

Ouroboros

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDMAN ENVIRONMENTAL PRIZE

The Goldman
Environmental
Prize

SPRING 2010



Members of the RosSPORT Five, including Willie Corduff (Ireland, 2007), second from right.

Shell's Corrib Gas Pipeline Route Declared Unsafe by Irish Planning Board

In November 2009, after a nearly ten-year campaign by citizens groups against Shell's high-pressure gas pipeline in the rural community of RosSPORT, the Irish Planning Board has deemed the route "unacceptable" on safety grounds. This represents a stunning victory in the campaign led in part by 2007 Prize recipient Willie Corduff, though time will tell if the ruling will hold.

Shell was ordered to create an environmental impact report for an alternative route sparing the section deemed unsafe. The report was due February 15, but Shell received an extension delaying the report until May 31.

Disagreement among the citizens of the tiny community in northwest Ireland's County Mayo over the potential benefits, including jobs for the rural community, and the potential risks associated with Shell's Corrib project drove a wedge between residents. The sustained nonviolent action against Shell's project by those opposing it has resulted in clashes with local law enforcement and strife among the community. Now, with the planning board decision in place, the developers of the pipeline must come up with a new plan to route the pipeline away from RosSPORT, connecting offshore natural gas wells to a refinery in nearby Bellanaboy via Srúwaddacon Bay, currently a protected area. The board also ordered that the new route meet international safety standards in order to go forward with implementation in the sensitive ecosystem.

Organizers of Pobal Chill Chomáin ("Kilcommon Community"), the local community group that Willie Corduff is a part of, took some time to discuss the current situation in RosSPORT with the Goldman Prize.

Q. What does the November 2009 planning board finding mean for the community of RosSPORT?

A. The decision by the Irish Planning Board ("An Bord Pleanála") to refuse planning permission for the Corrib Gas onshore pipeline has finally confirmed that Shell, StatoilHydro and Vermillion [the companies invested in the project], have been complicit in developing an unsafe project in the west of Ireland. The Board has found that the pipeline route selected was too close to local houses and that this posed an unacceptable risk to the life and health of the community in RosSPORT. The finding is a vindication of the local community who, for the past ten years, have been highlighting the health and safety aspects of the project. It is also an indictment of the Irish and the Norwegian governments who have supported the imposition of this dangerous project on the local community.

Q. What challenges lie ahead?

A. Obviously we cannot return to any kind of normality until this dark cloud hanging over us is finally removed. The health and safety of present and future generations and the long term sustainability of our community depend on the project being delivered safely.

In the meantime we have no choice but to continue with the struggle to protect our homes and our families. We will continue to seek international support, especially from organizations involved in the protection of the environment and human rights. We support the call by human rights organization, Afri, for a suspension of all work on the Corrib gas project pending an independent and comprehensive investigation of its safety, human rights, economic and environmental dimensions.

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THE GOLDMAN
ENVIRONMENTAL PRIZE

The Presidio
211 Lincoln Boulevard
P.O. Box 29924
San Francisco, CA 94129
USA

Tel 415.345.6330
Fax 415.345.9686

Email info@goldmanprize.org
Web www.goldmanprize.org

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Message from the Goldman Environmental Prize

2010 marks the beginning of the Prize's third decade in existence. These twenty-plus years have brought with them enormous changes to our way of life. Huge leaps in technology and access to information have caused a major shift in the way day-to-day business is handled and how we manage our personal relationships, as well. As information moves between hemispheres at a lightning-fast pace, more and more people have become aware of the ongoing environmental struggles happening around the world. And now, as we move into year 21 of the Prize, we as an organization will be pushing forward new technology to better spread the word about the recipients and their work.

Starting in 2011, the Prize will no longer publish a print version of this newsletter, the Ouroboros. As a means to both reduce our carbon footprint and provide more up-to-the-minute information to you, we will be switching to an email-based newsletter system. We hope you will take a moment to fill out and send in the email reply card on the last page of this newsletter so that we may continue to keep you informed about the critical work of the Goldman Prize recipients.

You may also sign up for our email newsletter on the homepage of our website.

Further, the Prize has in the last year recognized the growing trend among organizations to open dialogues with the public via online social networks. We have thus initiated Facebook and Twitter presences, and we hope that you will join us there, as well.

