmental and Human Rights measures that the Clinton administration has placed on our "South American brothers." Though Bush may try to portray inclusiveness, his policies would only benefit the power elite in Latin America.

Call G. W. Bush to reverse his stance. 202-456-1111 fax 456-2461

For more information re: Bush's energy & forest policies contact Joan Roney of Rainforest Relief @ [jer235@nyu.edu](mailto:jer235@nyu.edu) , 212-879-2118. For more information re: Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA — NAFTA for South America) contact Kim Foster @ [fosterk9@yahoo.com](mailto:fosterk9@yahoo.com) or Joan at the above.

## **Asbury Park targeted for Boardwalk Wood**

Rainforest Relief has taken on Asbury Park, New Jersey due to its proposed use of 100,000 board feet of unsustainable tropical rainforest hardwoods for phase one of the three-phase boardwalk renovation project. Joining forces with New Jersey Sierra Club, the groups have so far successfully stalled the awarding of the contract using the unsustainable wood.

Having only found out about the proposed use after the bids had come in in November, RR mounted a quick campaign, attending City Council meetings and alerting the press.

A meeting with City staff resulted in a postponement, but not for long. The City voted to award the contract for the wood in early January.

But all was not lost. Sierra Club campaigners Sunil Somalvar and Bill Wolfe "discovered" a 1993 New Jersey executive order that mandates the use of recycled materials by grantees when they fall within 10% of the cost of virgin materials. Since Asbury Park is using state Green Acres money for the renovations, this law applies to them.

RR found a lawyer willing to sue the City and informed them of that intent Jan. 15. The City voted Jan. 17 to postpone signing the contract pending a review by NJDEP. And that's where things stand at the moment.

Please send letters to the editors of the periodicals that have covered the issue.

Letters to the Editor can be sent to Asbury Park Press at [yourviews@app.com](mailto:yourviews@app.com); to the Star-Ledger at [elletters@starledger.com](mailto:elletters@starledger.com); and to the New York Times NJ Section at [jersey@nytimes.com](mailto:jersey@nytimes.com).

All electronic Business Week letters to the editor must be sent via the web:

<http://www.businessweek.com/letters/respond.htm>

Also, send letters to Asbury Park. They need to know that the whole country is watching:

Mayor Kenneth Saunders and City Council

City of Asbury Park

1 Municipal Plaza

Asbury Park, NJ 07712

phone: 732/775-2100

fax: 732/775-1483

To help with this campaign, call or email RR at 718/398-3760; [relief@igc.org](mailto:relief@igc.org). We have an email list for anyone who wants to keep up to the minute with new developments.

### **South Street Seaport vows no uncertified Rainforest Wood**

In other tropical timber news, a meeting between RR and the management of South Street Marketplace (the market part of South Street Seaport) resulted in SSM verbally pledging to never again use tropical hardwoods for pier decking unless they come from sources that carry independent certification accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

The company had used an African rainforest wood called bengazi for the decking of the entire pier, bench areas and steps in 1985. Replacement of the wood won't be necessary for a few more years but we wanted to head SSM off now and get a policy created.

Paul Harnett, manager for the company, was very open to hearing our concerns, did some research on his own and was definite about wanting to do the right thing. He will be exploring the use of recycled plastic lumber and also following up with suppliers of wood certified and accredited by the FSC.

Please send a fax to Mr. Harnett thanking him for making the commitment:

Paul G. Harnett, Vice President and General Manager

Seaport Marketplace, Inc.

19 Fulton Street, Suite 201

New York, NY 10038

ph: 212/732-8257; fx: 212/96458056

### **Reclaimed Wood, Not Rainforest Wood**

RR met with the president of Taocon, Inc., a general contracting construction company based in Manhattan. Taocon is the latest iteration of the desire of Steven Lamazor, the owner, to do environmentally sensitive construction whenever feasible.

Mike DelFausse, a Taocon employee, was given the task of finding green alternatives and reached out to RR.

We sent along our Guidelines to Avoiding Wood from Threatened Forests and then met with Mike and Steve in early January.

The outcome was that Taocon would consult with RR on various wood-related issues as they come up and try to get clients, architects and designers to open up to using more environmentally preferable alternatives.

RR put Taocon in touch with a certified supplier of wood products, based in Ewing, NJ. “Stubby” Warmbold has been milling reclaimed trees from tree service companies and municipalities at Amish-run mills in central Pennsylvania and turning them into flooring, door parts, furniture, molding and other products.

Hopefully, Taocon can begin substituting some of Stubby’s wood for some of the more egregious wood products currently in vogue.

Call, fax or write Taocon, thanking them for their efforts toward more sustainable wood products use:

Seven Lamazor

Taocon, Inc.

110 Madison Avenue

New York, NY 10016ph: 212/689-7799; fx: 212/689-4499

### **Tenth Year Anniversary Rainforest Relief Extravaganza**

Thank you to all our supporters who joined us in celebrating Rainforest Relief’s 10th Anniversary!! The event took place Brooklyn’s beautiful Prospect Park Picnic House – a glass filled building with high ceilings that gave us the feeling in the middle of being in a green house or perhaps an enclosure in the middle of the forests. The nighttime was filled with food, fun, dance and awareness. It was very special for all of us who have worked so hard these past ten years.

