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perspective
of flight.



WINTER/SPRING 2004
Focus: 25 year history
of LightHawk

LightHawk 2004: Celebrating 25 Years

By Laurie Martin

NOTES FROM THE NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MAUREN SMITH



When I accepted the position of executive director at LightHawk last December, it was with a feeling of real honor — not only because this is a unique and wonderful organization, making a difference, but because this year LightHawk celebrates 25 years of flying for the environment.

Please join me in this celebration by giving as much as you can as we move into our next quarter century, at a time when the gains of past decades feel overshadowed by the magnitude of the current assault on the environment.

I know some of you joined the LightHawk family ten, twenty, and even 25 years ago as LightHawk completed its first mission. So, I hope you enjoy reading this special 25-year anniversary issue of our newsletter. The pages are full of LightHawk success stories describing how, with the support from people like you, we are able to make a difference.

Once again, thank you for your continuing support in this milestone year and remember that when you give to LightHawk you are helping a small staff leverage a large corps of volunteer pilots who add power to hundreds of environmental organizations in North and Central America.

Last year marked an important anniversary in aviation history — the 100th year of powered flight. As aviation enthusiasts around the world celebrated the first flight of Orville and Wilbur Wright, preparations were underway to celebrate another important milestone in aviation — the 25th anniversary of LightHawk.

LightHawk was a pioneer in the field of environmental aviation, beginning in 1979, based on the idea that if you show those who have the power to make decisions a landscape-scale perspective of man's impact on the earth from a few thousand feet, you have the power to change minds. In 25 years we have grown from a one-man outfit that flew missions only in the Rockies to become an international environmental aviation organization.

Today LightHawk flies in nine countries. We leverage a small staff to mobilize the services of more than 140 volunteer pilots who donate their expertise,

their time, and the use of their airplanes to fly for environmental causes. These dedicated pilots cross the political spectrum and come from all walks of life — doctors, lawyers, small business owners, homemakers and active commercial airline, corporate and bush pilots, who volunteer because they feel compelled to share what they have seen for themselves. With their view comes a heightened environmental awareness and an acknowledged ability to make a difference.

At 25 years, LightHawk has a lot to celebrate.

Project LightHawk 1974 to 1982: An Idea Comes to Fruition

Like so many of LightHawk's volunteer pilots, our founder Michael Stewartt saw — and was shocked by — the impact and scale of man's activities on the environment as viewed from the air. In 1974, Stewartt was a young man from *continued on page 2*



LightHawk

Michael Stewartt named the organization LightHawk, after a mythical bird whose purpose is to shed light, and named the first LightHawk plane, a Cessna Turbo-210, LightHawk Ship Emily (pictured above) after Emily Stevens, a Wyoming rancher who donated the plane.

Tucson, Arizona with bush piloting experience and environmental ideals fueled by the aerial perspective.

Stewart's passion for flying and the environment came together when he joined a group of activists working to oppose a coal-fired power plant on Utah's Kaiparowits Plateau. While the group planned a press conference to highlight the pollution the plant would generate, impacting views and air quality in the Grand Canyon and other parks, Stewart asked his colleagues a question: "Why not fly folks over the Plateau and nearby lands that likely would be impacted?" Why not indeed?

Using four borrowed planes and the assistance of three volunteer pilots, the group took photographs and flew reporters, legislators, and local citizens over the Plateau region to inspire opposition to the plant. The idea was not to advocate, but to share the view and let it speak for itself. The idea worked; those opposing the plant won in the court of public opinion, pressuring plant backers to scrap their plans. To this day, it has not been built.



"That experience," said Stewart, "bore out my gut feeling that environmentalism needed high-caliber flying."¹

Stewart spent the next six months trying to find conservation organizations willing to support him as an environmental aviator. According to Stewart, most folks he talked to considered planes "as something buzzing over them in the woods, an annoyance."² Stewart saw it differently. The "other side" had planes and helicopters at their disposal; it was time to even the playing field.

For a short time, Stewart gave up on his dream. But while working as a deep tissue therapist, he met his first key supporter, a rancher from Colorado willing to lend him a Helio Courier and enough fuel to fly 150 hours. A year later, after Stewart flew several missions to prevent a dam on Colorado's Gunnison River, Wyoming rancher Emily Stevens generously donated a Cessna Turbo-210 to LightHawk.

Stewart named the organization LightHawk, after a mythical bird whose purpose is to shed light and the plane LightHawk Ship Emily. (Although Stewart incorporated the organization as "LightHawk," he used the name "Project LightHawk.") And so, "Project LightHawk" began — a one-man, one-plane organization.

From its inception, Stewart saw that LightHawk's mission was to act as a non-profit service for environmentalists "and similar types who were doing battle in the [Rockies]."³ In these early years, LightHawk often served as a budget airline, rather than a flight services organization, shuttling activists, scientists, and decision makers to key meetings, hearings and conferences, often in out-of-the-way places they otherwise would not have been able to attend. It was not long before the organization was unofficially dubbed the "wings of western conservation."

The Wings of Conservation 1983 to 1987: LightHawk Soars

The mid-eighties brought rapid growth to LightHawk. Starting with one and a half staff based in Santa Fe and two volunteer pilots, we grew to become an international organization with staff pilots, multiple planes, multiple offices, and a strong, effective volunteer pilot corps.

