ment, and institutions leads to the corrupting of our foreign policy endeavors, what *is* to be expected from an American contribution toward globalization, environmental conservation and management, and the reduction in nuclear materials that is ostensibly supposed to satisfy a widely desired, but rarely honored, belief in how science, technology, and foreign affairs, in tandem, can lead to the betterment of our planet?

Peter A. Cohen
Department of Chemistry,
Columbia University,
New York, NY 10027, USA
E-mail: cohen@chem.columbia.edu

■

Economics and Informed Passions

In the letter "Environmental economics and ecological economics" (18 July, p. 300), Trudy Ann Cameron argues that economists " 'fiercely resist' . . . the temptation to make value judgments regarding the choices that people ought to make" and that "[s]ome aspects of ecological economics do not fit this mold." Economists, by the very nature of their training and the assumptions behind their dominant model, value individual choice over collective choice. This and other shared values among economists affect the "objectivity" of their work, but, because they are shared, they may not be recognized. We ecological economists are a diverse group of economists, ecologists, and systems thinkers who are very aware of the values associated with the multiple models we use. Environmental economists' "dispassionate" "focus on matters of fact" have led them to focus on models which assume that current generatiόns hold the rights to resources and environmental services and that the current distribution of such rights between rich and poor is the one we would choose if given the choice. Their models, in short, do not inform us of the consequences of exercising our passions, should we wish to do so.

Richard B. Norgaard
President-Elect,
International Society for Ecological Economics,
Energy and Resources Group, and
Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics,
University of California,
Berkeley, CA 94720–3050, USA
E-mail: norgaard@icg.apc.org

Critical Habitats on Private Land

The Policy Forum by Fraser Shilling (13 June, p. 1662) criticizes the U.S. habitat conservation plan process, but also provides potential solutions. Shilling suggests that the endangered species listing process be speeded up and critical habitat be defined at the time of listing. He also suggests that the goal of a listing a species as threatened or endangered be recovery at a level higher than the minimum viable population. These suggestions assume that adequate and scientifically defensible data are available on wild populations and habitats. This is, in fact, rarely the case. Few species, even those that are fairly common game, have been studied enough to produce with good scientific data on population dynamics, habitat use, and so forth. The real solution is to have adequate available funds to conduct basic research on any and all species, no matter what the status of the species. Section 6 endangered species grants are rarely adequate to fund sound scientific research and are generally available from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service only "in the eleventh hour," contingent on congressional approval. The Teaming with Wildlife initiative is an example of a workable funding mechanism that—like the Pittman-Robert-