

Florida, and an authority on Florida's groundwater resources, the principal area of aquifer recharge is the sandy, citrus-clad hills of the Central Highlands, which extend three-quarters of the way down the peninsula like a misshapen backbone.

This carries important implications, for it means that the water resources of Central Florida cannot be adequately protected by a state land use policy which, focusing solely on the big cases, would have special protective regulations apply to certain specific places ("critical areas") and situations (DRI's). What is needed is a state land use policy to protect important resources wherever they are found. In this instance, while all development would not be excluded from the highlands citrus areas, the conversion of groves to urban uses would probably be strictly limited and controlled. Otherwise, extensive areas within the highlands might be covered with retirement housing, streets, parking lots, and shopping centers, with much rainfall running off as surface water rather than percolating into the aquifer.

Any attempt to apply the critical area concept over a number of really large areas may be no less difficult politically than to require, as a matter of general state policy, that *all* land in Florida be classified and regulated according to its most appropriate uses (whether for development, agriculture, preservation, or a mix of uses in a "conservation" category). The controversy over the proposed critical area in the Big Cypress watershed is a case in point.

Last June, the legislature, acting at Governor Askew's urging and with many legislators giving little thought to what they were doing, passed a special act to have a critical area designated within this important watershed. The act's stated purpose was to give early protection to the 570,000 acres within the proposed Big Cypress National Fresh Water Preserve and to such "contiguous" lands and water areas as are "ecologically linked" with Everglades National Park, the Ten Thousand Islands, and the shallow aquifer of Southwest Florida.

In late August, the Division of State Planning proposed that more than three-fourths of the entire watershed, or some 1.2 million acres, be designated as critical. Besides the large acreage in the proposed national preserve where all land would be under public ownership or easement, the critical area would have included an additional

The EPC: Environmental Lobby

Leading and coordinating conservation interests in lobbying for land use control legislation is a relatively new group called the Environmental Policy Center (EPC). The purpose of the group, established in Washington, D.C., in early 1971, is, in the words of director Joe Browder, to "concentrate on influencing, through Congress and the Executive Branch, public policy on a few key resource and environmental issues."

The EPC, unlike most environmental organizations, engages in overt lobbying activities; therefore, contributions to it are not tax deductible. Browder says that, in order to avoid competing with other groups, his outfit is not a membership group. It acts instead as an action arm and research resource for other concerned organizations. The Sierra Club, for example, pays EPC's rent in return for research on strip mining and related issues. The budget for the center—estimated at \$168,000 for 1974—is derived from private donations and the sale of research and information services.

Staff of Youthful Environmentalists

The youthful, 11-member staff is comprised of people formerly associated with such groups as Friends of the Earth, the Sierra Club, and Ralph Nader's Public Interest Research Group. In addition to land use, their major areas of concern are strip mining, water resources, and selected energy issues. David Calfee, a 27-year-old lawyer who formerly worked for Nader on energy issues, has been working since the beginning of the year as chief coordinator for environmentalists seeking to guide proposed land use legislation. Louise Dunlap, former coordinator of the Coalition Against the SST, is now coordinator of the Coalition Against Strip Mining (which the EPC put together) and leads environmental lobbyists on this issue. The coalition favors eventually phasing out all strip mining; meanwhile, it is credited with having been influential in getting strict and explicit standards for land reclamation built into the strip-mining bill passed last month by the Senate.

The center has been strongly critical of the fact that energy industries tend to have a monopoly on resource information needed for policy-making, so it does a good deal of its own research. From such research, the EPC argues that the ratio of deep-mine coal to strippable reserves is more like 30 to 1 than the 3 to 1 cited by the coal industry on the basis of its wholly different assumptions.

One of Browder's principal concerns has been to save Big Cypress Swamp, which acts as a watershed to the Everglades National Park. Browder has helped lead efforts to get the federal government to buy the area, containing over 500,000 acres, before it becomes irrevocably damaged by real estate developers and oil seekers. In October, the House finally voted to authorize \$116 million to buy it and create a Big Cypress National Preserve; EPC is optimistic that the Senate will follow suit.

Other experts at EPC are Barbara Reid, who worked with David Zwick, a Nader man, on passage of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972; Wilson Clark, an energy systems expert who does research on nonfossil fuel energy sources; Brent Blackwelder, who specializes in the Byzantine mysteries of federal water resources development; and Barbara Heller, an authority on deepwater oil terminals and offshore oil exploration (she and her husband Rick Heller were also active in the Coalition Against the SST).

The EPC, which operates out of a third-floor walk-up office on Capitol Hill, is a "hand-to-mouth" operation, says Browder. Salaries range from \$6,500 to \$15,000. But its reputation appears to have achieved a solid footing. By confining its lobbying to a few carefully selected areas of legislation, the EPC has been able to wield an influence that is acknowledged by congressional staffs and respected by opposing industry lawyers and lobbyists.—C.H.