In these early years, Stewart strongly felt that LightHawk was not engaged in a war on industry and development, but rather served as a tool to help people make prudent decisions about the environment in which they live. Advocacy was neither our mode, nor our method. The idea simply was to share the view from above. Stewart also realized we had the ability to bring groups together to share resources and work on issues of mutual concern.

This philosophy played out well in a mission that took Stewart back to flying on behalf of clean air. This time, the smokestacks were already in place. In 1983, in collaboration with Environmental Defense Fund and other groups, LightHawk took on the Phelps Dodge copper smelter in Dodge, Arizona.

The plant was the largest source of acid rain in the country. The smelter had been operating under a Clean Air Act (CAA) waiver from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that permitted emissions in excess of the law for 10 years. The goal of the groups working with LightHawk was to bring the plant into compliance with current CAA standards.

We brought the smelter's impacts to light as only LightHawk can, flying passengers through the plant's pollution, coughing from the yellow smoke plumes that stretched for more than 100 miles. Passengers included local and national press and state officials from Colorado and New Mexico. Both states subsequently joined a suit against the EPA calling for a repeal of the waiver. Four years after the battle began and under the weight of much public pressure, the EPA ordered Phelps Dodge to comply with the law, forcing its closure.

While Stewart generated publicity from these aerial tours, LightHawk was able to take on a second plane, a second staff pilot, Bruce Gordon, and a second office, based in Aspen, Colorado.

With the aid of the second plane and a few volunteer pilots, we worked with partners representing many important issues throughout the western United States and Central America. We transported endangered thick-billed parrots seized from pet smugglers in Texas; we helped track missing radio-collared timber wolves for a wolf recovery project in Montana; and we aided researchers in spotting grizzlies and surveying their habitat in support of grizzly reintroduction in Yellowstone National Park. We also helped prevent illegal road-building in wilderness study areas and aided in garnering congressional support for wilderness designation on public lands throughout the West. From his success in the U.S., Stewart also realized the power of bringing LightHawk's mission to Central America, beginning in Costa Rica and Belize, to help protect tropical rainforests.

Not unexpectedly, word of LightHawk's good work spread quickly, resulting in an exponential increase in requests for flight support. By 1987, Stewart realized he needed help, and set about to create a network of volunteer pilots — a LightHawk air force. *continued...*

"That experience," said Stewart,

"bore out my gut feeling that environmentalism needed high-caliber flying."



LightHawk

Like so many of LightHawk's volunteer pilots, our founder Michael Stewart (pictured above) saw — and was shocked by — the impact and scale of man's activities on the environment as viewed from the air.



LightHawk

In 1988, Stewart and volunteer pilot Jerry Hoogerwerf (pictured above with an unidentified passenger) flew Costa Rica's Osa Peninsula and discovered rampant illegal logging and gold mining activities in a government-protected region of tropical forest. Photos documenting the activities were turned over to the Costa Rican Ministry of the Environment and Energy and within 24 hours the illegal miners and loggers were located and removed from the area. These flights would not have been possible without Jerry's assistance and his plane; at the time, all LightHawk's planes had retractable landing gear not suitable for landing on unimproved airstrips and in harsh conditions often found in Mesoamerica. Jerry was one of LightHawk's first volunteer pilots and still flies for LightHawk in Central America and in areas near his home state of New Mexico.



LightHawk

In 1987, Stewart realized he needed help, and set about creating a network of volunteer pilots — a LightHawk air force. Pictured above, the sign on the truck says, "Pilot Workshop with LightHawk"

In 1988, LightHawk and The Wilderness Society (TWS) found that only 33 to 50 percent of the forest tracts listed by the Forest Service as old-growth stands were still standing in six of Oregon and Washington's national forests. One of these was Olympic National Forest in Washington, pictured at right. TWS used this evidence to contest draft management plans.

Suzanne Parish, often referred to at LightHawk as the "woman in the pink plane" (a Curtiss P-40N, pictured below), is an icon of aviation. Flying since 1941, she has always sought to serve others through flight. Suzanne became a member of the Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) during World War II. The work Suzanne completed in association with LightHawk is equally amazing. She is the mother of former LightHawk Executive Director and Board President Will Parish and was one of a handful of pilots who camped out in Portland in order to conduct aerial tours at a moment's notice in the weeks leading up to President Clinton's Ancient Forest Summit in 1993.



Gary Braasch/LightHawk



LightHawk

LightHawk conducted flights over the Tongass National Forest (log floats pictured above), in support of the Tongass Timber Reform Act. LightHawk provided aerial tours for elected officials to view irresponsible forest management practices, as part of which trees more than 9 feet in diameter and 100 feet tall were sold for less than three dollars.

The Environmental Air Force
1988 to 1994: LightHawk as Advocate (or the Era of Celebrity)

During the mid-to-late eighties, LightHawk's mission, methods and focus changed dramatically. For much of this era, LightHawk staff could be found rubbing elbows with the elite of Washington and Hollywood on LightHawk business nearly as often as they were working with activists. We changed both the way we worked and the ways we thought about our work.