Visit our website at www.goldmanprize.org to learn more.

We look forward to what the future will bring, and continue to be inspired and motivated by the courageous work of the Goldman Prize recipients.

Contribute to the 2009 Goldman Prize Recipients

The Goldman Environmental Prize and Global Greengrants Fund have formed a partnership that makes it possible for people around the world to support the inspiring work of the 2009 recipients. Online contributions go directly to the Prize winner's organization of your choice.



Our partner in this endeavor, Global Greengrants Fund, is an organization that helps bring funding to grassroots groups around the world.

To donate, visit www.goldmanprize.org.

Q. How has Rossport changed since Shell began operations in the region?

A. Since the transnational oil companies forced their way into our lives there is a sense among us of being under siege. Our area is under occupation. We have been under surveillance by the police at our public meetings, in our homes and even far away from the scene of any protests. We have been jailed, beaten with batons and kicked. Our children have been video recorded on the beach by Shell's private security. We have been lied to and denied information.

The oil companies and the Irish State have tried to divide us and to bribe us but the Rossport and surrounding communities have remained focused on the main issues of health and safety and have kept their protests peaceful in the face of severe provocation.

Rossport has changed radically in many ways. There has been a mass education of the community on several fronts and there is now formidable local expertise in areas such as human rights, environmental law and technical and legal issues. We no longer depend on elected politicians to speak for us. We speak for ourselves. We no longer accept the word of "experts" without carrying out our own independent research.



We have been visited by representatives of communities with experience of, or engaged in similar struggles in other parts of the world e.g. South Africa, South America, Native American Indians (Shoshone, Choktaw and First Nations) and the Ogoni people of Nigeria. We now view our struggle in global terms.

Before Statoil and Shell began operations, the local people possessed an almost endearing innocence and naiveté. When the oil companies told us they wanted to be good neighbors most people in our community believed them and trusted them. Not anymore. Now there is a deep distrust of big business and transnational corporations. The local people feel alienated from the institutions of the Irish State, which has failed in its primary duty to protect its citizens.

We have little confidence in the police, whom most of us see as facilitators of the project rather than impartial enforcers of the law. The same goes for the planning system which we believe is controlled by developers. We have developed a

critical attitude towards the media which for the most part have vilified us and tried to portray us as ignorant and backward peasants trying to hold up "progress."

Q. What would ultimately resolve the conflict? Is the planning board finding enough to stop the pipeline?

A. The site chosen for a gas processing plant lies at the heart of the conflict. It is six miles inland, which means that a production pipeline carrying unprocessed gas at high pressures would have to pass close to homes. Shell admitted under questioning at a recent public hearing that this pipeline is unique. The Irish Planning Board turned down Shell's application for a gas refinery at this location in 2003 on safety grounds, stating that it was "the wrong site." This is also the view of the overwhelming majority of the receiving community. We were never opposed to the exploitation of the Corrib gas reserve, but rather to the manner of its development. We are the only party that is actively trying to find an agreed solution. We have moved away from our preferred option of refining the gas at sea to supporting a compromise proposal from the priests of our parish that the gas be processed at a remote uninhabited shore-line location. We have sought every opportunity to resolve this dispute through dialogue.

The Irish Planning Board finding of November 2, 2009 did not go far enough. We believe that it should have buried the pipeline proposal once and for all. Instead it sought further information and suggested ways that Shell might overcome the difficulties with their original proposal.

Q. What other cases/petitions are pending around the pipeline project? When are they scheduled to be resolved?

A. Since the Irish Government (we believe at the behest of Shell and Statoil) decided to criminalise the protests and protesters several charges have been brought against members of the local community. Many of these cases are either pending or being appealed to higher courts. No case or charges for law breaking have been brought against Shell or its private security firm.

Landowners are awaiting judgement from the Irish High Court in relation to the legality of the permissions granted to Shell to enter their land in 2005, which resulted in the jailing of the Rossport Five.

At the international level, the local community has brought complaints alleging violations of human rights and breaches of environmental law to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the EU Commission and the EU Petitions Committee. These cases are active.

