

Inner-City Dweller Apathetic on Conservation

People surrounded by sooty concrete and treeless vistas have not been the first to jump on the bandwagon for conservation.

Mrs. Donald Clusen, national vice president of the League of Women Voters, said this is a mistake

and she blames both the conservationists and urban constituents.

Luncheon speaker Tuesday at the Land Transportation Symposium held at the St. Paul Hotel, Mrs. Clusen, who is the national environmental chairman for the League,

By Mary Jane Saunders
Staff Writer

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — Mrs. Clusen stressed the importance of having everyone involved in conservation.

But why does the city dweller turn a deaf ear to the subject? Mrs. Clusen said there are at least three reasons:

LACK OF IDENTIFICATION is one reason. Suburban conservationists fail to communicate their concern to inner-city people.

In the heart of the city people think conservation is something "way out there," with no relevance to their daily lives.

FAILURE OF THE URBANITE to identify his problems with conservation also causes his lack of interest. He simply never makes the connection.

When it rains he sees mud in his yard and water in his basement. He can't swim in the local river. He blames city government but can't see the problem in terms of wide-range city planning.

LACK OF AWARENESS of the helping hand available from conservationists. "We fail to tell the urbanite that we care for people as well as trees, that we see environment as his."

In order to bridge the communication gap between the suburbanite and the urbanite regarding conservation, there are, said Mrs. Clusen, ways to remedy the situation.

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"Conservationists must

of your sincerity is on you.

"Make their cause your cause and see things as others see them. Local leaders and ward politicians are good sources for information and connections.

"If people can come to see their problems as environmental they will see the interrelation with suburban conditions."

Most important of all,

Mrs. Clusen said, is to insist that people in the inner city are involved with dealing with their own problems.

"People must be involved with the selection of the goal in order to care about its achievement. Who knows better than a local resident whether to establish a new park or to preserve an old one."

As national chairman of conservation, Mrs. Clusen said she devotes as much time to the voluntary posi-

tion as she had previously spent on a full-time paid job.

She travels to Washington several times a year to lobby for the League position on conservation and to act as liaison between the government and the League.

Conservation has been a League topic since 1956, when the group dealt mainly with salvaging water supplies.

The subject was expanded to include all aspects of environmental control last year.

"Conservationists must show more interest in people and their needs," she said. "There will be resistance and apathy to greet your sudden new interest and you must be prepared to meet this rebuff. The burden of proof