The food — much of which was donated by local restaurants — got rave reviews. Thank you to Thai House Café (our friends for many years), Madras Mahal for the wonderful Indian food, Thanks to Cabana Carioca for the tantalizing Brazilian Selections, Organization for Advancement of Nigerians for their delicious dishes, Steve’s Key Lime Pies for his incredible key lime pies that even Hemmingway would have raved about. Thanks also to Howler Sorbet who donated their rainforest sorbet, Equal Exchange who donated organic shade-grown coffee and to Cloud Nine for donating organic chocolates.

And a very special thanks to Eric Johansson of Broad Street Exchange Deli for donating his catering services. Eric has been a long-time supporter and really outdid himself for this event. Eric’s donation allowed Rainforest Relief to actually make some funds with the event.

Brooklyn Brewery & Park Slope Brewery both contributed their local brews. Thank you also to Prospect Park Wine Shop, Shawn’s Wines and Paul Chartrand Wine Imports.

The music at the event was so good many of us wanted to continue grooving to those precious beats into the later hours. Unfortunately we had to have the room cleaned up and out of the park by 1:00 am. Thanks to Juan Avila, Simon 7 and Antibalas.

Rainforest Star Awards were given to:

Odigha Odigha, a Nigerian Forest Activist for Activism on the Other Front Line

Dr. Thomas Nosker of Rutgers University, Jim Kerstein, President of Polywood Recycled Plastic Lumber; and Dennis Hurley, Engineer & Consultant for Alternatives to Destruction

Jane Goodall, Primatologist & Founder of The Jane Goodall Institute for Science Speaking Out.

John Quinones, ABC News Primetime Correspondent for Rainforest Reportage.

Dr. Douglas Hansen and David J. Kolar for Funding the Work (Past & Present)  
Toni Scelzo and Joan Roney for Doing the Work (Past & Present)

Also, somewhere in the newsletter we should thank our recent "Jaguar" donors (\$1,000) or more: Mia MacDonald & Martin Rowe; Dr. Douglas Hansen & Family; Sunil Somalvar & Family.

Photo: Rainforest Relief Friend & Supporter Kennedy Prentis

Thank you especially to Andy who worked so hard preparing for the event. Thanks also to Mark Reed, Cindy Rosin, Mark LeStrange, Jen Whitburn, Therese Chorun, Brian Hires, Makwe NaMacor, Tim Doody and all the other wonderful volunteers without whom the night would have crashed and burned.

### **You want to throw or sponsor a party?**

One way to help Rainforest Relief is throw a small party for interested friends and supporters at your house, apartment, office or school. One of us would show an inspirational slide presentation on the forests, its species and its peoples with a focus on our community. Call Rainforest Relief @ 718-398-3760 or relief@igc.org.

### **Remember...**

#### **To spare Rainforests...**

Avoid beef. Take mass transit or carpool. Drink Shade grown organic coffee. And when you or your town are about to make that wood purchase call us at Rainforest Relief for advice on alternatives.

**Rainforest Relief representatives met with Jane Goodall** to enlist the help of The Jane Goodall Institute in the campaign to end New York City's use of uncertified tropical hardwoods for subway ties, boardwalks, benches, piers. The Chimpanzees of Central West Africa with whom Ms. Goodall has worked for years have been severely impacted by illegal logging and the bushmeat trade which it facilitates. Jane Goodall was awarded a Rainforest Star Award this year for Scientist Speaking Out, which she accepted in a video taped acceptance speech at our 10th Anniversary celebration in November. We also made a one minute video public service announcement (PSA) which we hope to air on local stations. If anyone would like to help distribute the PSA to their local television station please call Rainforest Relief @ 718-398-3760 or 212-879-2118.

## **Raindrops Spring '01 Updates**

### **Nicaraguan Environmentalist, Paul Baker Hernandez, will discuss Rainforests, Corporate Globalization & Militarism in Nicaragua, April 3**

Nicaraguan environmentalist Paul Baker Hernandez, sponsored by RR, will be visiting the Activism Center at Wetlands Preserve on Tuesday, April 3 to talk about the impacts of corporate globalization on the Nicaraguan environment. His talk will feature the following topics: a proposed canal megaproject funded by foreign interests which will devastate the rainforest and indigenous communities in its path, the impact of multilateral trade agreements like the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) on Nicaraguan farmers using the example of the forced patenting of native Nicaraguan plant species by Monsanto and other US agrofirms, the oil prospecting off the Nicaraguan coast by US energy companies and its link to increased US militarization in the region, and the mounting ecological debt that the US and other countries in the Global North owe Nicaragua for its exploited natural resources which more than cancels the debt owed by Nicaragua to the IMF and World Bank. Paul will also discuss ways US citizens can support Nicaraguan environmentalism, including various letter-writing campaigns and action strategies targeting US corporations and Nicaraguan government officials, the fair trade coffee campaign, environmental brigades that support sustainable development in Nicaraguan communities, and several projects to support indigenous communities living in the Nicaraguan rainforest. He will touch upon the USA's embargo in the '80s bringing down the people's revolution and how that is mirrored today in the \$1.2 billion the United States has recently given to Columbia's military. After his talk local

activists will give a brief report back on the recent consulta meeting regarding the upcoming Anit-FTAA mobilisation in Quebec City and along the borders in Vermont and Cornwall, New York.

