

I-N-D-O-C-T-R-I-Nation (Vol. 2)

Merriam-Webster described “indoctrination” (the title of this article) as;

- 1. to instruct in a doctrine, principle, ideology, etc., esp. to imbue with a specific partisan or biased belief or point of view.**

“Oh, the tangled web they weave”

“Tears of a Clown”

I was a little frustrated last month during a Q&A session with Dr. Roy Crabtree (Regional Director for the National Marine Fisheries Service), after the Gulf Council meeting in Tampa. Normally you would think that the frustration would stem from trying to get your message through to Dr. Crabtree, a near impossible feat if you don’t have the initials “Dr.” preceding your name. But no, not this time. This time, it was something else, something even more disturbing.

We were all sitting around in a circle of seats making our attempts to cast “fisherman’s logic” upon Roy and a few of his staff and just about to start signing Kumbaya, when up pipes this conservative young lady – spiral notebook and pen in-hand. She raises her hand to be acknowledged and when granted the opportunity to speak by his honor, she instead wants something else. She wants to see a show of hands of how many of us in the group were recreational and how many were commercial fisherman. We all happily followed her orders and raised our hands on cue as she tried to get the count right. During her second attempt (some of us put our hands down too quickly) Sir Roy asks “why don’t you tell us who you are?” And then she drops the bomb; “I’m from the Ocean Conservancy”. And I knew we were all had! She was writing furiously, surely in an effort to develop the next round of anti-fishing news articles, and all of a sudden my sinking heart couldn’t stop thinking of that Smokey Robinson song “Tears of a Clown”. You remember....

“Now if there's a smile on my face, it's only there trying to fool the public”

And so it is!

Last time, we spoke about the Pew connection to NOAA, Gulf Council and Fisheries Management. The impromptu survey and her Ocean Conservancy affiliation provides me the perfect opportunity to demonstrate just one layer of the “tangled web” of the environmental Eco-Takeover that we are experiencing right now....and it’s coming at us faster than the government can print the next billion-bucks-for-a-bailout!

“Pitchwoman” – Vikki Spruill

Let’s begin with Vikki Spruill. Ms. Spruill is the current president and CEO of Ocean Conservancy and has been since the end of 2006. Prior to her current position, she was the president and founder of SeaWeb. SeaWeb was formed in early 1996 as a “project” of the Pew Charitable Trusts. Rather than Pew

operating the project in-house and showing the direction they intended to go, Pew awarded a start-up grant to the “Ocean Awareness Campaign” at the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). From this grant SeaWeb was born and became a “project” awaiting the creation of its first problem. Pew stated the purpose for the grant was the promotion of “ocean awareness in the national audience of aquariums, zoos, and science museums.” But SeaWeb was spun off as a separate entity by Pew and things quickly changed. Through a relationship that Pew and the NRDC had with Fenton Communications (a Washington Public Relations firm headed by David Fenton) Vikki Spruill’s name came up as the best candidate to take over the helm at SeaWeb because of her long history of public relations and advertising experience, much of it in the food and restaurant industries. SeaWeb then became the “food police” and began creating problems for consumers. Just so you know who Fenton is, they engineered the 1989 Alar-on-apples fundraising scam. Some of you might remember this as it resulted in apples being pulled from store shelves, schools, etc. and the apple industry lost over \$250 million dollars. After the Alar-on-apples scare was totally discredited as junk science, *The Wall Street Journal* found and printed one of David Fenton’s internal memos where he stated:

“We designed the Alar Campaign so that revenue would flow back to the Natural Resources Defense Council from the public, and we sold this book about pesticides through a 900 number and the *Donahue* show. And to date there has been \$700,000 in net revenue from it.”

And the apple industry lost \$250 Million?

“The Food Police”

As we start to break apart the tangled environmental web, you’ll see that Fenton Communications plays a major role in the environmental scare tactics surrounding the food base, especially our fish. Most of their activity is cleverly designed to bring obscene profits back to their own client base in one form or another.