As Stewart said at the time, "We're not just a bunch of pilots anymore. We're following the issues and asking what we can do."⁴ Our mission became focused on identifying issues and initiating, organizing, and carry out flights and communications to expose and help solve the challenging environmental problems of our time. We were doing it all — even initiating projects without partners.

We soon began flying over the Tongass National Forest in support of the Tongass Timber Reform Act (TTRA). For more than a year, LightHawk provided aerial tours to elected officials to view the irresponsible forest management practices occurring there — roads built to promote logging and vast subsidized clearcuts, where trees more than 9 feet in diameter and 100 feet tall were sold for less than three dollars. In fact, the Forest Service closed an airstrip in the Tongass because LightHawk frequently used it in the effort to expose the logging abuses occurring there.

The flights culminated in a congressional investigation and subsequent passage of the TTRA. Despite the harsh flying conditions found in Alaska, Tongass flights continued for several years to help secure federal protection for Tongass rivers and to end two heavily subsidized 50-year logging contracts. Volunteer pilots flew nearly every mission.

Before long, LightHawk focused on forest issues almost exclusively, and most intensely on clearcutting in the Pacific Northwest. The reason, according to Stewart: "It is in the Northwest that the mismanagement of our fast disappearing National Forests is at its worst."⁵

Efforts increased when the U.S. Forest Service began developing forest management plans, as required by the National Forest Management Act of 1976. As a part of this process, the Forest Service compiled data on current forest resources, including surveys of remaining old growth forests that would be used to govern logging for the next 10 to 15 years and would set management directions well into the future.

Working in conjunction with The Wilderness Society (TWS), LightHawk set up flights to compare the data that the Forest Service compiled with what was actually happening on the ground, which was easy with the view from above. LightHawk and TWS found that only 33 to 50 percent of the forest tracts listed by the Forest Service as old-growth stands were still standing in six of Oregon and Washington's national forests. TWS used this evidence to contest draft management plans.

With the abuse of our national forests revealed, it was time to inspire those who had the power to stop it. We knew with clearcut flights that what is difficult to conceptualize from the ground becomes simple to see in the air.

By 1989, LightHawk was ready to roll out a full-fledged national forest reform campaign. The idea behind it simply was to get as many decision makers in the air as we could and return them enlightened and ready to support forest protection legislation. We kicked off our

campaign by running a full-page ad in the New York Times titled, "Our Last Chance to Save America's Rainforests," one of many we would issue to promote our work on behalf of our national forests. We also began running aerial tours over the six national forests in the Cascade mountain range that runs from Washington to Northern California where old-growth forests were being harvested at the rate of one square mile per week.

The issue of clearcutting in the Pacific Northwest headlined across the country by 1991. The Federal courts had just blocked logging operations on millions of acres of national forest to protect the endangered northern spotted owl and other threatened wildlife, causing layoffs for timber workers and at small mills. Interest in LightHawk's tours was great. We purchased a 14-passenger 1968 DeHavilland Twin Otter to keep up with demand and planned to purchase a used turbine helicopter and a seaplane for "land-anywhere" and open-water operations. We also opened our field office in Seattle, vital to the development and sustainability of the campaign.

By 1992, several members of Congress sent "Dear Colleague" letters urging others to fly with LightHawk. Staff visited Washington to lobby Congress and urged their participation as well.

But LightHawk did not focus solely on Congress. We conducted flights with timber industry representatives, including small mill and forest product company owners, local and state officials, and of course representatives of the environmental community. We also flew representatives of the press on nearly a daily basis. Feature stories on Pacific Northwest clearcuts and LightHawk ran on the Today show, CNN, Good Morning America, and in newspapers and journals across the nation.

We soon hired a public relations firm and advertising and political consultants and with their assistance, developed a Public Service Announcement (PSA) narrated by Paul Newman. The ad asked viewers to send telegrams to President George Bush and candidate Governor Bill Clinton demanding protection for our public lands.

United Artists, Loews and other nationally-owned theaters ran the PSA, reaching more than 6 million viewers. Called "1-800-Be-A-Hero," the ad premiered at the Seattle Art Museum and in Hollywood and later ran on national cable networks, radio, and in print and billboard ads.

A similar tactic used at a rock concert held at the Gorge in Washington asked the estimated 17,000 concertgoers to send a telegram — from the concert site — to the U. S. Forest Service Chief, demanding that he stop logging in America's national forests.

By April 1993, newly elected President Bill Clinton organized the Ancient Forest Summit in Portland, Oregon to resolve the longstanding battle over the Northwest's remaining old-growth forests. With tensions over the future of our national forests at their peak and our media

and advertising campaigns in full swing, we had seven planes and a loaned helicopter ready to provide aerial tours at any time. Four volunteer pilots stayed in hotels for more than a week to help fulfill requests for media and VIP tours.

Following the Summit, President Clinton promised a plan that would be "scientifically sound, ecologically credible, and legally defensible." Within a year, he released his Forest Plan (Option Nine), reducing logging on our National Forests in the region from 6 billion board feet per year to 500 million board feet. *continued...*



LightHawk

LightHawk's advocacy work, however, was not exclusive to the Pacific Northwest. In 1992, our Colorado office published a mining briefing booklet targeting for reform the much-outdated 1872 Mining Law, which allows companies to mine public land for private gain. We conducted missions to highlight the industry's irreversible impacts on the environment.