### **Judge Throws a Monkey Wrench in Asbury Park's Boardwalk vs. Rainforests Battle**

On Friday, March 16, in the case of Rainforest Relief v. Asbury Park, NJ Superior Court judge Bette Uhrmacher ruled to deny further relief to Rainforest Relief, thus allowing Asbury Park to move ahead with their contract with Circle A Construction of Neptune for use of 100,000 boardfeet of uncertified tropical hardwoods for Asbury Park's boardwalk reconstruction. Many times in the past we've won with these tactics and we can do so again in Asbury Park. We believe we can still get the town to use certified woods for the project. Remember, too, that this is only phase one of 3 phases. With your help we can assure that only certified woods are used for future renovations. If we do, Asbury Park would become the largest buyer of independently certified wood in U.S. history. The source of the certified wood? A dam impound lake on the Ticuri River, Brazil. An operation there is removing dead submerged trees from under the water of the artificial lake which was flooded in 1985 -- the largest dam ever constructed in tropical forests. While we oppose the construction of all dams in rainforests and elsewhere, once the forest has been flooded, biomass should be removed. Otherwise, as trees rot under water they give off methane, a powerful global warming gas. The company producing the wood has applied for independent certification and everyone is assuming it should come quickly and without difficulties, perhaps as soon as May. We just learned that the company quoted a price for ipe to Asbury Park's supplier that is within 10% of the uncertified ipe quoted to Circle A. But either Asbury Park failed to make this known to the public or the courts, or the conventional supplier kept it under wraps. Please help us work to spare another 10,000 acres of rainforests from the loggers.

If you'd like to get postcards to distribute or would like to get involved in planning demonstrations, please call or email us at 718/398-3760 or relief@igc.org.

### **THE U'WA NORTHEAST TOUR FOR INDIGENOUS JUSTICE AND DIGNITY - APRIL 22 – 28TH**

#### **FTAA, PLAN COLOMBIA, CORPORATE PROFITEERS AND INDIGENOUS RESISTANCE!**

**"We ask that our brothers and sisters from other races and cultures unite in the struggle that we are undertaking.....we believe that this struggle has to become a global crusade to defend life." Statement of the U'wa, August 1998**

For thousands of years, the U'wa – a peaceful indigenous community of 5,000 people – have lived in the cloudforests of northeast Colombia, protecting their land and culture from outside encroachment. U'wa culture remains one of the least influenced by Western ways in Latin America. Their traditions, economy, religion, and political system rely on their relationship to the land. Land ownership is communal, not individually recognized. They practice agriculture by altitude and by season, migrating to different areas of their territory and cultivating different crops coinciding with religious cycles.

The U'wa keep their traditions and culture alive through storytelling, theirs is an oral, not a written culture. Their language is U'wa, not Spanish, and it comes from the Chibcha language family. The U'wa sing different stories at different times and their stories recount their creation and sacred lands on which they live. Today, as in the past, the land and its ecological health are fundamental for the continuation of the U'wa's collective well being. Now, an oil project slated for their land by Occidental Petroleum and condemned by environmental and human rights groups around the world, puts the survival of the U'wa and their sacred land in jeopardy.

The U'wa have non-violently resisted Oxy's project since the company was granted drilling rights by the Colombian government in 1992 and have stated they are willing to die if necessary to stop the drilling. OXY began construction of its first drill site, known as Gibraltar 1 in early 2000. This project has already led to a dramatic increase in human rights violations and environmental destruction. In the past year, the U'wa

homeland has become heavily militarized. The U'wa warn that unless the project is cancelled, it will only bring further violence, environmental and cultural destruction, oil spills from guerrilla bombings and deforestation from new access roads.

The international campaign in support of the U'wa people is now calling on Sanford Bernstein to divest from OXY. This comes on the heels of a major victory against Fidelity Investments, another top shareholder of the company and world's largest mutual fund.

Plan Colombia, supported largely by the lobbying efforts of Occidental Petroleum and three major weapons manufacturers in the northeast – General Dynamics, Sikorsky Aircraft and Textron are profiting at the expense of Colombians, such as the U'wa. The U'wa have been calling on US citizens to help in ending military intervention in Colombia and to pressure the administration to send humanitarian aid.

Colombia is now preparing itself for inclusion into the Free Trade area of the Americas, an extension of NAFTA to the entire Western Hemisphere. This will allow multinational corporations easy access to the resources of Colombia and anyone in the way of this process is threatened with death. In the past few months, several indigenous leaders have been targeted by paramilitary groups. If the FTAA is implemented the world will be seeing more indigenous massacres in Colombia as first peoples reside on the richest natural resource base.

Currently Pastrana is pushing to have the Colombian Constitution rewritten - which currently gives indigenous peoples autonomy over their land and their culture. This is a measure similar to Mexico revoking article 27 in 1993 to prepare for inclusion into North American Free Trade Agreement – a step which led to the Zapatista uprising.

#### Schedule of Events:

April 22 7pm event with Noam Chomsky and Roberto Perez, MIT auditorium April 23, 7pm evening - Event in East Boston, with Colombian Community

April 24 Evening event in Providence RI

April 25 Daytime – demonstration - shareholders meeting - Textron – Providence

April 25 7pm Evening event in NYC location TBA

April 26 National Day of Action - Sanford Bernstein, NYC 11:00 – 1:00 767 5th avenue NYC

April 26 Event in Western MA at UMASS

April 27 Event in Burlington, VT

April 28 Earth Day event Boston

For more info, please contact:

Kim Foster of Rainforest Relief at 617-623-2453 cell 617-438-2326 or Joan Roney @ 212-879-2118 or jer235@nyu.edu. Or to help fund this emergency tour please send checks to the Rainforest Relief address. On envelope and check put attention to U'wa or Anti-FTAA Emergency Fund. We are calling for at least \$2000 to cover travel expenses.