According to Consumer Freedom, when SeaWeb joined with Fenton in 1997, the “Give Swordfish a Break!” campaign (engineered by Fenton) was born the following January (1998). This was a two year program designed to get high-end restaurants and chefs to declare a moratorium on serving swordfish until the stock had “rebounded”. Sound familiar? Their entire program was eventually declared “flawed to the core” by U.S. Fish & Wildlife officials.

The Environmental Defense Fund gave substantial money to this project as did Pew Charitable Trusts who gave \$2 Million. SeaWeb then claimed that over 700 restaurants across America were declining to purchase or serve swordfish. Throughout this two-year period, even the federal government said that swordfish were never in any danger in the first place. Finally, after two years of trying to destroy the livelihood of the fishery, SeaWeb finally called off the boycott. During their “boycott”, U.S. imports of swordfish rose to over 200 metric tons and our U.S. fisheries suffered the consequences of the SeaWeb smear campaign.

In order to defend the program, Vikki Spruill stated "Our goal is to raise awareness about the problem of overfishing by using swordfish as an emblematic species" she says. "What I think is unusual and different about this campaign is that we are trying to give consumers a voice in this issue. This gives them something to do, which people are desperate for." SeaWeb ultimately hopes to enlist consumers to pressure Congress and the fisheries service to toughen regulations, implement effective recovery programs that reduce bycatch (incidental fish caught in nets that are discarded and often killed), and protect fish nurseries”.

“The Coconut Twist”

What is even more interesting is during SeaWeb's early existence, they hired The Mellman Group to perform a survey designed to gather support for ocean issues. According to FishNet who credited a column by N. Stolpe, the results of the report were stated as:

“American's believe the ocean's problems stem from many sources, but oil companies are seen as the prime culprit. In fact; 81% of Americans believe that oil spills are a very serious problem. This is followed by chemical runoff from large corporate farms (75% very serious), improperly treated water from towns near the coast (69%), contaminated seafood (65%), and trash, oil, and chemical runoff from streets (65%).”

“Overfishing” did not even register in the public's eye as a problem with the oceans. But an article in the SeaWeb's November 1996 monthly update, the only specific threat to oceans that was mentioned was overfishing. *“71% of the respondents agree that overfishing is threatening the health and stability of the marine environment”.*

- no mention of oil spills
- no mention of runoff
- No mention of contaminated seafood - **Just Overfishing!**

“Behind the Veil”

When I initially reviewed the results of this survey, I had one of those gut reactions. Since Pew is the old Sun Oil money, Marisla Foundation is the old Getty Oil fortune and with several other oil companies in the “environmental” mix, my mind wanted to race forward and conclude that these oil interests were seeking a way to distract attention from their apparent bad press from oil spills and the environmental impact. Or, are the oil companies the ones who intend to purchase all the catch shares? While there may be an element of this, I quickly regained my senses. “Oil spills” just did not seem to me enough of a sustainable crisis to ensure a sustainable contribution flow back to these environmental activist foundations. But **“overfishing”** would be. Vikki Spruill already knew the direction she was going to take using her vast experience in public relations.

In fact, in Spruill's own words:

“SeaWeb's goal in the campaign is for consumers to become more involved in the overfishing crisis, and we think the best way to do that is through the food on their plates.”

Source: An O'Dwyers PR Services Report.

Talk about “sustainability” – you do have to credit Spruill for her PR and Marketing savvy. After all, billions of dollars are at stake and, well, Spruill's current salary at Ocean Conservancy of \$200,185 plus \$26,630 in additional contributions to her employee benefit plan may also require a little “sustainability” at all costs!

But is there also a payback to any Fenton Clients? According to Consumer Freedom, an activists group called the Chef's Collaborative was linked to Fenton in 1999 when Environmental Defense (also a Fenton client) wanted a culinary partner to promote its “dying oceans” agenda. With a \$50,000 contribution from Environmental Defense, Chefs Collaborative co-produced *Seafood Solutions*, a guide to cooking fish in an “environmentally responsible” manner. The unveiling of the completed book featured representatives from both groups as well as SeaWeb. And Fenton Communications handled all of the arrangements.

