How can you help? We could still use quaint Appalachian metaphors and sayings. Jot them down and send them to us. We are looking for seldom-used words and phrases in the following areas: herb-growing and preserving, and herbal medicine; hunting and preserving of wild game; barn and house construction; woodworking and shingle-making; mining and coal purification; well-digging; cooking of native plants; spinning, weaving and clothes-making; general and seasonal gardening; music and dancing; metal, agricultural product, and wood crafts; children's games; weddings and funerals.

Earth Healing: We are continuing the "Earth Healing" programs and are including some of the "Forest Commons Conference" speakers in the series (Wendell Berry, and Dan Berry). The interview with Dr. Charles Puccia of the Union of Concerned Scientists and the Religious Partnership on the Environment was aired on the last week of April. For July we will have an interview with Dr. Steve Smith of the Tennessee Valley Energy Reform Coalition speaking on the General Accounting Office evaluation of the performance of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Forestry Projects

Our two summer interns Pam Broadston and Amy Carrico are being funded by a grant from the Moriah Foundation through the Appalachian Forest Action Project, of which ASPI is the Kentucky sponsoring organization. This year's crew, again working under the direction of UK professor of forestry, Paul Kalisz, has already developed twelve plots as of this writing and are in the process of training eight local forest monitors. Sites in Clay, Harlan, Casey, and Floyd have already been located and plotted. By autumn the project will extend to treatment of the condition of soils and understory plants and animals. Wade Davidson, a graduate student at the University of Kentucky, is being funded under the same Program to do the work in the five cooperating states as part of his graduate studies.

ASPI continues in its planning for a broader based Appalachian Sustainable Forestry Center to be located here at our resource center. The eight component parts are being assembled, and funding is now being sought — in these rather difficult times.

ASPI Demonstration Center

In time of tight budgets demonstration centers have lost their popularity among public and private funding agencies. Yet ours continues to struggle on after seventeen years. Our counterpart in Louisville, the Urban Environmental Homestead lost its independent status due to shortage of finances; most readers know that most of the other Science Service Centers that were funded by the National Science Foundation in the Carter years have folded or combined. Our Rockcastle Resource Center continues but with increasing difficulty. Quarterly we report the Center's organic growth, a little bit at a time in a true grassroots approach. In fact, since the spring report we have made modest progress. We endured the rainiest May on record with only slight damage; we have added a picnic pavilion, expanded the camping site recreation area, reactivated the herb garden, installed permanent siding on fourteen raised beds, and extended our nature trail network from one to four miles through the Sand Hill Community Land Trust. This "Green Trail" still must be fully marked and designated, but the hikers give it great reviews.

The Condition Of Our Times

This newsletter does not delve in political commentary, but one can hardly remain silent when many of the programs that have aided the lower-income people of Appalachia are being threatened by the Republican-controlled Congress. ASPI people have responded through letters, phone calls, faxes, and E-mail messages. Jack Kieffer wrote a letter in the Lexington Herald-Leader on the destruction of the agricultural SACRE program. Al Fritsch spoke on statewide National Public Radio on threatened cuts in the Department of Energy's renewable energy and weatherization programs, and various persons responded to the nearly disastrous Federal Recisions bill. One of the greatest dangers for our region would be the destruction of the Legal Services Program, to which so many of our lower income people depend, and for which various friends have actively lobbied. The cutting season has just begun.

Forest Commons Conference Summary

Strategies for citizen efforts to conserve privately owned forests – Summary of Discussion Groups: Discussion within the ten working groups emphasized the need for conservationists to work directly at the grassroots with private landowners.

Reforming the Practice of Loggers Subject loggers to a certification system. Set up a school for loggers and require loggers to become educated about sustainable forestry before they practice. Establish a clearinghouse from which landowners can learn which loggers practice sustainable forestry, which the opposite. Try to identify loggers likely to cause harm and then engage in public disclosure. The idea here would be to use shame in a positive way to enforce community norms. This approach is used in Virginia.

Influencing Timber Companies Not all companies are the same; some make an effort to practice sound forestry, although others do not. Because of variation, conservationists should open channels of communication with industry. Large logging companies should be required to have management stewardship plans.

Education as an Approach Many regard education as the key but a variety of approaches are suggested. Education should be in terms of bioregions — connected with places, not generalized. Education needs to change the culture so that people think and act differently towards natural resources — assume responsibility for their actions. We must educate the politicians. We should contact and educate university forestry extension personnel and state divisions of forestry, since these people can in turn educate landholders. We should get to know and work with natural resources foresters. Schools should educate in sustainable forestry. Person-to-person; neighbor-to-neighbor education is needed. We should become educated ourselves about forests in our respective regions. We should tell people about this Conference and share information with them.

Providing Information to Woodland Owners Conference participants should work with woodland owners to lead them to educate other woodland owners, because the owners want to talk to and are more likely to learn from one another. A non-governmental consulting organization to provide hands-on advice from people working in the field should be established. More service foresters to work with individual landowners are needed. Kentucky, for example, has a six-months backlog of requests for assistance with management plans, although less than 10% of Kentucky landowners have such plans. Conservationists should lobby legislators for money to hire more service foresters and urge that some financial resources or staff positions now devoted to public forests be used instead to provide more foresters to work with private landowners.