Dear Sir:

On January 23, 1970, a student-faculty group at Northwestern University held the nation's first environmental "Teach Out." Ten thousand attended the all-night event in Northwestern's engineering school, the Technological Institute. Students came from Ann Arbor, Madison, Urbana, and Chicago, as well as from Evanston. Many adults also attended.

The Northwestern "Teach Out" served as the model for subsequent environmental programs, culminating in an estimated 1,000 college and high school "teach ins" on "Earth Day," April 22.

We hope the enclosed material will prove useful in stories and picture layouts that you may be planning about current interest in the environment.

Sincerely,

James S. Sweet
Science Editor
"UP ALL NIGHT WITH
A SICK ENVIRONMENT..."

Time Magazine on Jan. 26, 1970 first took note of the concern on campus about pollution when it reported that the first environmental teach-out would be held at Northwestern University -- "Project Survival."

Time's cover story the following week was devoted to "The Emerging Science of Survival," and to ecologist Barry Commoner who, said Time, has probably done more than any other U.S. scientist to awaken a sense of urgency about the declining quality of life.

"Last week," Time reported, "he addressed 10,000 people at Northwestern University, where young activists staged the first of a series of major environmental teach-outs that will climax in a nationwide teach-out on April 22."

Science magazine, the organ of the U.S. scientific community, on January 16 noted in a round-up on student activism concerning the environment that "One of the first of the larger environmental teach-outs this year will be held at Northwestern University. This is billed as an all-night affair that is to begin with speeches by environmental evangelists Paul Ehrlich of Stanford and Barry Commoner of Washington University. There is to be a songfest, followed by a smorgasbord of group discussions. The teach-out is being organized by Northwestern Students for a Better Environment, a nonradical group set up last October to investigate and take positions on environmental questions and to stimulate wider public interest in these issues."
The "Teach-Out" was also discussed in two issues of Chemical & Engineering News, organ of the American Chemical Society.

It was not only the timeliness, but the scope of Northwestern's "Project Survival" that provided information the news media needed to inform the public of the critical and complex issue being raised.

This point was made by Fred W. Friendly, producer of the Edward R. Murrow Reports and the innovator of the Public Broadcasting Laboratory. Viewing preparation for "Project Survival" some weeks earlier, he said, in effect, that Northwestern University was "where it was at" in presenting the issue of the day. He urged radio and television to look there to achieve their educational promise.

The national and Midwest broadcast media did turn out in force for "Project Survival."

Representing Chicago radio were crews from WBBM, WIND, and WFMY. Television crews came from WGN-TV; NBC TV City Desk; NBC TV Night-Beat. CBS-TV Network also filmed the activity.

Midwest colleges sent radio crews, too. These came from Northwestern, Kendall College and the University of Illinois.

Under a headline, "Public Service at Highest Level," Chicago Daily News radio and TV writer Norman Mark made this observation Jan. 27: "WIND's 10-hour coverage of the Northwestern University pollution conference last Friday night was a fine example of community service by a broadcaster.

"I thought that fewer interviews should have been repeated in the course of the program and the home audience should have been allowed to contribute comments, but the idea of committing 10 straight hours to one subject was often highly successful in communicating the enormity of the pollution around us. Bravo, WIND."

(more)
The Associated Press and the United Press International carried the highlights of "Project Survival" across the nation. Thus, from Houston, Texas, to Minneapolis, Minn., to both coasts citizens were afforded some expert evaluations of President Nixon's "clean waters" program, which he had announced only the day before "Project Survival." The wire stories quoted Drs. Commoner and Lamont Cole, for example, as saying the program was inadequate to handle the nation's sewage.

Newspaper coverage by such metropolitan papers as the Milwaukee Journal, Chicago Today, Chicago Sun-Times, Chicago Daily News, and Chicago Tribune, had been extensive during planning stages of "Project Survival." They devoted pages to the event itself and, in the following days, published several editorials.

Among the more comprehensive accounts was a picture and text report by the Milwaukee Journal team:

"Northwestern University was up all night with a sick environment, and the result was a dramatic display of youthful commitment.

"Thousands of people, mostly students, attended an all-night -- 7 p.m. Friday to 6 a.m. Saturday -- program of speeches, workshops and folk singing in what was called "Project Survival, an environmental teachout." It was called a teach-out because it was an effort to dramatize environmental problems, and because the university was reaching out to involve the community.

"The commitment the young people displayed is sure to have political influence on the issues of overpopulation, pollution, and the impact of man and technology on nature."

Mentions of "Project Survival" in other papers and magazines across the nation hit the same key.
Business Week, in its February 7 issue, for example quoted Casey Jason, one of the organizers of "Project Survival," in an article the magazine headlined, "How Students See the Pollution Issue":

"Students in general seem unimpressed with the Administration's current efforts to marshal student opinion behind its antipollution program. 'Their attitude smacks of channeling student energy, putting up posters to keep them happy and busy,' says Northwestern senior Casey Jason, co-chairman of the Northwestern teach-out. 'Well, that's not what we're after, and we're not going to settle for it.'"

U.S. News & World Report, in its February 16 issue, in an article devoted to a seeming ebb of violence on U.S. campuses printed a picture from Northwestern University's "Project Survival," the first teach-out on the subject to be held in the nation. The caption:

"Improving the environment is 'in' as a campus issue."
College students have a new crusade--against pollution, and for a better environment. And many older people have joined them.

Ten thousand Midwest and Chicago-area students and citizens expressed concern about contamination of the air, earth, and water at the nation's first environmental "Teach Out" at Northwestern University last Jan. 23.

"Project Survival," the program held at Northwestern's engineering school, the Technological Institute, offered a preview of similar programs planned in coming months on campuses all over the nation.