The Chefs Collaborative also uses its influence to guide the purchase of seafood to only “approved” fish vendors. Chef’s Collaborative officers hold six seats on an advisory board at EcoFish, a for-profit vendor of “sustainable” fish. It’s an unbelievable web of trading partners that trade money back and forth and support each other’s income producing “agendas”. Chefs Collaborative also participated in a boycott of Caspian Sea caviar at the request of Fenton Communications. Fenton promoted the caviar boycott on behalf of one of their clients -- Whole Foods Markets who was less than two months into promoting its own “domestic, farm-raised” caviar line. That’s enough on Fenton and its clients for now; I think you get the idea.

“Let’s tweak the Science to fit our goals”

SeaWeb then moved on to a variety of other projects, all aimed at changing our eating habits for the good of one politically-correct fish or another. All designed with the PR mastery of Spruill.

Another of their projects is COMPASS (The Communications Partnership for Science and the Sea).

“COMPASS: Stimulates interdisciplinary, conservation-oriented work among marine scientists. In order to make scientific concepts more accessible to policy and management strategists and to enhance communication between the professional fields of Marine Science and Conservation Policy.”

Source: IRS form 990

Even though Vikki Spruill is the president and CEO of Ocean Conservancy, she is a managing director of SeaWeb’s COMPASS project. Is it a coincidence that Vikki Spruill, a PR professional was chosen for this job? Why not a seasoned Marine Biologist?

All one has to do is read the stated purpose of COMPASS: “to make scientific concepts more accessible to policy and management strategists and to enhance communication between the professional fields of Marine Science and Conservation Policy” 1) to make scientific concepts more accessible to policy and management strategists” (Decoded, this likely means that they develop the new science that fits their agenda using paid hacks and then communicate their new-found “facts” to the strategists) who will then 2) “enhance communication between the professional fields of Marine Science and Conservation Policy” (Decoded - meaning they will claim that their science and scientists are the new “best available science” and they will ensure that their lobbyists deliver these “facts” to those who will make policy in Washington.

Seafood Choice Alliance is another SeaWeb project and although I could not identify a current direct relationship between Spruill and Seafood Choice Alliance, she was certainly at the helm while at SeaWeb. SCA’s stated purpose is:

“To build a constituency in support of better and more sustainable seafood choices, SeaWeb has joined in creating the Seafood Choices Alliance. An effort to give food professionals, chefs and ultimately, consumers, the information they need to make the most informed decisions about food.”

One of the SeaWeb Grants made for 2006 was \$116,279.00 to “Mark Sedway Associates”. Sedway directs “PAI” (Philanthropy Awareness Initiative”) and one of its purposes is to “secure vital political support to protect philanthropy’s freedom and flexibility”. These groups are all part of the lobbying effort in Washington that pave the way for the Washington insiders, politician’s and others to hear the message

of the “overfishing crisis”. Interestingly enough Philanthropy Awareness Institute was also run by Vikki Spruill prior to taking over the helm at Ocean Conservancy.

“Overfishing”

Major environmental groups like Pew have all discovered that “overfishing” sells and opens many doors for them to not only continue collecting the heavy-hitter funding they so desperately need, but to influence our legislators in ways that ensure their continued survival. Just take a look at the recent “Oceans 21” project. According to Sam Farr (D) California “Oceans-21 is the product of several years of effort within the House to draft bipartisan and comprehensive legislation. It would implement key recommendations of the congressionally mandated U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy **and the report of the nonprofit Pew Oceans Commission**”. Really?

I couldn’t help but remember the words of Josh Reichart (Pew Environmental) in his interview with Sport Fishing Magazine a month or so ago:

Sport Fishing Magazine question to Josh Reichart: “How do you account for the perception that Pew wants to close off much of the ocean to fishing?”

Josh Reichart: “I think it is mainly the result of efforts by some fishing organizations to whip up their constituencies in order to help them recruit members and raise money”.