**Raindrops Fall '01**

Rainforest Relief welcomes Shawn Knox and the new Tucson, Arizona chapter. RR welcomes to the New York City office the new hard-working campaigners. We express our gratitude to Mara Zusman for her development work, Christine Lucas for her membership outreach and artwork, and Gabby Silverman for her canvassing. We welcome Sarah Wald to the Oregon Chapter office. Special thanks to Cindy Rosin for her layout skills and to Steve Bagley for his last minute crunch time work.

## **Indigenous Rights Caravan**

In April and May 2001; through coalition building with several other groups such as ACERCA, NYC Anti-FTAA Coalition, Times Up, NY Greens and NY Direct Action Network; we at Rainforest Relief orchestrated an Indigenous Rights Caravan to provide an alternative forum to the Free Trade Area of the Americas summit. The caravan featured Juan Gualinga, a traditional healer from the Sarayacu community in Ecuador and Gina Maria Echevarry, an Afro-Colombian artist working on educating the United States and Europe on the plight of the African Colombian communities living in or on the edge of the rainforest. Gina Maria highlighted her premise by telling the story of her husband, a journalist and an inspector for Colombia's environmental agency.

At the well-attended FTAA-Reportback in New York City Christian Bello, a teen from Brooklyn, joined the panel. Christian works with Urbanmindz, a youth of color group that focuses on issues of racism and global justice. The so called "war on drugs", he said, is not about stopping drugs but about increasing wealth at the expense of minority and poor communities all over the world as resources are extracted and peoples and lands exploited. "If they cared about stopping drugs why has funding for drug treatment programs in poor urban areas in the US so drastically decreased as US funding for the Colombian military and paramilitaries increased, and why is Gina Maria's journalist-husband's life threatened by paramilitaries when he writes about the gold and oil companies' illegal mining and drilling practices in the rainforest communities of Colombia?"

## **September 11th**

### **By Joan Roney, NYC Campaigner**

We at Rainforest Relief have been no less affected by the events of September 11 then anyone in New York City. Friends and family were near Ground Zero during the attack and many of us waited seemingly endless hours before we heard from them. Our partner organization, The Activism Center at Wetlands Preserve, out of which we did much of our organizing these past three years, was soon behind the cordon. For weeks our campaigns have been effected, our actions postponed. I myself, as many New Yorkers, bore witness to portions of that day. It began when I received a wakeup call from a friend in California, when the first plane hit. Being an activist I immediately had to do something, anything to bring forth aid. Perhaps that's just a compulsion or simply a personality trait of ours. I thought there would be lots of injured to help. I ran first to my corner pharmacist and bought as many bandages, tape and antiseptic as I could carry in my backpack – in which I had already placed Dr. Seuss's All the Places We Will Go, thinking those injured waiting to be treated might need comforting distractions and a kind voice.

The pharmacist from Syria, with whom I often converse on a variety of topics, had something to say to me as I left. "Maybe now the US will understand." His words horrified me, not because I haven't shared his anger but I realized the magnitude of what had happened and the sentiment behind it – all was worse then I ever thought. Pains and communication and anger had reached a breaking point I hadn't imagined.

His words made me aware of the challenges activists, environmentalists and human rights advocates would face in the coming months. I responded, saying that I'm among the first to say how disappointed I am with the business practices of the US – that I fight and struggle to stop the actions that cause environmental degradation and human suffering. I told him that I have many times demonstrated on Wall Street against the global trade in

illegal and destructive tropical timber, against the desecration of indigenous peoples and lands from the Diné of Arizona to the U'wa of Colombia. But, I added, I believed this particular act would only bring more excuses to further inefficient practices that cause suffering, destruction and needless inhumanity around the world. I hopped in a cab and headed for the direction of that incredible smoke. On the way down we heard over the radio the second tower was hit. And when we arrived at Chambers the first tower came down. I was directed to a temporary triage center at the Duane Street Firehouse not too far off from where RR did its DOT action. I guess in the first few hours if you carried supplies and a large gas mask the police thought you were an EMT in training. Anyway, once in, I was able to bluff my way through later checkpoints. Several images have stuck with me. At Stuyvesant High School, the central triage center, you could see building number seven burn and then go down further up the street.

It was so bleak and stark to be waiting and no living victims were arriving except for firemen and officers in need of smoky eye treatment. I hugged a young fireman in training who just discovered his two buddies were among those in the Twin Towers. He had moved off a ways from his coworkers. He commuted from Long Island everyday and said he hated New York. Bothered, I asked him why. He told me he didn't like the traffic. Hitting midnight fifteen of us were chosen to carry body bags to Ground Zero proper. It was nighttime and so crazy. From Chambers Street on we scuffled through a half-foot of ash, pieces of computers, twisted metal sheets and tubes and tons of papers – so many resumes and financial statements and legal mumbo jumbo highlighting hostile takeovers – floating, floating as flood lights glared, capturing each sheet of white as if it were falling snow. I went with the Black Labrador, his caretaker and a plumber from New Jersey. Now past midnight, we found very little. Hours later the dog was so tired – he had been sniffing since 2pm the day before – he just rolled over like a puppy and tugged on his long leash. He just did not want to sniff anymore. We tickled his belly. At 6am I was too tired to continue. The last victim I saw was a still-buried woman – her small feminine hand stuck out from under a long piece of scaffolding – gray and luxurious – a wedding ring on the curled ring finger – her index finger pointing up like an orchid out of ash.