Gorilla Conservation Today: Q&A with Eugène Rutagarama

In Rwanda, 2001 Goldman Prize recipient Eugène Rutagarama is director of the International Gorilla Conservation Programme, overseeing a project that spans three Central African countries. He took some time to speak to the Goldman Prize about the current state of gorilla conservation.



Q. 2009 was deemed “the Year of the Gorilla” by the United Nations. How was this public attention on mountain gorillas and other large primates beneficial to conservation? Was the year successful?

A. My assessment is that the Year of the Gorilla was indeed beneficial to gorillas and other great apes because it helped to put them in the limelight of international attention. Conservation organizations and other friendly institutions have taken advantage of the attention generated to raise the awareness of the public and governments hosting all subspecies of gorilla and other great apes and to safeguard these primates. In our area of mountain gorillas, respective governments have taken the lead in sensitization of their respective communities and the general public. In Uganda, for example, the Uganda Wildlife Authority has organized a successful campaign called “friend a gorilla” (www.friendagorilla.org) which has attracted international and national interest, from the grassroots communities to national leaders. In Rwanda, the annual event of “gorilla naming” (www.ortp.gov.rw) was more focused on the Year of the Gorilla, and an international conference was organized. The International Gorilla Conservation Programme, IGCP (my organization, www.igcp.org) was part of the organizing committees. All these initiatives have helped to reach out to more people, locally and internationally, and we hope that in the long run, potential threats from human beings will diminish.

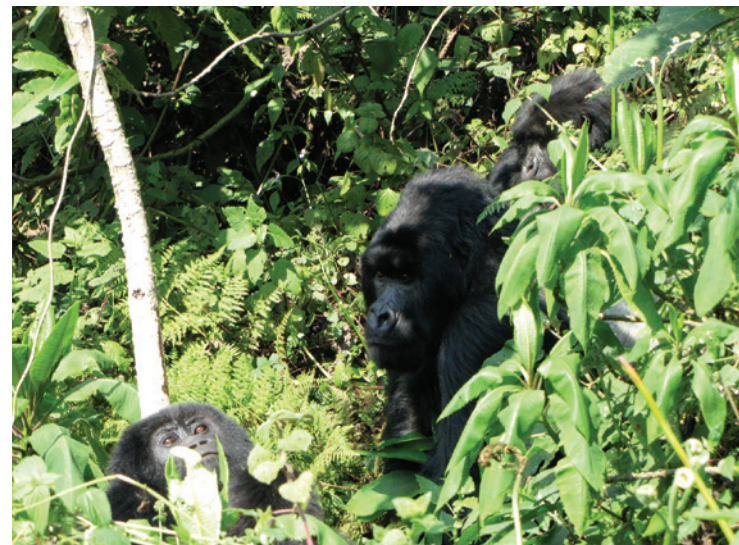
Q. In Rwanda, Uganda, and DRC, how is the rise in gorilla tourism affecting the local communities, the economies, etc.?

A. In these three countries, park authorities have agreed for example on a policy of “revenue sharing,” which implies that a percentage of income from gorilla visits goes to community projects, like water tanks, schools, health centers and so on. Moreover, local communities benefit from the employment generated by tourism and the sale of their products to tourists. Thanks to financial resources that IGCP and the African Wildlife Foundation (www.awf.org) have been able to secure from USAID, two local community associations representing thousands of households in Uganda and Rwanda are now owners of high-end accommodation facilities that are well managed by private investors who provide a substantial return to owner communities. The rise in gorilla tourism has enabled these accommodation facilities to keep up a sizeable number of guests, hence the increase of return to communities.

Q. In what ways has the conservation effort for mountain gorillas incorporated local people?

A. In addition to those mentioned above, there are several initiatives where local people are partners and beneficiaries. Thanks to the financial and technical contribution of conservation institutions, governmental and non-governmental, problems experienced by local people are well understood and addressed with them. For example, as crop raiding was a serious issue across the three range states of mountain gorilla, local communities and conservation organizations have partnered to build a stone wall that stops the most damaging wild animals in the area, including buffalo, from raiding community crops.

Local communities have formed their own conservation efforts that complement park authority efforts to enforce the law against poachers and other illegal use of the park resources. Beekeepers whose beehives in the park were





removed have formed associations that we now support and are producing good quality honey.