Isn’t this in fact exactly what Pew has done and continues to do? Whip up their current and potential new donors in order to ensure that Pew continues raising money by making apocalyptic claims of near doom through “overfishing” in our oceans?

Now let’s look at Ocean Conservancy’s statement of program services in their IRS form 990:

- a) “ To reform fishery management in the U.S. to employ ecosystem-based management as the framework for fisheries policy and to make long-term sustainability the priority for fishing”
- b) “Protect Marine Wildlife”: The goal of the Ocean Conservancy is to reduce and eliminate bycatch to prevent the extinction and ensure the recovery of many species of marine animals.”

If the words “*To reform fishery management in the U.S. to employ ecosystem-based management as the framework for fisheries policy and to make long-term sustainability the priority for fishing*” don’t scare you as to their long term intentions, it should.

When you have your hand out all the time for your existence, you quickly become a “solution waiting for a problem” and clearly the enviros have decided that the best way to keep the gravy-train flowing is through ocean advocacy. Pew has become not only the largest grant maker to environmental causes, but also uses its deep pockets to focus on a very aggressive political advocacy. With environmentalist extraordinaire Josh Reichart at the helm of their environmental division, Pew has shifted its conventional environmental grants to advance a singular strategy of “ending overfishing”. Pew uses a rigorous strategy to screen its grantees to ensure that they share the same “scientific advocacy”. If they tow-the-line and advance the Pew agenda creating the latest “best science” and then broadcasting articles about it, they are ensured year-over-year funding from Pew.

Despite what you may hear from these groups in their attack on our fishing rights, Red Snapper are in better shape now than they have been in years and Grouper are far more abundant than we are being led to believe. Why then are some extremists spending millions upon millions of dollars to hijack our fisheries?

To me it seems that it is more important to the leadership of these groups to turn their once commendable movement into a political machine by sending out their paid snake-oil salesmen to mislead the American public under the guise of protection our oceans, and to gain eventual access to the fish.

Their first target was the commercial sector, followed by recreational anglers. With Catch Shares or IFQ's rocketing towards us, these environmental groups are in effect lobbying to take a common resource and convert it into a negotiable, government asset and eventually reorganize it into a private business model, with their "chosen few" seafood distributors in control of our newly branded "Eco-Fish".

"It's a close-knit group"

We should be more concerned about the tangled web of activist financing and the fact that there is no real way to tell where tax- payer funded grants and private dollars cross, where advocacy funding and political funding intertwine and if environmental groups like Pew really spend money on actually "improving" our oceans. Recent changes in 501-3 (c) rules allow for up to 5% of their annual budget for lobbying efforts. Guess what? With an operating budget in excess of \$200 Million per year, that represents a \$10,000,000.00 annual budget for lobbying our leaders in Washington. Where does all that money go? Who are the benefactors?

Environmental groups set much of the public agenda, and in the area of environmental activism, foundations collectively spend in excess of \$500 million per year." The largest environmental grant-maker is Pew Charitable Trusts. Other large foundations, such as and The David and Lucille Packard Foundations, are not far behind Pew in their making tax-free grants to environmental groups.

Foundation-funded advocacy groups make back room deals and in effect deny us, the average citizen, a voice and input into the policy through our elected representatives in Congress. As a result, and as we see in the case of federal fisheries management, government becomes more remote and unresponsive to the plight of the recreational angler.

When foundations make grants, the grantees are accountable to the foundations that fund them. The people who run big foundations are part of an elite and insulated group. They are typically located well beyond the range of the communities and the people affected by policies they advocate. They are immune to feedback from those most affected by their decisions. They are accountable to only those who donate large sums in order to achieve their particular goals. It is apparent that Foundation wealth shapes public policy at the expense of alternative points of view.