This is the second time I've been involved with something like this – the first being in El Salvador ten years ago at the dump site where the US-supported Salvadoran government sponsored death squads threw thousands of bodies for many years. Strange this time searching for victims on the “side” I've often demonstrated against – many worked in establishments that have hurt others elsewhere.

I understand the rage – my rage is frustration. Now that there is a war in Afghanistan and talk of others; now that there is an increase of military aid and force in even more countries, that is, countries in which it is difficult to differentiate the “bad” players from the general population, and in which indigenous people, minorities and ecosystems will get caught in the crossfire. Now that Fast Track was passed, civil liberties stampeded, activists called terrorists and any disagreement called unpatriotic. I think the hard part for all of us is and will continue to be the aftermath, as we try to pick up the pieces and continue the great work RR has done for 12 years. It's important more than ever that activists come together and support each other as we continue to highlight destructive policies and stop misdeeds by corporations and governments. Opposing the National Energy Bill and the Free Trade Bill, passing the good wood bill, opposing Star Wars and the pull-out from START. We must do now what we have always done – and more of it. At RR, we believe that showing our alliance with Earth – redoubling our efforts to end the assault on the world's rainforests and ecosystems and all the species and people who live within them – is the best response. In despair can be rebirth – orchids can burst out of war-like jungles. Panthers can prowl, jaguars can pounce, children can play, and the ocelot will be free in form and stealth. Though small, the ocelot is still felt by the jungle, much as Rainforest Relief is an integral part of the change.

**In April 2001 in Quebec, Canada** a 4km “security perimeter” surrounded a very important meeting to which NGO's were not invited. The controversial Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) was being negotiated by business trade ministers and leaders of every nation in the Western Hemisphere (except Cuba). There were no representatives of Environmental, Health, Labor or Human Rights Groups. The export-driven growth model promoted by “free trade” agreements have destroyed ecosystems around the world. Under this unsustainable model many people and countries in the Global South cut down their forests, overfish their waters, drill for oil and mine for minerals to earn hard currency. Since NAFTA, for instance, 15 US wood



product companies have set up operations in Mexico – in the last eight years 40 percent of their forests have been lost leading to massive soil erosion and habitat destruction. Aerial leaflets, printed on 100 % recycled and salvaged paper, were dropped over Quebec documenting in both French and English ten reasons why to oppose the meeting and the FTAA.

### **Activist Climbs 30 Feet and Drops ‘Road Sign’ Banner to Protest Rainforest Destruction by NYC DOT**

Bustling workers occasionally glanced up as Cindy Rosin, a member of Rainforest Relief, began her ascent to the top of a 35-foot streetlight pole using rock-climbing gear. The pole was located in front of the entrance to the headquarters of the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT). Once in position, Rosin released a large banner designed to look like two orange and black road construction signs: the top sign framed a silhouetted stump and the bottom one read, “NYC DOT Destroys Rainforests!” Demonstrators, dressed as a road construction crew with hard hats and orange vests held mock orange and black diamond-shaped road signs. The signs repeated the banner’s image of a silhouetted stump and warned of mass extinction, tribal genocide and other effects related to tropical deforestation.

DOT is responsible for building and upgrading both the decking of the Brooklyn Bridge and the piers and pilings of the Staten Island Ferry Terminal both of which use vast quantities of rainforest wood.

Roughly an hour and a half later, Rosin was removed from the pole, pulled into a third floor window and arrested by police. As she was led to a paddy wagon in handcuffs, she stated the following to reporters: “It is an outrage that the DOT and other City agencies are still engaged in the destruction of rainforests when so many alternatives to tropical hardwood, such as recycled plastic lumber, exist and are in use by many other municipalities across the nation.”

Since RR members initially broached DOT with their concerns, the agency has refused to meet. With litigation in the making, RR will continue to place pressure on DOT projects until they begin to utilize recycled plastic lumber or, at the very least, Forest Stewardship Council-certified wood, which guarantees eco-logical and social standards during logging operations.

### **Big News from Brazil on Mahogany Imports**

by Tim Keating, Executive Director

About ten years ago Rainforest Relief volunteers decided to target tropical hardwood imports as the most important and effective way to spare rainforests from destruction. Shortly thereafter, sometime around 1992, RR joined with Rainforest Action Network to target mahogany imports – which were found to be coming from indigenous lands, parks and preserves and driving massive illegal road-building into the heart of the Amazon. The exploitation of mahogany in the Amazon is a story of murder and destruction as illegal loggers send gun crews ahead of the bulldozers to “pacify” the indigenous people who oppose logging on their customary and legally recognized lands.

At least ten indigenous groups have had family members murdered by illegal loggers in Brazil and Peru. According to the Brazilian government at least 80% of logging in the Brazilian Amazon is done illegally. This is organized crime as companies launder illegally cut wood through the mills and ports using legal documents. Rainforest Relief has targeted a number of companies through the years for their use of mahogany (and other woods). Our first target was Barnes & Noble in 1994. B&N was using mahogany for entry doors, foyers and railings (and jatoba flooring and shorea chairs from Philippines), building about a hundred new stores a year. In a quick victory, B&N declared a commitment to end their use of rainforest woods, which they completed within a year and a half.

Other companies we converted included Brinker International (owner of Chili’s restaurants), Rock Bottom Breweries, Hilton Hotels and others.