Q. What do you feel are the biggest threats to gorilla populations, and what are the solutions you feel are viable?

A. a) Poaching, b) habitat degradation or loss due to illegal harvest of natural resources in the gorilla habitat, c) wild fires, d) encroachment and f) potential transmission of human disease to gorillas.

Solutions to those threats include sustained law enforcement, involvement of local people in finding solutions that both enhance their livelihood and benefit gorilla habitat stability and enforcing gorilla visit regulations.

Q. In addition to actually visiting the parks and participating economically in gorilla conservation, what are ways that people around the world can support your work?

A. It is important to keep spreading the conservation word. There are people around the world who still think that they can capture and hold gorillas as pets. They will do everything to corrupt and collude with local people to capture young gorillas. Despite conservation efforts, these actions result in gorilla killings. Secondly, conservation efforts will only succeed if sustained for the long-term. Financial contribution to conservation efforts remain a direct and realistic way of contributing to gorilla conservation.

The Goldman Environmental Prize acknowledges the following nominating organizations:

Amazon Watch

<http://www.amazonwatch.org>

American Jewish World Service

<http://www.ajws.org>

Ashoka: Innovators for the Public

<http://www.ashoka.org>

Center for International Environmental Law

<http://www.ciel.org>

The Conservation Fund

<http://www.conservationfund.org/>

Conservation International

<http://www.conservation.org>

Earth Day Network

<http://www.earthday.net>

Earth Island Institute

<http://www.earthisland.org>

EARTHWORKS

<http://www.earthworksaction.org>

Ecological Development Fund

<http://www.ecologic.org>

E-LAW

<http://www.elaw.org>

Environmental Liaison Centre International

<http://www.elci.org>

Fauna and Flora International

<http://www.fauna-flora.org>

Friends of the Earth

<http://www.foe.org>

Greenpeace International

<http://www.greenpeace.org/international>

International Forum on Globalization

<http://www.ifg.org>

International Rivers

<http://internationalrivers.org>

National Geographic Society

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com>

Ocean Conservancy

<http://www.oceanconservancy.org>

Pacific Environment

<http://www.pacificenvironment.org>

Rainforest Action Network

<http://ran.org>

Sierra Club

<http://www.sierraclub.org>

Wildlife Conservation Society

<http://www.wcs.org>

World Wide Fund for Nature International

<http://www.panda.org>

World Wildlife Fund

<http://www.worldwildlife.org>

Worldwatch Institute

<http://www.worldwatch.org>

Winners' Circle *News from Around the World*



Rosa Hilda Ramos
PUERTO RICO, 2008

With the support of Rosa Hilda Ramos, Puerto Rico will see the production and implementation of biofuel from microalgae possibly as early as next summer. The carbon capture project, developed by the firm Bio-Lipidos de Puerto Rico, a coalition of entrepreneurs, researchers and investors, gained the acceptance of the island community and government endorsement with help from Ramos, who says that without the distinction of being a Goldman Prize recipient, she would still be “sitting in some government agency lobby, waiting to be heard.” The algae fuel will first be tested in a sample of Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority’s (PREPA) already existing facilities without the need for much modification-- with the objective to expand to meet all of the island’s energy needs and eliminate emissions from the plant. Along with PREPA, Bacardi has agreed to participate and receive its energy from the microalgae project, a move that would further reduce toxic emissions on the island.

Puerto Rico’s warm weather and consistent sunshine create the perfect environment for microalgae to thrive; giving Ramos the impetus to champion the potentiality of Puerto Rico becoming the world’s center for microalgae research.

Ramos won the Goldman Prize in 2008 for her campaign to hold polluting industries accountable in Puerto Rico, including PREPA and Bacardi, for gross violations of the Clean Air and Clean Water acts.



Marc Ona Essangui
GABON, 2009

Marc Ona Essangui achieved a personal victory when a Gabonese court found former-Interior Minister Andre Mba Obame’s 2008 international travel ban on Ona “illegal” and awarded him \$11,500 in personal damages on November 25, 2009. Ona was restricted from travelling outside Gabon four times in 2008 and was almost kept from attending the Goldman Prize ceremony last April when he was removed from the airplane on his way to San Francisco; luckily he made it on a later flight. Ona has worked fearlessly to bring transparency to the Gabonese government through his work as coordinator for the Gabonese branch of Publish What You Pay and founder of the NGO Brainforest.