These environmental programs will come to a climax on Earth Day, April 22, when some 1,000 colleges and high schools will hold their own anti-pollution meetings.

On the basis of Northwestern's "Teach Out" (whose object was to spread information out to the community), what can be said about today's environmental protesters?

Are they yesterday's civil rights and anti-Vietnam activists in unaccustomed consensus with everyone from Ronald Reagan to Saul Alinsky?

Or has a new group been added to the youthful dissenting population? If so, will it encounter opposition and obstructionism? If frustrated, will it become radicalized?

-more-
At Northwestern, at least, a new group of "apolitical activists" has appeared. The impetus came from science and engineering students. Many of the original student group behind the "Teach Out" are graduate students. One of them is a senior premedical student. The membership of the group--Northwestern Students for a Better Environment--is a cross section of all political tendencies and many departments in the University, at both graduate and undergraduate levels.

NSBE did not start out to be the body that would sponsor 1970's first environmental "Teach Out." It started with the concern of Casey Jason, the premedical student, and James Reisa, a Ph.D. candidate in biological sciences, about smog that is beginning to spread out from Chicago to the suburbs and about the pollution of near-by Lake Michigan.

Jason was looking out the window of Northwestern's Cresap Laboratory one day when he noticed a plume of smog creeping up from Chicago over the lake waves toward Evanston, just north of Chicago, where Northwestern is located.

"I wondered if something couldn't be done to stop it," Jason says today. Jason communicated his desire to "do something" to Reisa. They asked Wesley O. Pipes, professor of biological sciences and civil engineering, to sponsor a student group that would study what might be done.

It seemed to Jason and Reisa that a University such as Northwestern possessed more talent to solve environmental problems than any government body short of the federal government. The best way to improve the environment would be to enlist the expert talent in universities.

NSBE was formed in fall, 1969. Gradually more and more students and faculty members began to attend its meetings. One faculty member, Allison
Burnett, professor of biological sciences, suggested the "Teach Out."

The extraordinary success of January 23's "Teach Out" reflects two facts:

--- NSBE's concern about the quality of American life is shared by millions of Americans of all shades of opinion. NSBE reflected a growing popular mood.

--- A good idea requires good organization to bring it to fruition.

When the "Teach Out" was suggested, NSBE had eighty members. Every one of them has an assigned task, and they worked hard at it. Shortly before the "Teach Out" another hundred responded to a request for more volunteers in the "Daily Northwestern" -- on a night when Fair Dealer Arthur Schlesinger Jr. spoke on campus (it was also ten below zero that night).

In Northwestern's administrative complex, Rebecca Crown Center, the University's officers decided to cooperate with NSBE. Assistant Dean of Faculties for Research Robert F. Acker invited NSBE members to participate in discussions of how to mobilize Northwestern's research talent to attack environmental problems. (The discussions go on; NSBE is an action organization; it was not a "one-shot" effort set up to produce an all-night meeting.)

Robert H. Strotz, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (and an expert on the economics of pollution) agreed to pay for some of the evening's expenses, including videotape and audiotape of five hours of it.

Walter Owen, dean of the Technological Institute, permitted NSBE to take over the Institute's auditorium, six large lecture halls, and about 30 classrooms. He authorized Institute personnel to rewire the Institute for TV and radio and paid custodial staff overtime on January 23-24.
NORTHWESTERN'S "TEACH-OUT"/Add 3

The Northwestern departments of astronomy, biological sciences, chemistry, civil engineering, geological sciences, home economics, mathematics, physics, political science, and sociology donated money from their lecture funds to help bring the nation's outstanding environmental leaders to Northwestern. Sigma Xi, a science fraternity, donated $1,500.

The Tuberculosis Institute of Chicago and Cook County printed 5,000 programs. (The programs were all distributed before the evening's events began.)

The Kiwanis Club of Evanston donated $450 to NSBE.

Contributing informational literature were the Sierra Club and the Federal Water Pollution Control Administration's Midwest office.

Both adult and student groups had information tables. University of Michigan and University of Chicago students distributed literature about coming environmental programs at Michigan and Chicago. Zero Population Growth and Planned Parenthood stressed the dangers of uncontrolled world population growth. The League of Women Voters, long concerned with the quality of the environment, was there, as well as the Isaac Walton League and the Audubon Society. The Campaign Against Pollution passed out membership applications. A North Shore citizens group posted a sign inviting attendance at a meeting at Illinois State Park on the Zion, Ill. atomic power plant. Students marching up and down the front hallway chanted "Ban DDT" and "Boycott Grapes."

The auditorium started filling about 6:15 p.m. The audience, mostly students who arrived earlier than North Shore citizens, were "warmed up" by folk singer E. Kitch Childs. About one in five attendees was a member of the older generation. The auditorium quickly filled and later arrivals had to see and watch the program on closed-circuit TV in six large lecture halls,
or hear it over loudspeakers in the Technological Institute's hallways. By eight o'clock there were so many students sitting on the floor in the halls it was nearly impossible to walk through.

Midway in the evening, the audience was invited to "take a break." The Chicago Coca-Cola and Seven-Up bottling companies provided free drinks of Coca-Cola, Seven-Up, and Dr. Pepper. Student volunteers distributed 9,000 cups of coffee and 7,200 doughnuts. Stewart's Private Blend Coffee Company provided 5,000 plastic cups.

An army travels on its stomach. So do those who battle for a clean environment--when asked to sit up overnight.

Some did. About 6,000 of the 10,000 attendees were there to hear Tom Paxton's folk songs at midnight. And at 7 a.m. when E. Kitch Childs, Northwestern voice student Michael S. Mark, and two volunteer musicians from the audience entertained, 300 still were there.