As part of this work, LightHawk helped protect the 2.5 million acre Tatshenshini Wilderness in British Columbia, an area known for its extraordinary scenic beauty and wildlife. In response to a proposed open-pit copper mine in the area, we worked to raise awareness about the pollution and road-building that threatened important downstream fish and wildlife habitat, including areas of Alaska's Glacier Bay National Park. British Columbia's government subsequently conducted a scientific review of the proposed mine and found 12 severe and irreparable impacts and 85 serious impacts, and concluded there was no way to safely develop the mine. A year later, the Tatshenshini was established as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

We also helped stop the Noranda mine development outside of Yellowstone National Park, flying nearly 100 missions over the area during a five-year period. Plans for the mine were rolled back in 1996, due in part to a LightHawk flight that took President Clinton's press corps over the proposed site. Clinton later toured the mine site by helicopter, immediately imposed a moratorium on the site, and ultimately developed a land trade returning the site and the minerals beneath to the federal government.

During this time, LightHawk also achieved some of its greatest successes in Mesoamerica. In 1990, we helped Belize set aside its largest protected area — the 97,000-acre Bladen Nature Reserve, an extensive tropical rain forest in the southern Maya Mountains, in what the Boston Globe called, "one of the richest undisturbed natural areas left in Central America." LightHawk flights helped to convince government officials that logging in the steep watershed near the Bladen

River would be unwise. This was not obvious to them until they saw first-hand from the air how run-off in the mountains could affect farms and fisheries in the valley below.

In Costa Rica, we helped the government crack down on illegal logging activities and encroachment that account for 60 percent of the deforestation in the country. We also flew missions to help establish corridors, or connective linkages, between the "scattered" park system areas, which is critical to preserving Central America's tropical rainforests. Both of these efforts continue today.

In keeping with our "era of celebrity," LightHawk completed a mission in Mexico with long-time LightHawk supporter and Advisory Board member John Denver and Jean Michael Cousteau, flying over Baja and completing survey work on the endangered Baja pronghorn antelope, the gray whale and Gulf of Mexico harbor porpoise.

We also worked with groups in Mexico to protect two Biosphere Reserves in the Yucatan Peninsula and helped the Mexican conservation group Pronatura map more than 1.8 million acres of uncharted tropical forest of the Calakmul reserve. In the 1.3 million acre Sian Ka'an reserve, we aided Amigos de Sian Ka'an to complete the first systematic survey of wading birds and catalog non-native tree species in the region.

LightHawk also undertook its largest initiative in Mesoamerica in the La Mosquita region of Honduras, the country's last major forested area. We helped to inventory the natural treasures of this wilderness and create vegetation maps and conducted aerial surveys of wildlife, including manatees and waterbirds.

We began flying missions in Chile and Nicaragua, as well, and expected to extend our work into Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia and Brazil.

It was at this time that Michael Stewartt was quoted in a staff memo to the board as saying: "If we become more interested in the future of our organization than we are in the future of the resources...we are here to protect, then it's time for us to get out of the battle and let someone else pick it up."

ERA OF CELEBRITY MILESTONES

1989 - LightHawk completed its first Eastern U.S. mission providing views of clearcuts near Henderson reservoir in Pisgah National Forest, North Carolina, with the help of volunteer pilot Ed Coffman.

1990 - Sam Donaldson, while working on a story about the 1872 Mining Law for *Primetime Live*, flew with LightHawk to view the devastation caused by the Copar pumice mine in New Mexico's Jemez Mountains. Congress later passed legislation protecting the area as a National Recreation Area preventing its purchase, but Copar retains mineral rights.

1992 - We worked with the Gwich'in Athabaskan people to prevent drilling proposed by the Bush administration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge along a 125-mile stretch of Arctic coastline. LightHawk continues working in defense of the Refuge against nearly every legal or regulatory challenge.

1992 - We completed missions over the Doe Run lead-acid battery recycling facility near Boss, Missouri, in which LightHawk passengers photo-documented toxic waste illegally stored in 55-gallon barrels with phony "recyclable waste" stickers on them. The flights resulted in the discovery of five Clean Water Act violations and a \$300,000 fine being levied by the state on the facility owners. Subsequent LightHawk flights resulted in an additional \$3 million in fines and penalties.

The Wings of Conservation

1995 to 2000: Turbulent Times; LightHawk Comes Full Circle

If LightHawk relied on publicity and advocacy in the early nineties, then the next few years necessitated a rethinking of what made us work. There was some turbulence within the organization as Michael Stewartt moved on to new projects and staff turnover reached an all-time high. We also relocated our headquarters to San Francisco, to be closer to a number of our environmental partners and foundations that were supporting us, but operating expenses there were costly and our budget strained at the additional expense of owning and maintaining multiple aircraft and paying staff pilots.

We also slowly began to return to our more traditional approach of working with and through our partners. Our methodology, however, remained unclear: were we an activist organization, conceiving and leading campaigns on specific issues? Or were we more truly a service provider, achieving our goals by enabling our partners to be more effective?