Ona won the Goldman Prize in 2009 for his work exposing an illegal mining contract given by the Gabonese government to a Chinese company to mine in the protected Ivindo National Park in Eastern Gabon. His public campaign led to the renegotiation of the mining contract.



Jadwiga Lopata
POLAND, 2002

Jadwiga Lopata was awarded the Golden Cross of Merit, the highest decoration for public service in Poland, for her work promoting organic farming. The President’s Agriculture Adviser, Jan Krzysztof Ardanowski, presented the award at the National Organic Harvest Day on September 12, 2009.

Lopata won the Goldman Prize in 2002 for her work promoting the environmental advantages of small, organic family-run farms over large-scale factory farms in Poland.



Carlos Alberto Ricardo
BRAZIL, 1992

Marina Silva
BRAZIL, 1996

Carlos Alberto Ricardo and Marina Silva received a special visit from singer/activist Sting during his brief tour in São Paulo in November. Ricardo and Silva, who are working together to create a new organization, the Institute of Democracy and Sustainability (Instituto Democracia e Sustentabilidade), were available to answer Sting’s questions about deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon.

Silva is currently running for President under Brazil’s Green Party. Elections are expected to take place in October.



Orri Vigfússon

ICELAND, 2007

The French government, under the recommendation of the North Atlantic Salmon Fund (NASF), has agreed to remove two hydro-electric dams in the region of Normandy in an effort to restore France's wild salmon population. The removal of the dams will restore salmon runs along the Sélunde and Sée rivers, giving passage to historic spawning grounds that have been blocked for 70 years. The government speculates this move will help generate employment and development in the region. NASF chairman and founder, Orri Vigfússon hopes that this bold move by France will inspire the rest of continental Europe to take measures to restore the wild salmon population.

Vigfússon won the Goldman Prize in 2007 for applying his business skills to salmon conservation, keeping the North Atlantic salmon population from being wiped out completely by over-fishing.



Michal Kravcik

SLOVAKIA, 1999

Manana Kochladze

GEORGIA, 2004

While visiting Tbilisi, Georgia, Michal Kravcik contacted Prize recipient Manana Kochladze during his visit last October. Kravcik, a hydrologist by training, met with Kochladze to discuss Georgia's water problems. He reported back that the meeting was beneficial since both recipients won the Prize for water-related issues in fledgling democracies. We encourage collaboration between Prize winners. The Prize recipient network is a resource with eager and enthusiastic experts interested in collaboration with other Prize winners and environmental activists.

Kravcik won the Prize for his work in creating alternative water management systems in newly-democratized Slovakia and defeating the Tichy Potok dam project that would have damaged the environment and flooded four ancient villages.

Kochladze won the Prize for defending local communities affected by the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline in newly-democratic Georgia. The foreign pipeline project would have damaged Georgia's main industry of bottled natural spring water, and Kochladze's work helped bring the citizens' voice to the table.



TIME Heroes of the Environment

Congratulations to 2009 Prize recipients Marc Ona, Syeda Rizwana, Yuyun Ismawati and Olga Speranskaya for being named 2009's Heroes of the Environment by Time Magazine. The magazine seeks to annually recognize Leaders & Visionaries, Activists, Scientists & Innovators, Moguls & Entrepreneurs from around the world for their great contributions to preserving the environment.

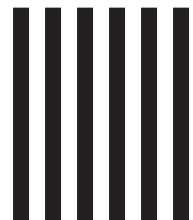
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THE GOLDMAN ENVIRONMENTAL PRIZE
*is the world's largest prize for grassroots
environmentalists. Founded in 1990 by Richard
and Rhoda Goldman, the Prize currently awards
\$150,000 annually to each of six activists from
six continental regions. Nominated confidentially
by a worldwide network of environmental
organizations and individuals, recipients are
chosen by an international jury of experts on
the basis of their sustained and important
environmental achievements. The Prize offers
these environmental heroes the recognition,
visibility, and credibility their efforts deserve.*

The Ouroboros, a serpent biting its
tail, is recognized in many cultures as
a symbol of nature's power of renewal.

