

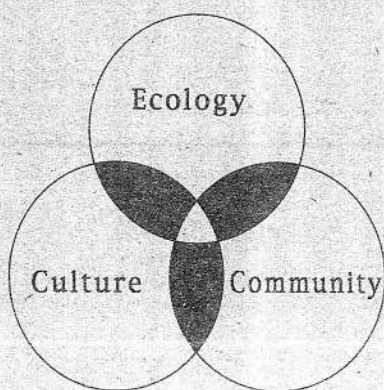
JOURNAL OF MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION®

A Publication of Three Circles Center
for Multicultural Environmental Education

Volume 2, Issue 1

Spring 1995

Three Circles Center introduces, encourages, and cultivates multicultural perspectives and values in environmental and outdoor education, recreation, and interpretation.



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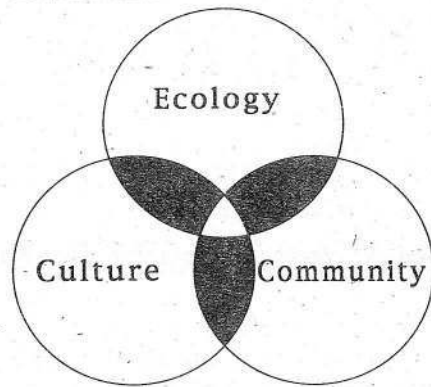
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Three Circles Center



Three Circles Center introduces, encourages, and cultivates multicultural perspectives and values in environmental and outdoor education, recreation, and interpretation.

El Centro Tres Circulos sirve para introducir fomentar y desarrollar perspectivas y valores multiculturales en la educacion del medio ambiente, la recreación y su interpretación.

Three Circles Center nagsilil bi para itakilala sa kagitingan at payamanin, buhayin, alagaan, maraming uring patingin sa kabyrungang panglabas ng ta hanan opang kau kasan, paglilibang at pagintindi sa isa ng bagay.

三育中心之宗旨在於宣傳、鼓勵和培養在環境及戶外活動上的教育、康樂活動及其意義上之多元化的體會及價值觀念。

Three Circles Center introduz, promove e desenvolve perspectivas e valores multiculturais em educação na natureza ambiental, lazer e interpretação.

About Three Circles

The "Three Circles" of our name refers to the three interdependent systems of ecology, culture and community. *Ecology* is the total of myriad relationships between the biotic and abiotic environments; *culture* is the dynamic total mores, values and traditions to which a people relate as their own; and *community* is the network of relationships and the context in which culture flourishes and ecology and culture meet.

Three Circles Center suggests that ecology never stands alone as an isolated system but as one always connected to the sociocultural worlds of humans. The epistemological implications of this are intriguing. Ecology can thus be viewed as a text with an infinite range of interpretive possibilities expressed through the cultural lives of humans in relation to the lives of plants, animals and other living beings.

Thus the notion of a gestalt of interdependent systems - where the totality is greater than the sum of the parts - can serve as a useful and necessary starting point to rethink environmental education and the paradigm of environmentalism in general.

On the Cover...

Students from Parker Elementary School of Oakland, California participating in the Inside/Out Academy plant a tree on California Arbor Day 1992.

Three Circles Consulting

Three Circles consults with organizations around the country on issues of cross-cultural communication, staff development, curriculum and program design and community outreach and liaison. Recent clients have included:

- Audubon Canyon Ranch, Stinson Beach, CA
- National Science Teachers Association/Environmental Protection Agency
- Urban Habitat, San Francisco, CA
- Lawrence Hall of Science, Berkeley, CA

For more information about consulting services, workshops and presentations, please contact our office.

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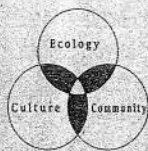
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Please Reduce, Reuse, & Recycle.

"The choice of language and the use to which it is put is central to a people's definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment, indeed in relation to the entire universe." -Ngugi Wa Thiong'O (Quoted from *Border Crossings* by Henry A. Giroux, 1992).



JOURNAL OF MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION®

A Publication of Three Circles Center for Multicultural Environmental Education

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Environmental Education for Environmental Justice

A Three Circles Perspective

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by Running-Grass, Executive Director
Three Circles Center

Introduction

In the autumn of 1991, the United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice convened over three hundred activists from around the country for the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit. The Summit served as a forum for launching the Environmental Justice Movement. Initiated by intense grassroots activity throughout the country, the conceptual framework formulated through the Environmental Justice Movement has significant implications for both environmentalism in general and for environmental education in particular.

As the Environmental Justice Movement challenges the definitions, concepts and philosophies of mainstream environmentalism, it is also challenging—and changing—those of environmental education. The cultural assumptions underlying the definition of "environmental education" as well as its pedagogy, practices, curricula, materials and the internal demographics of the field itself are being called into question. Environmental educators, who have been excluded from the dialogue between the Environmental Justice Movement and mainstream environmentalists, must now assess the implications of the information that the Movement brings to bear on these issues.