"Hijacked"

A full and fair public debate on oceans policy is being derided by foundation funded advocacy campaigns. For the most part, the elites who run big foundations share similar viewpoints or have hijacked their original founder's intentions in order to carry on their own activist agendas. What better forum to accomplish this than the billions of dollars at hand to back them up? Policies supported by these foundations have not been formulated through vigorous and thorough debate. Organizations like the FRA and others groups skeptical of the Enviro-supported policies are often smeared by foundation funded media campaigns in order to marginalize us in the public eye. This very article could be subject to their attack. The alternative solutions that have been brought forth in fisheries management are rejected out of hand as environmental groups mentioned earlier in this article mold their programs and agenda to continue to receive tax-free grants from well heeled foundations with billions of dollars to "fix" situations to suit their needs.

Many of the environmental “save the ocean” policies advocated by foundations like Pew and others, trample on our basic rights granted by our forefathers. They intend to shut down the domestic fisheries and they are effectively reducing (but would rather put an end to) most recreational opportunity especially if that same opportunity includes the taking of fish for one’s personal use. They cause serious economic damage in coastal areas dependent on resource and recreational activities. All segments of our fisheries are under attack and we can thank Government actions that are unfairly influenced by an interlocking triangle of agenda-driven federal employees, grant-driven environmental organizations, and donor advised funds in private foundations.

Environmental groups peddle visions of grandeur selling the idea of abundant ocean life where each species is perfectly managed to their maximum sustainable yield, yet many of the groups’ staff have never been fishing in their lives and they’ve become perpetrators of the fraud of junk science, using their paid scientists to develop theory that meets their goals and agendas. They continue to add freight cars full of “junk” to the now rapidly moving train of indoctrination we are subject to day-in and day-out – until their goals are fully met.

Unfortunately, they seem to be ignorant of the fact that without the basic industries that produce substantial revenues for the States by way of recreational and charter boat fishing, jobs are disappearing rapidly and those who support the industry are losing money if not already out of business. But the enviros really do not care about the people

“As much POWER as they can buy”

The foundations’ strategies used to fund their environmental movement include buying influence for these groups on government policy. The issues brought forth by these environmental groups is not really about “overfishing” but about power and its use for their own purposes as subscribed to by their donors. In the meantime, whole communities are being trampled in the process. What happens to the towns and communities whose residents are forced to absorb the financial pain inflicted upon them by these elites that run large foundations? The people are left with ruined livelihoods and slumping local economies. But do you think these environmental activists groups really care? They just go about collecting their six figure tax-free grants from wealthy foundations and together they move on to the next step of their plan leaving the communities and families that they’ve just destroyed to languish.

What follows is a graphic representation of just one layer of the tangled web of environmental extremism. As I mentioned at the beginning, I used the Ocean Conservancy issue to begin the untangling. But bear in mind that this is only one small portion of the depth and breadth of these organizations and the tactics they use to pave the way for their agendas. We’ll continue to break this down in the next issue, but in the meantime, prepare for the fight!

“What can we do?”

Honestly, we are in Round-10 of a 12 Round Fight. A lot can happen in the last two rounds as long as we start now and keep swinging until the end. The last one swinging – wins!

The FRA is the only organization with enough guts to file a lawsuit with the guidance of a great attorney that will fight to ensure that all FRA members can continue to have the opportunity to fish and keep our catch. But we cannot do this for free, and the FRA needs your support right away! Every contribution will count, no matter the size. If you can give \$10, \$25, \$50, \$100, \$500 or more, the time is now.

Please send your donation to:

Fishing Rights Alliance
4604 49th Street North, #34
St. Petersburg, FL 33709

Or, log on to <http://www.thefra.org/joinfra.htm> and send your donation via PayPal.

Would you rather donate -

- **\$25 to the grocery store for 1-1/2 lbs of imported Grouper?**
- **\$25 to the FRA who is continuing the fight so you can catch your own?**

For the FRA - Mike Jackson

What follows is a graphic representation of just one facet of the tangled web. It points out only two of the major players involved and their intertwined connections. This is only one dimension of what we are dealing with. Over the next few articles, we will continue to break this apart and name the players that are trying to control our lives.