Despite these obstacles, LightHawk continued to conduct effective missions. With tensions easing in Oregon and Washington and policies in the Tongass improved, LightHawk and its partners started working intensively in British Columbia. We based several LightHawk-owned planes in Seattle and spent a considerable amount of time flying (the flight route became known as the "milk run") over Vancouver Island's fjord area, the Clayoquot Sound. *continued...*



LightHawk

LightHawk helped stop the Noranda mine development outside of Yellowstone National Park, flying nearly 100 missions over the area during a five-year period. Plans for the mine were rolled back in 1996, due in part to a LightHawk flight that took President Clinton's press corps over the proposed site.



Jim Wark/LightHawk

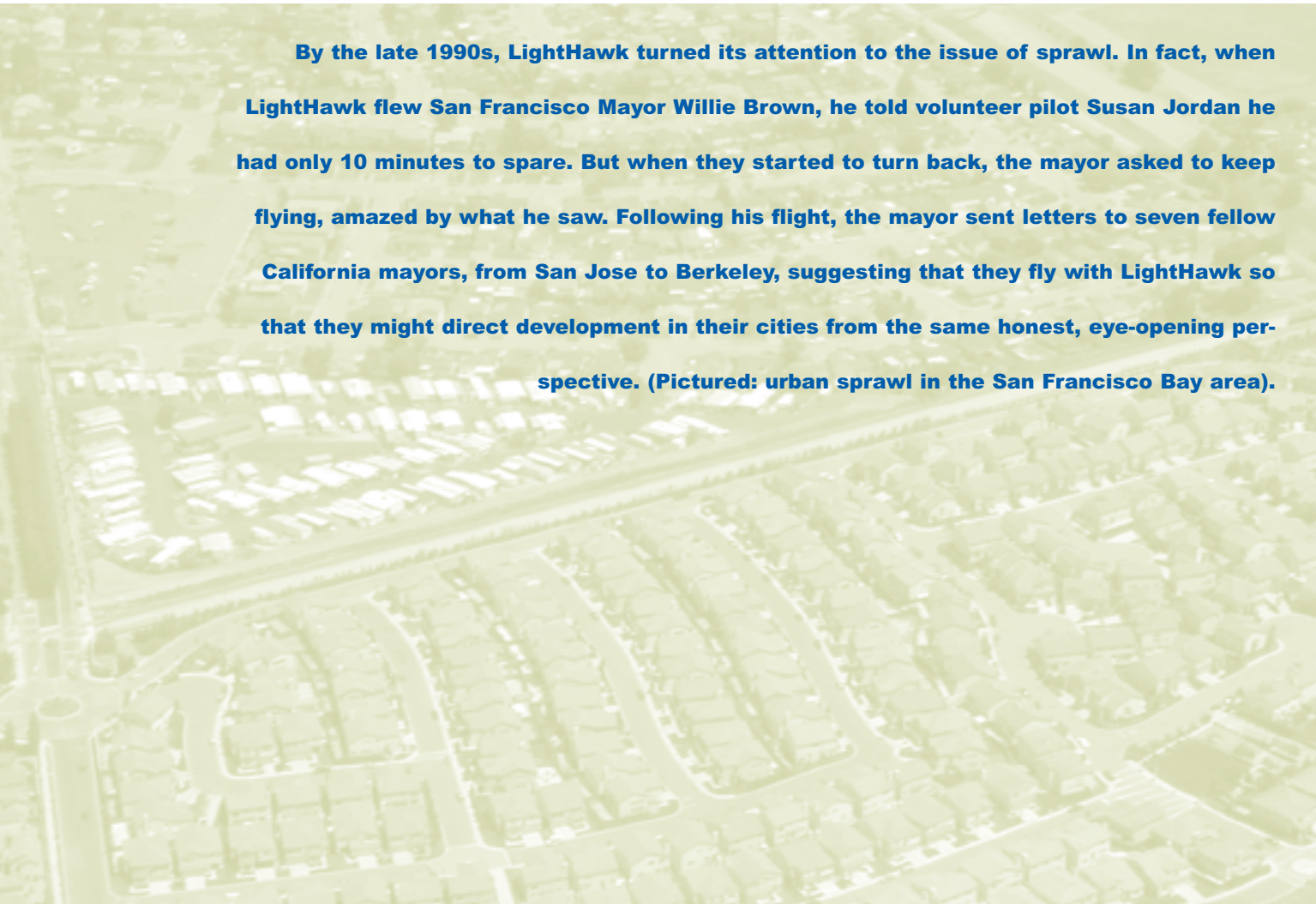
In Costa Rica, we helped the government crack down on illegal logging activities and encroachment that account for 60 percent of the deforestation in the country.



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LightHawk

By the late 1990s, LightHawk turned its attention to the issue of sprawl. In fact, when LightHawk flew San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, he told volunteer pilot Susan Jordan he had only 10 minutes to spare. But when they started to turn back, the mayor asked to keep flying, amazed by what he saw. Following his flight, the mayor sent letters to seven fellow California mayors, from San Jose to Berkeley, suggesting that they fly with LightHawk so that they might direct development in their cities from the same honest, eye-opening perspective. (Pictured: urban sprawl in the San Francisco Bay area).



We conducted flights over Yellowstone National Park, where “beauty strips” were left to hide clearcutting along the west edge of the Park in Targhee National Forest. According to the Denver Post, “the first photographs showed Yellowstone’s straight border contrasted so cleanly by the clearcut that some disbelievers said the images must have been faked”⁶.