RR also joined with other organizations to promote the listing of bigleaf mahogany on Appendix II of CITES (the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna). Appendix II is when the CITES mechanisms really kick in because if a country lacks enforcement capacity, only Appendix II brings in another country to help enforce.

By 1996, the US had become the largest importer of bigleaf mahogany. That year, RR joined with Friends of the Earth and In Defense of Animals to sign on to the US/Bolivia proposal and push the US delegation to follow through.

Again in 1999, RR joined with Friends of the Earth UK to once again lobby the US to propose listing. Brazil decided to head off a possible vote for listing by listing its own population of bigleaf on Appendix III and vowing to convene a mahogany “working group”. At about that time, Greenpeace opened an office in the Amazon targeting illegal mahogany logging and directly confronting illegal loggers.

In June, Rainforest Relief’s director, Tim Keating, along with Action Resource Center’s John Picone, went on contract with Greenpeace to document what happened to mahogany once it arrived on US shores. The two collected evidence that showed that major US companies such as Ethan Allen, Henredon, Stickley, and even Gibson Guitars could be tied to mahogany from illegal sources.

At the end of the contract, in October, Greenpeace was set to publish its report on the illegal trade and Greenpeace US was set to publish an Annex report, authored by Keating, highlighting the US companies buying the most-likely-illegal wood.

The day before the reports were set to go, IBAMA declared a temporary suspension of all mahogany logging, milling, transport and export. Within the next week, IBAMA, along with Greenpeace, seized about \$7 million worth of illegal mahogany logs. Many of the thousands of logs were cut from Kayapo lands.

Two months later, expecting the suspension to be lifted, IBAMA instead made the suspension permanent! The decree, issued the first week of December, shut down 11 of 13 mahogany licenses (except the two that had been on their way to independent certification) but also mandated that any logging operations next to indigenous lands, parks, preserves or biological reserves would have to be certified. Also, any logging within the range of bigleaf mahogany (about a fifth of Brazil) would be shut down until they were certified.

In effect, this decree shuts down illegal mahogany logging in Brazil – something activists have been working towards for 15 years!

The new head of IBAMA has taken a bold step to prevent further destruction of the Brazilian Amazon due to illegal mahogany logging. But the backlash in Brazil has been strong.

IBAMA and the rainforests need your letters of support. Write Mr Hamilton Casara, President of IBAMA – send us your letter and we will forward it to him.

## **Hundreds take the Streets in Critical Mass Ride for the Rainforest**

by Tim Doody, NYC campaigner

Fuzzy bicycles, skateboards and a couple of twelve foot high pedal powered contraptions that looked like Dr. Seuss illustrations gathered around while hundreds of people were welcomed to the monthly cycling event called “Critical Mass” which meets the last Friday of every month. In New York, organizers generally give each ride a theme. Last May’s Critical Mass, org-anized with Rainforest Relief, highlighted the City’s use of tropical rainforest wood for benches, subway ties, piers, bridge decking and 8.5 miles of coastal boardwalks. Participants were promised a “Dead Rainforest Tour” of New York to be followed by a surprise after-party. Rainforest Relief estimates that the City destroys approximately 10-50,000 acres of rainforest annually.

With the loud sound of noisemakers and whistles the high-spirited ride began. The first stop on the Dead Rainforest Tour occurred as riders came within view of Gramercy Park. Two people unfurled a banner depicting a woman jumping off a park bench with the text, “Get off your butt! NYC Parks Dept. Kills Rainforests for Benches!” This highlighted the tens of thousands of benches throughout NYC that are made of ipê from the Brazilian Amazon. Similar banners greeted cyclists at a subway entrance, where the track ties are made of ekki logged from the rainforests of Gabon and Cameroon, and at the Brooklyn Bridge, where the decking is greenheart from Guayana. Flyers went to crowds along the route which explained Critical Mass and detailed NYC’s “crimes” against rainforests. The final banner, which condemned the City’s choice of Guyanese greenheart for piers and pilings, was displayed at the entrance to the Staten Island Ferry Terminal where the 18-piece “Hungry March Band” joined the riders for a surprise party on the Staten Island Ferry.

## **News from the Northwest**

by Jeff Lockwood, Northwest Chapter Director

The Portland, Oregon-based Northwest Chapter of Rainforest Relief continues to work on rainforest wood and oil issues. We are working closely with the Oregon Chapter of Sierra Club and the Oregon Wildlife Federation Collective to convince the Metro Regional Government, County of Multnomah and City of Portland to adopt ordinances that would prohibit the governments from using wood products from old-growth forests (including all tropical forests) in projects they build or fund, unless the wood is independently certified. Adoption of these ordinances would be an excellent way to set an example and raise awareness on our number one issue – the destruction and degradation of rainforests by logging.

Rainforest Relief also worked with Portland Parks and Recreation Department to ensure that only independently certified ipê will be used for a planned boardwalk. We convinced the city's architectural consultant to avoid uncertified ipê being unscrupulously marketed by Timber Holdings Ltd. Uncertified ipê is being ripped from the rainforests and dry forests of Brazil and Bolivia.

We are happy to announce that several local companies have taken our pledge to avoid uncertified rainforest wood use and sales. Environmental Building Supplies (503-222-3881); Sera Architects, Interiors and Planning (503-445-7372); Rock Soft Futon (503-249-7195); Holly Hill Construction (503-554-9006); and Joseph Millworks (541-894-2347, [www.josephmillworks.com](http://www.josephmillworks.com)) have all made this commitment. Also, The Joinery (503-788-8547) has agreed to stop using mahogany in furniture it manufactures. We urge you to favor these businesses and thank them for sparing the rainforests! If you know of a business that may take our pledge call us at (503) 236-3031.

