

An Environmentalist Fondly Remembers Alan Kuper

Leon Kolankiewicz shares his memories of Alan Kuper.

I was deeply impressed by Alan's firm, scientifically grounded principles, unflagging commitment, and courage in the face of fierce and unprincipled, even scurrilous, attacks by our opponents on our movement's character and motives. But Alan never gave up or became embittered, even after we lost the 1998 Sierra Club referendum. He also never lost his jaunty sense of humor and his dogged hope that, given the facts, environmentalists and Americans at large would eventually come around and realize that population stabilization was an indispensable ingredient of sustainability.

I am truly saddened by the news of Alan's passing. I really loved him for his spunk, indefatigable spirit, and tremendous initiative in the never-ending struggle for sustainability and population sanity in America and on our planet. How many Americans can claim to have started a new environmental organization (CUSP) in their late seventies?

I wish I could have spent more time with Alan out in the nature we both loved, rather than in meeting rooms or on phone calls. At a meeting in San Francisco after the 1998 Sierra Club referendum, a bunch of us went for a wonderful hike in a park above that scenic city. That was the only outing I ever shared with Alan in the Great Outdoors. He expressed such delight in seeing and learning the wildflowers gracing the meadows and coastal sage scrub. To me it seemed that he had, and never lost, the childlike sense of curiosity and appreciation that are the hallmark of a genuine scientist and humanist, a Carl Sagan type who savors the cosmos and the tiny speck of it that is our precious

home. And like Sagan, Alan faced his own untimely end unflinchingly." ■

—Leon Kolankiewicz



Alan with his bike in rural Vermont, 2002.

Leon Kolankiewicz is a practicing environmental scientist, wildlife ecologist, and natural resources planner whose career has spanned more than 25 years, multiple states, and three countries. His career has included stints with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, University of Washington, University of New Mexico, and Orange County (CA) Environmental Management Agency. He also served as vice-president of Carrying Capacity Network and as a Peace Corps volunteer in Central America promoting conservation of tropical rainforests and wildlife.