

Young Activists Plan Wide Environmental Protest

By GLADWIN HILL
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WASHINGTON—"Don't use this toilet—it's broken," reads a hand-scrawled sign in a cluttered 10-room office suite in midtown Washington.

"Words to live by," a hooky-playing college student remarks sardonically. "Substitute 'environment' for 'toilet' and you've got what we're campaigning for."

The second-floor spread above a Chinese restaurant at 2000 P Street, throbbing to the ring of phones, the clatter of business machines and intense youthful conversation, is the nerve center of the "April 22 Environmental Action" mobilization. The campaign is pointed toward a national day of protest, education and reform that backers believe could outstrip last year's Vietnam demonstration in participation and impact.

Each day's mail is bringing in hundreds of letters from college campuses, high schools and citizen groups across the country, asking guidance, offering suggestions and frequently enclosing contributions to help the campaign along.

The organizers have been hard pressed to keep track of all the prospective participants, but estimate the response to date as involving upward of 600 college campuses and 1,300 high schools.

Scores of Activities

Variouly they are projecting scores of activities, from parades to prayer meetings and film festivals to community tours of pollution sources, for the big day, which has elicited approval from quarters as high as U Thant, Secretary General of the United Nations.

The idea originated with Senator Gaylord Nelson, Wisconsin Democrat, and other Congressional conservationists. It is being coordinated by a score of college students and young people from all over the country, working 12 to 18 hours a day with a revolving battalion of local volunteers.

The national coordinator is Denis Hayes, a 25-year-old Stanford graduate from Camas, Wash., who is headed for Harvard Law School. Tall and earnest

and given to the fringed-buckskin genre of mod attire, he hops around the country like an ecological Dustin Hoffman, preaching mobilization for environmental reform with sober but evangelical militance.

"We must throw out all our notions of finding salvation in the continued growth of population and resources," Mr. Hayes says. "The ecological freak is not questioning his share of the pie so much as he is questioning how we're getting our flour. The problem isn't technological; the problem is a matter of values."

Articulate and Dedicated

The other campaign leaders are the same stripe—conservative in grooming and deportment, articulate and dedicated.

The organization's high school coordinator is Bryce Hamilton, a 28-year-old University of Iowa graduate who served in the Peace Corps in Guatemala and left a job in the Freedom From Hunger Foundation here for the nominal \$125 a week given some of the full-time workers.

Opened in January, the headquarters has been operating on about \$50,000 received from several conservation foundations and contributions raised by Daniel Lufkin, a New York stockbroker who is finance man on the campaign's adult "policy board." It includes such people as Senator Nelson, Sydney Howe, director of the Conservation Foundation, and Dr. Paul Ehrlich, Stanford biologist and "population bomb" crusader.

Projects for Campuses

Inquiring environmental-action groups are sent suggestion kits for activities suited to their age levels, from which they can tailor their own E-Day programs to fit local circumstances.

A score of college campus suggestions range from organizing seminars to shining spotlights on polluting smokestacks. High school students are urged to organize science projects, distribute bumper stickers and stage "pollution track-downs." Community groups are encouraged to conduct tours, explore lawsuit possibilities and precede April 22 with "Environmental Sunday" church services.

A paperback anthology en-

titled "The Environmental Handbook," prepared expressly for the April 22 "teach-in" and published by Friends of the Earth, a New York-based conservation organization, has been a first-edition sellout.

The movement is running advertisements in major newspapers and, with assistance from the United Auto Workers and other environmentally minded labor unions, is producing a newsletter.

Involvement with Federal agencies, except Congress, has been avoided because of wariness of an inherent conflict of interest.

Disapproving Rumbles

"Many of them are bound to be targets in environmental cleanup efforts," explained Philip Taubman, an on-leave Stanford student who is the campaign's press director.

The organizers are unhappy but undaunted by disapproving rumbles from anti-Vietnam radicals, who see a diversion of student zeal from the war issue and are mounting a counter-protest for mid-April; and from some Negro quarters, who say

that they have been fighting environmental pollution all along.

The answer of Mr. Hayes and other ecological leaders is that environmental reform transcends and encompasses every other reform movement because it is a sheer battle for world survival.

"We're flirting with something immeasurably worse than war or genocide," he says, "and that's specie-cide. The death of man is involved here, and time is running out."

"Our big concern now," adds Mr. Taubman, "is what happens after April 22. How do we project the momentum into something meaningful on a long-term basis?"

"We're discussing whether we should try to develop the April 22 organization into something permanent, turn things over to some existing organization, or start a nontax-exempt political-action arm.

"But in any event, judging by the response we're getting, it looks like we've got something here that wouldn't stop. No one can afford to have it stop, really."