Rainforest Relief also is circulating a petition promoting a boycott of Chase Manhattan Bank because they are loaning money for construction of a second heavy oil pipeline in Ecuador's rainforest. The project to be served by this pipeline is located in Yasuní National Park, which has been declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO and is part of the traditional territory of the Huaorani people. What You Can Do: Close any Chase credit card or account with a letter to the below address. Write & demand that Chase cease funding the new oil pipeline in Ecuador.

William B. Harrison, President and CEO

Chase Manhattan Bank, 270 Park Ave, NYC, NY 10017

## **Raindrops Winter '01-'02**

### **Prada Agrees to Find Alternatives to Rainforest and Old Growth Wood for All Future Projects Rainforest Destruction for the "Wave" Floor Found Unfashionable**

Members of Rainforest Relief handed out flyers in front of the newly-opened SoHo Prada store in January after canceling a planned protest of the use of wood cut from west African rainforests for the store's floor. The unusual floor, dubbed the "Wave", has become a modest tourist attraction in the area, but it is made entirely of zebrawood, a tree species that grows only in the remote rainforests of Cameroon, Gabon and Congo.

The store, in a space leased from the Guggenheim, was designed by well-known Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas of the Office for Metropolitan Architecture and is reported to be a prototype for other stores. After phone calls and a letter alerting the company of the issue and of Rainforest Relief's demonstration plans, Prada agreed to find an acceptable alternative to the future use of wood from rainforests and all other old growth forests.

"Logging in Cameroon is a nightmare of environmental devastation and illegality", said Tim Keating, RR's Executive Director. The government, aid organizations and environmental NGO's estimate that 90% of logging in Cameroon is done illegally.

Millions of dollars of taxes have not been paid to the people of Cameroon as logging companies, many of them European, in collusion with sawmills and transporters, sidestep the law. Contrary to the law, few companies even have a management plan for the areas they are licensed to log.

The environmental impacts of this type of logging in west Africa are well known and tragic, eradicating species such as chimpanzees and contributing to over-hunting. One study showed logging to have precipitated

territory “wars” among populations of endangered wild chimpanzees, ultimately reducing their numbers by 80%.

Loggers play a key role in the illegal trade in bushmeat – that is, wild game – which has become epidemic in the region. As more and more logging roads are bulldozed into pristine forests, greater access is provided. Loggers also give guns to hunters to kill wild game for their logging crews and then transport the hunters and their excess kills to the towns where the taste for bushmeat is driving a demand that is devastating wildlife populations. Endangered gorillas, chimps, pangolins, deer and other wildlife all make their way to the markets in cities and towns, with the assistance of loggers.

“Indigenous forest peoples – such as the peaceful Baka ‘pygmies’ – are being displaced”, said Tim Doody, a Rainforest Relief campaigner. “Their culture is being destroyed by often violent contact with loggers who are eradicating the forest on which they depend for food, medicine and their spiritual culture.”

Handing out flyers reading, “Rainforest Destruction No Longer in Fashion”, Joan Roney, Rainforest Relief’s New York coordinator said, “Architects and designers need to pay attention to the impacts of their designs and stop sourcing from endangered forests all over the world. We hope that Rem Koolhaas, the Office for Metropolitan Architecture and the Guggenheim will follow Prada’s example and end all future use of wood from the world’s endangered forests. There are alternatives.”

#### **What You Can Do**

Contact PRADA to thank them for this commitment to spare the world’s rainforests, and urge them to continue to move their business in a sustainable direction.

Miucci Prada • PRADA

50 West 57th Street • New York, NY 10019

Phone: 212.307.9300 • Fax: 212.974.2822

Write to Rem Koolhaas and urge him to follow PRADA’s suit and pledge to halt the use of rainforest and other threatened wood in his designs.

Rem Koolhaas

Office for Metropolitan Architecture

180 Varick St. • 9th fl. • New York, NY 10014

Phone: 646.230.6557 • Fax: 646.230.6558

Email: office@oma.nl

#### **Protesters Link Stickley To Trade In Illegal Wood**

Rainforest Relief protesters visited the Stickley Furniture’s Fifth Avenue showroom last December, bringing along drums, brightly colored signs and a banner that read “Stickley Steals Illegal Amazon Wood”. The protest called attention to the fact that Stickley buys mahogany from the Amazon and African Rainforests, where the vast majority of logs are cut illegally.

Though the company denied any wrong-doing, Greenpeace activists have traced their wood purchases through DLH Nordisk to two mahogany cartels: Perrachi Exports and Tapajos Timber. These cartels illegally log in the Brazilian Amazon and brutalize and even murder regional indigenous groups struggling to preserve their home. At peak season, they generate about US\$1 million per day due to the demand fueled by outlets such as Stickley. These huge profits pay for new roads and other infra-structure that soon leads to further devastation by pro-viding access to the rainforest for clear-ing for cattle ranches, planta-tions, wood gath-ering, over-hunting and mining.

“As public awareness grows of the rainforest destruction that is associated with illegal wood, consumers will demand that companies like Stickley find alternatives to tropical hardwoods or buy their wood only from operations certified as well-managed,” said Joan Roney, Rainforest Relief’s NYC Coordinator. “In Brazil, environmentalists have been murdered for blowing the whistle on illegal logging operations. It’s demand from companies like Stickley that is driving the black market for illegal wood.”