By 1995, in response to intense international pressure that LightHawk helped create, British Columbia accepted 120 recommendations to protect Vancouver Island’s fjord area, the Clayoquot Sound, including a ban on logging in pristine watersheds.



photo courtesy of TALC LightHawk

Adrian Dorst/LightHawk

With the help of groups like Friends of Clayoquot Sound, Greenpeace and Sierra Club B.C., we provided guided aerial tours to business, community, and tribal leaders, U.S. legislators, and even pulp and paper company representatives. We also supplied our partners with high-quality photographs, video footage, and media tours that helped bring international media exposure to the forest devastation occurring there. By 1995, in response to intense international pressure that LightHawk helped create, British Columbia accepted 120 recommendations to protect the Sound, including a ban on logging in pristine watersheds, and transferred logging operations from MacMillan Bloedel to a native-run logging company doing FSC certified logging. LightHawk went on with its tours, however, working for complete protection of the Sound.

LightHawk continued working in the American Northwest during this time, but our most familiar flights over the Olympic Peninsula lessened in frequency. With the west side of the Cascades protected by Option Nine, a change in Washington to a Republican-led Congress caused LightHawk staff to conclude that an intense effort to fly legislators would be “a waste of time.” We did fly a number of missions to monitor Adaptive Management Areas (AMA) set up by Option Nine in conjunction with the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie Forest Service, Western Ancient Forest Campaign, The Wilderness Society and others. We also conducted flights to promote fisheries and watershed protection, monitor timber sales and provide evidence for timber sale appeals and lawsuits.

By 1997, however, more than 7,800 acres of old-growth trees were being logged per year in forest reserves protected by Option Nine in Oregon, Washington and northern California. Another 5,000 acres of trees were cut down annually at streamside reserves most critical to salmon and trout species in the region. Groups including LightHawk began to voice concerns that Clinton’s Northwest forest plan was full of loopholes.

Within a year, LightHawk was working with two of the biggest names in the music business on behalf of national forest protection. In conjunction with the Washington Wilderness Coalition, we assisted R.E.M. guitarist Peter Buck in producing a Public Service Announcement that included an aerial view of the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, and asked viewers to call the White House and demand protections for our remaining ancient forests. The PSA aired on MTV and later on VH1, CNN and radio stations across the country. Members of the Dave Matthews Band also were provided a birds-eye view of clearcuts in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. The day after the band’s flight, developed in conjunction with Rainforest Action Network, the group posted an article about their experience to their website, which received approximately 30,000 hits a day.

LightHawk also launched two new staff-driven initiatives out of the Seattle office. The Community Outreach Program brought diverse community members together to explore local and regional environ-

mental issues from the air and talk about common goals. The Fisherman Watershed Action Project, developed in collaboration with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, used flight to help educate fisherman, biologists and tribal leaders about impacts to salmon habitat caused by logging and other agricultural practices and inspire them to action.

By the late 1990s, LightHawk turned its attention to the issue of sprawl. We aided partner organizations in Washington, Colorado, Oregon and California in the hope that decision makers would be persuaded to plan wisely, save dwindling open space, and halt unsustainable growth. LightHawk’s pilots often heard, “You don’t always get a sense of what is happening on the ground, but from the air sprawl’s impact is crystal clear.”

And so, despite an increasingly strained budget, high staff turnover, and a mission that had begun to drift, LightHawk endured. As current executive director Maureen Smith expressed in her review of the organization as a consultant in 2000: “It is a testament to the personal passion and persistence of individual[s]... and to the fundamental power of the LightHawk concept, that LightHawk has continued to produce 400 or more high-quality flights per year.”

LightHawk was at a crossroads in its evolution.

Wings of Change 2001 to Present: LightHawk in the New Millennium

As LightHawk entered the new millennium, we began to right our course again. Based largely on an intensive strategic planning process and organizational effectiveness projects in 2000 and 2001, we redirected our program emphasis from issues to partners and regained our focus as a service organization. In key ways, we returned to our roots, enriched by the experience and knowledge gained over two decades.

At one extreme of the organizational spectrum is the advocacy model, which puts LightHawk not only in charge of flying, but issue expertise and campaign strategy. Yet LightHawk has flown from Chile to Alaska for hundreds of distinct regional and global issues and research projects, making it difficult if not impossible to maintain sufficient staffing to serve as “the expert” on all of these flights. At the other is the “1-800-LightHawk” model, in which the organization simply matches requests with planes and pilots. In between these two extremes lies the model that now powers us: a “strong partnership” model that maximizes the combined strengths of LightHawk and its partners.

Today LightHawk works with partner organizations to initiate and develop missions and help them develop passenger lists, and advises them on the development of routes, briefing materials, maps, and effective narratives for each flight. With a strong understanding of environmental priorities in our program regions, we help design powerful flight collaborations, producing highly complex flight series and supporting technologically sophisticated satellite ground-truthing, mapping, and documentary missions. *continued...*



Alison M. Jones/LightHawk

“I wish more people were lucky enough to have this experience,” wrote Dave Matthews following the flight. “It’s saddening to see, but also truly inspirational.”

