



Agenda 21? What is Agenda 21?

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Most people have never heard of Agenda 21. If they have heard of it, they likely believe it to be a vague United Nations program that will never see the light of day, or they believe it is imagined by conspiracy theorists. Yet, the principles contained in Agenda 21 are at the heart of many of our federal programs since the late 1990s. They reach every corner of the United States and impact millions of Americans who don't even realize the document exists.

Although Agenda 21 was decades in the making, it was showcased to the world at the 1992 UN "Earth Summit" in Rio de Janeiro. It was there that President George H. Bush, along with leaders from 177 other nations, signed onto this "non-binding" UN action plan that was purportedly designed to assist governments at the local, national and international level implement the principles of so-called "sustainable development." The "21" in the name refers to the 21st Century.

Agenda 21 made its way into the U.S. the following year when President Clinton quietly established the President's Council on Sustainable Development (PCSD). The PCSD codified Agenda 21 into U.S. policy through a program called Sustainable America. Today, nearly all federal programs dealing with land management, education, environment and much more are linked to Agenda 21 through Sustainable America.

Because of grassroots pushback, the federal government today rarely uses the term Agenda 21 or Sustainable America anymore — especially with any program it is promoting. Instead, programs which administer Agenda 21's sustainable development principles are given warm and fuzzy titles like the America's Great Outdoors Initiative, Partnership for Sustainable Communities, Obama's Climate Action Plan and many more. Even the newest education fad, Common Core, is linked to Agenda 21, as are the new Next Generation Science Standards.

Google has over 300 million references to Agenda 21, yet it's hard for most people to get the truth about Agenda 21 because of the truckloads of smoke and misinformation generated by government bureaucrats and the progressive media. This UN program is indeed real and it is an affront to our personal liberties. Agenda 21 is supposedly designed to make the world "sustainable" by limiting human activities that environmental extremists believe are harming the planet. That may sound fine to many people — until they understand what it means in practice. In order to protect the environment, Agenda 21 instructs governments to micromanage virtually

all human activity — which the governments either severely restrict, or regulate to the point that such activity can be minimalized.

A good case in point took place in California recently, which as has been widely reported, experienced a major three-year drought. In mid-March 2014, the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld federal guidelines that guaranteed minimal flow of the Sacramento River to benefit "endangered" Delta Smelt — totally neglecting the needs of local farmers. Most farmers are getting no water even though most of them have long-term contracts guaranteeing it to them.

Ironically, the Delta Smelt have survived many severe droughts in the past when farmers got virtually all the available water from the Sacramento River. Yet today the smelt get the water and the farmers don't — even though many of the farmers will not survive the cutbacks. Seeing the needs of nature as being in conflict with the needs of people is a principle that is at the very heart of Agenda 21.

This is no small matter. Thousands of workers are being put out of work in California, and up to 700,000 acres of prime farmland will be removed from production. Since one-third of America's fruit and vegetables originate in California's Central Valley, this means that food prices could jump as much as 3.5 percent. While that may not seem like much to the more affluent in our society, it could be devastating to seniors and the poor who may no longer be able buy essential fruits and vegetables.

Simply stated, the only way Agenda 21 can work is to deny private citizens their private property rights. This should surprise no one since the UN has maintained that "public control of land use is...indispensable" since the 1976 Habitat I Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia. Yet, recent research sponsored by the World Bank has shown that legally protected private property rights drastically reduce corruption, while establishing the foundation for wealth creation. This in turn also helps the environment as wealthier nations spend more on environmental protection than poorer ones. The research stressed that "since these people do not have access to a comprehensive legal property system, they cannot leverage their assets to produce additional wealth." The bottom line? "Nearly five billion people are legally and economically disenfranchised by their own governments," reports the Bank.

The vast bulk of this is occurring, of course, in the developing world — but not all. The same thing is happening in the U.S. as Agenda 21 principles are adopted into policy. It has already had devastating effects. According to the Fraser Institute and CATO's Economic Freedom of the World, the legal-system and-private-property-rights ranking for the U.S. plummeted from number one in 1980 to 38th in 2011; which not unsurprisingly has occurred since Agenda 21 principles began to be implemented in the 1990s. The U.S. combined economic ranking in the world from 1980 to 2000 was second or third place behind Hong Kong and Singapore. It plummeted to 19th between 2000 and 2011—mostly due to federal spending, debt, skyrocketing regulations (especially from EPA) and, most importantly, loss of a stable legal system and property rights.

Is it any wonder the current "economic recovery" is so anemic. Certainly not all of the economic woes we have experienced since President Obama's election can be blamed on Agenda 21 policy.

But Agenda 21 is no doubt a big factor in ravaging the U.S. economy. Citizens can begin to restore America's health by supporting rational candidates at every level of government that are committed to ridding this nation of Agenda 21's "sustainable development" policy plague.