**Rainforest Relief’s upstate New York campaigner Gail Evans paid a visit to the upstate Stickley Furniture store in December as well. She adds her account of protesting the furniture manufacturer.**

There were very few cold days this past winter in New York, but December 12th was one of them. That day saw five of us out there – six if you include my son (sixteen months old at the time) who spent half of the demonstration in a stroller and half on my back – on the sidewalk in front of the newly constructed Stickley Furniture store. The new store is magnified in scale beside the humble one that it has replaced right across the street. Stickley has been dubbed the “largest single user” of imported mahogany – most of which is being illegally logged from parks, preserves and land reserved for native people. We had signs and held a banner which read “Shame, Stickley. Mahogany is Murder.” We reached thousands of people on the busy road in White Plains, and were filmed by local television news at the scene. One radio interviewer showed and three others interviewed me that morning on the phone. I have spoken repeatedly with the purchaser at Stickley who says that we should bring up our concerns with the governments of the countries exporting the woods from endangered forests. Rainforest Relief looks for accountability at each and every stage in the marketing of these precious woods.

## **Environmental and Human Rights Activists Join to Protest Hess Oil**

Rainforest Relief joined with the Free Burma Coalition and other groups to create a New York presence for the International Day of Action against Hess and Premier on December 8th. Banners, signs, drums and lots of creative chants made their way to a Manhattan Hess gas station to get the word out about Hess’ mess in Burma.

Hess owns 25% of Premier Oil, a British company that is a business partner of the Burmese military dictatorship, one of the world’s most repressive and violent regimes.

Premier’s partnership with the Burmese military dictatorship has built the Yetagun natural gas pipeline in Burma, which runs parallel to the Yadana pipeline, built by Unocal (U.S.) and Total (France). The construction of these pipelines has led to a massive militarization of the region; the soldiers providing security for the pipeline have conscripted forced labor, ordered forced relocations, and committed rape, torture and murder of villagers who stood in the way. The pipelines cut a swath through one of the largest intact tracts of rainforest in Southeast Asia.

British activists have been pressuring Premier to leave Burma. They have asked U.S. activists to focus the spotlight on Hess, with its enormous stake in Premier. A responsible company cannot look the other way from the impacts of its investments. Not only should Hess seek to persuade Premier to leave Burma, but they must insist on it, or sell their stake in Premier.

### **What You Can Do**

Tell Hess to sell its shares in Premier  
and stop profiting from slave labor:

John B. Hess, Chairman & CEO, Amerada Hess Co.

1185 Avenue of the Americas, NYC, NY 10036

Phone: (212) 997-8500, Fax: (212) 536-8494

Call Hess’ customer service hotline: 800-437-7872

Or call Hess customer relations: 800-HESS-OIL

## **News from the Northwest**

by Jeff Lockwood, Director, Pacific Northwest Chapter

The Pacific Northwest chapter of Rainforest Relief has been ramping up our rainforest wood campaign since last December when Sarah Wald, a well-known local forest activist, joined us to spearhead our effort.

### **Local Dealers of Rainforest Woods Surveyed**

Rainforest Relief completed surveys of rainforest wood sales by a number of businesses with a presence in Portland, including regional lumber chains (Parr Lumber, Keith Brown Building Materials and Tualatin Valley Builders Supply) and several specialty wood dealers. We contacted these companies and requested that they avoid buying from companies known to be trading in illegally-harvested rainforest woods, and that

they pledge to phase out sales of woods from endangered rainforests. Keith Brown, which was initially hesitant to respond to us, called to set up a meeting after a joint Rainforest Relief and Forest Ethics protest at one of their locations. Companies that refuse to work with us are likely to become future campaign targets.

At the national level RR is resuming negotiations with Hilton Hotels to work toward a policy to avoid woods from endangered forests. Locally, we succeeded in ensuring that the large new Hilton in downtown Portland will not have an interior of Latin American mahogany like its predecessor across the street.

#### Ethan Allen Furniture: Selling Destruction

The PNW Chapter also is organizing to take action against Ethan Allen Furniture, a national chain that has sold furniture made from Latin American and African mahogany has stores Portland and Lake Oswego. As recently as last October Ethan Allen purchased Brazilian mahogany from illegal sources, according to Greenpeace. Although our recent survey indicates they are not currently selling this species, they have not pledged to avoid it in the future. Ethan Allen continues to sell African mahogany (khaya) in its 18th Century Collection.

#### What You Can Do

Contact Ethan Allen at [www.ethanallen.com](http://www.ethanallen.com) or call 1-888-EAHELP1. Ask them to stop selling woods from endangered forests like the African mahogany in the 18th Century Collection. To get involved in this or any of our local campaigns call Sarah Wald at (503) 235-8270 or email [rrvolunteer@yahoo.com](mailto:rrvolunteer@yahoo.com)

### **Rainforest Relief Brings a Colorful Presence to the World Economic Forum Protests**

When the World Economic Forum met in New York in February they were greeted by 10,000 protesters. While elite delegates claiming to represent the world's "best interests" met to decide our collective future in the Waldorf-Astoria, the real debate about our present struggles was enacted out on the streets by a colorful coalition of community groups, environmentalists and labor activists. RR brought the issue of rainforest destruction into the media debate with a much-photographed "Angry Spirit" puppet flanked by a flock of tropical birds bearing placards that demanded an end to the unsustainable wood consumption levels of Western countries.