LightHawk regularly takes a “special projects” approach to major opportunities, developing high-impact, highly complex multi-partner and multi-flight events. These projects often are fully integrated with pre- and post-flight briefings, ground tours, and press conferences. This approach is well demonstrated through the “Most Endangered Linkages Campaign” flights we conducted in the Rocky Mountains for the Wildlands Project. For several weeks in 2003, aerial tours took policymakers and media representatives over four “endangered linkages” to educate them about threatened critical habitat and the need for protected corridors, and to help bring public attention to the launch of this campaign.

We undertook similar efforts last year in Colorado and California, including multi-flight missions that helped the California Wild Heritage Campaign (CWHC) conduct outreach on the Wild Heritage Act, legislation that would protect more than 2.5 million acres of public land. During two three-day tours, CWHC hosted Congressional staff, conducting extensive aerial tours with LightHawk volunteer pilots. The tours were integrated with workshops, hikes, and river trips to educate participants about the areas covered in the legislation. Gone are the days of the advocate staff pilot, who lobbied as he flew. In fact, much about our flying is changed.

LightHawk Ship Emily is gone — our sole company aircraft is a Cessna 206. And in 2002, we became 100 percent volunteer pilot based. Volunteers must have at least 1000 hours as pilot-in-command, have an excellent safety record, a well-maintained plane and a professional demeanor. These requirements are far beyond those of most charitable flying organizations, but aside from what is collected on

paper, these folks are impassioned. Passenger comments collected from trip reports frequently commend the pilots for their skills, generosity, and amazing attitude.

Kemp Hiatt, a former LightHawk flight director and staff pilot, said what cannot be denied: “The magic, the strength, of the organization is the volunteer pilot corps.”

Our administrative headquarters now is based in Lander, Wyoming, with most staff working from home offices in Oregon, California, Colorado, Vermont and Central America. With eight full-time, three part-time and a few seasonal contract employees, we are one-third as big as we used to be, but we fly just as much as ever. We have program staff placed to work with more partners than at any time in our history.

Last year alone, LightHawk flights aided partners working against ski area development, mine expansions, coalbed methane gas drilling, and the Bush administration’s misguided “Healthy Forests Initiative”; and in support of wilderness designation, migration corridors, Yellowstone bison, sustainable forestry practices, and open space initiatives. And this is just a sampling of the work we support.

LightHawk again is flying on the right path. Powered by a sound organizational model, dedicated staff and board members, and volunteers with unmatched skills and enthusiasm, we have come full circle and are poised for another 25 years of success as one of the world’s leading environmental aviation organizations.

Longtime former board member Jim Roush summed it up best by saying, “What we do now is what we do best. We add power to existing organizations.”

In 2003, LightHawk merged with Northern Wings, with the blessing and aid of Northern Wings founder and president Rudy Engholm, creating a new Northeast program for LightHawk. Northern Wings was founded in 1995 and worked with more than 50 partner organizations and nearly 60 volunteer pilots. With a program already in place, LightHawk conducted flights like this one for the The Wilderness Society and Friends of Sandwich Range over the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire, looking for evidence of illegal all terrain vehicle use.



Heather Dowey, TWS/LightHawk

THANK YOU We wish to thank the many donors who contributed to LightHawk between November 12, 2003 and April 12, 2004, including:

Foundations Anonymous (2), Wiancko Family Donor Advised Fund of the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole (\$25,000), The Roy A. Hunt Foundation (\$5,000).

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Volunteer Pilots Our heartfelt thanks to the many volunteer pilots who donated their time and the use of their aircraft to fly for LightHawk during this time.

We received gifts in honor of: Mother Earth, Gizzy Funk, G. James Roush and Cynthia Wayburn, Hubert G. Jay Jr. and Gertrude Jay, Lynne Weaver, Jitze Couperus, Polly Ross and Mary Helen Hayes

We received gifts in memory of: Tony W. Oster, Emily Stevens, Richard Kibbey



Correction to the Fall 2003 newsletter: The photo accompanying the article, “Vermont’s Chance for New Wilderness,” should have been the one pictured. Left to right: Geoff Brown, U.S. Senate Environment & Public Works Committee staff member; LightHawk Volunteer Pilot, Dick Bicknell; and Jim Northup, Forest Watch Executive Director. In the photo on the cover of the Fall 2003 issue were from left to right: Dick Bicknell, LightHawk Volunteer Pilot; Josh Royte and Dan Grenier, both of The Nature Conservancy’s Maine Chapter.

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LIGHTHAWK operates established programs in western and northeastern North America and Mesoamerica, and engages in special projects elsewhere in North America.

Continental Airlines Our thanks to Continental Airlines for providing free travel vouchers for our Mesoamerica program.



Courtesy Laurie Martin

When Laurie Martin, LightHawk’s Northeast program manager, was asked to write an article about LightHawk’s 25-year history nearly seven months ago, she jumped at the opportunity to learn more about the organization she works for. She began gathering articles, sorting through archived files and

videos, and interviewing folks involved with LightHawk over the years. As she conducted her research, Laurie was amazed by the people and organizations LightHawk has worked with, the contributions made by so many, and by the environmental accomplishments LightHawk has played a role in through the years.

Laurie was consumed with the history of LightHawk and soon became the staff “expert.” While visiting Lander in January, she even was able to look through piles of unmarked photos and say, “Oh, that must have been when we....” And from her research came this comprehensive article about LightHawk from the beginning.

This project benefited greatly from the assistance of the following:

Richard Barr	Kemp Hiatt	Margaret Puckette
Joan Bavaria	Jerry Hoogerwerf	Jane Rosevelt
Fran Cole	Valerie Langer	Jim Roush
Rick Durden	Yana Merrill	Elmer Schettler
Michele Gangaware	Jane Nicolai	Merry Schroeder
Steve Gorman	Steve Parker	Steele Wotkins

- ¹ Greider, Katharine. “Pilots’ Project Gives Conservationists wings.” *In These Times* 1989/1990.
- ² Jackson, Donald Dale. “An Air Force Called LightHawk.” *Audubon* Jan. 1990: 78-80.
- ³ Morgenthaler, Eric. “An Airplane Service for Environmentalists Turns into a Big Help in Western Battles.” *Wall Street Journal* 18 Feb. 1982: 25.
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- ⁵ “LightHawk, the Environmental Air Force.” *Real Goods News*. Hopland, CA: Real Goods, May 1992.
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FROM THE FLIGHT LOG

Oil and Gas Assault on the Upper Green: Flight Missions Help Draw National Attention

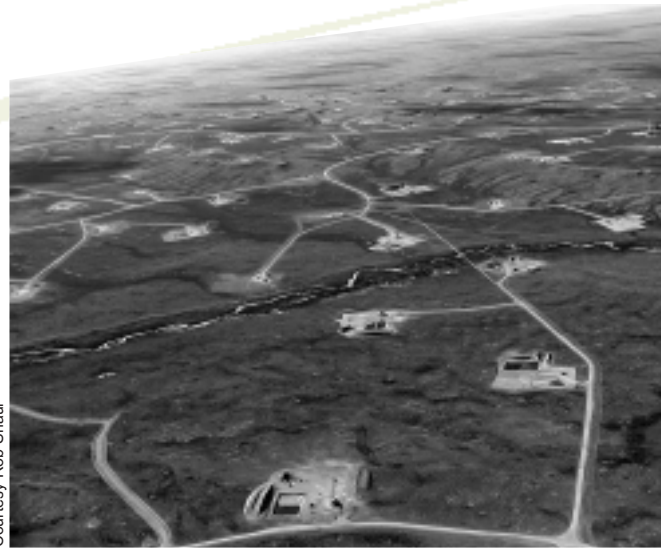
Every LightHawk flight mission is a rich story in its own right, but some also are “happenings” — multiflight events, coordinated with ground activities, that carry key decisionmakers and media representatives. Often months in the planning, these events are among the highest impact missions LightHawk volunteers fly.

One such happening took place at LightHawk’s annual fly-in two years ago over the Upper Green River Valley of Wyoming, and the ripple created by it has expanded outward, as LightHawk continued to fly frequent missions here.

In June 2002, seven LightHawk pilots flew 20 passengers out of Jackson, Wyo., to see how the wide open spaces of the Upper Green River Valley were being altered by roads and drilling sites, and to view the evidence that the longest big game migration corridor in the lower 48 states was being blocked by oil and gas development. As part of the 2002 fly-in, LightHawk’s program staff organized several local media outlets, three local partners (The Wilderness Society, Greater Yellowstone Coalition, and the Wyoming Outdoor Council) and the volunteer pilots to provide an extended aerial overview.

The story of the day’s events not only made the local news, but also helped educate regional media and awaken them to the problems caused by oil and gas development. Carl Shuptrine, of KJWY NBC 2, in Jackson, Wyo. wrote: “I had no idea about the oil and gas fields around Pinedale. It’s a scary thought to think that beautiful basin is in danger of becoming oil and gas fields.”

By March 2003, a headline in the *Sublette Examiner* read, “‘Valley’ Is Environmental Ground Zero.” Describing the work of regional



Courtesy Rob Shaul

Gas development in the Jonah fields south of Pinedale, Wyoming.

environmental groups on the issue and stressing the importance of protecting the valley, the accompanying article noted: “One of the ways organizations can assure that actions in the Upper Green River region maintain a high profile is through providing stunning visuals. One way to make that happen is through a partnership with a unique environmental organization: LightHawk.”

By 2004, these efforts paid off; the environmental consequences of unchecked energy development in the Upper Green River Valley are national news and part of a larger energy debate. And LightHawk continues to offer the compelling visuals. In March, LightHawk Volunteer Pilot Larry Swanson flew an ABC *Nightline* cameraman over the valley to shoot footage for a network broadcast.



LightHawk Volunteer Pilot Larry Swanson (below) went the extra mile for this mission out of Pinedale, Wyoming that entailed 9 flights over 3 days, flying 26 passengers.



Courtesy Larry Swanson

ABC arrived in conjunction with the 2004 Wyoming Conservation

Congress. This statewide gathering in Pinedale, a town of 1,500 that sits in the heart of the Upper Green River Valley, brought together hundreds of people to focus on one critical issue: the rampant oil and gas development in their state. Over the course of three days, Larry flew 26 passengers on nine flights.

With future flights planned for partners like *National Geographic*, LightHawk continues to offer the power of flight to keep the Upper Green River Valley on the minds of people all over the United States.



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Newsletter comments?

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