Differing Definitions of Environmental Education:

Consider first Principle 16, the prescription for environmental education set forth in the

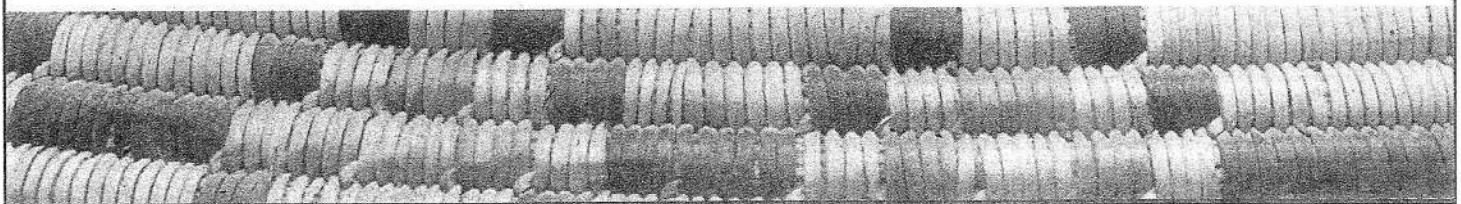
Principles of Environmental Justice ratified by the delegates at the Summit.

Environmental justice calls for the education of present and future generations which emphasizes social and environmental issues, based on our experience and an appreciation of our diverse cultural perspectives.

Two ideas set this vision of environmental education apart from conventional definitions: its explicit recognition of the connection between social (justice) and environmental concerns, and its insistence that environmental education be based on "our experience and an appreciation of our diverse cultural perspectives."

Contrast this with the commonly accepted definition formulated at Tbilisi, Georgia in 1977 and elaborated on by the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) in 1983. It asserts the following:

Environmental education is a process which promotes the analysis and understanding of environmental issues and questions as the basis for effective education, problem solving, policy-making, and management. The purpose of environmental education is to foster the *education* of skilled *individuals* able to understand *environmen-*



tal problems and possessing the expertise to devise effective solutions to them.

In the broader context, environmental education's purpose is to assist in the development of a *citizenry* conscious of the scope and complexity of current and emerging environmental problems and supportive of *policies* which are ecologically sound. (Italics are mine).

Although this elaboration of the Tibilisi Statement initially appears to be comprehensive, closer examination reveals that elements of Principle 16 are clearly outside its scope: the assumption of fundamental unity of environmental and social justice issues and the emphasis on experience and cultural perspectives. The NAAEE statement is also fraught with cultural assumptions and biases which the Environmental Justice Movement challenges.

The NAAEE elaboration of the Tibilisi statement implies a homogenous "citizenry" composed of "individuals" who can be uniformly "educated" about universally acknowledged "environmental problems" and who, thus educated, will actively participate in education, problem-solving, policy-making and management. The Environmental Justice Movement questions these assumptions and biases on the following counts:

- People of color are often segregated, living in low income, urban core areas or isolated in poor rural towns. Mainstream environmentalists consider these living conditions social problems rather than environmental issues. They generally don't perceive persistent poverty, economic development, community health, and political empowerment as having a significant environmental dimension.
- The Environmental Justice Movement is challenging assumptions on what constitutes the "environment" itself.

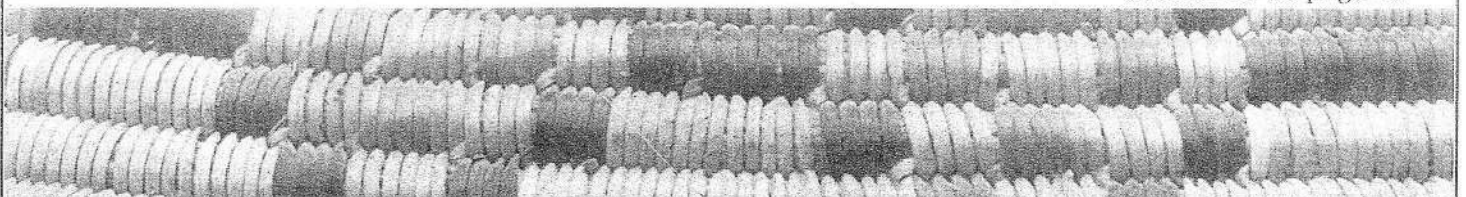
- Poor communities incur disproportionate environmental degradation, including toxic waste dumping, higher concentrations of air and water pollution and greater risk of exposure to particular toxic materials such as lead and other heavy metals. There is no acknowledgment in the Tibilisi Statement (nor in NAAEE's elaboration on it) that environmental degradation occurs within a complex matrix of culture, race, class, gender and age.

- Environmental policy has not protected such communities. It has, in fact, discriminated against them on the basis of race and class. There is thus a social justice dimension to environmental policy which is just now being acknowledged by such policy makers as the EPA.

The recent Executive Order on Environmental Justice also clearly recognizes the differential impacts of environmental protection and mitigation policies as well as the confluence of environmental protection and civil rights.

- Partly as a result of this discrimination, the Environmental Justice Movement tends to emphasize protest and direct action rather than management, "problem solving" or other forms of political participation legitimized by the status quo. The form of direct action taken often springs from the historical and cultural experiences of people within their community. It is no coincidence that demonstrations for environmental justice use the tactics and style of the civil rights movement of the 1950's and 60's. The struggle for environmental justice is often part of a larger struggle for political, economic and cultural self-determination.
- Communities of color and those involved in environmental justice campaigns are unlikely to have access to environmental education programs. When they are available, these programs generally

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Organization Profile

Deep South Center for Environmental Justice



Photo courtesy of Deep South Center

Dr. Beverly Wright, Director

The lower Mississippi Delta region and the lower Southeastern states have borne a large share of the extreme environmental degradation within the U.S., and within this region, people of color and low-income communities have experienced a disproportionately large share of these bur-

dens. In 1990, these inequities inspired a group of four universities (Southern University of New Orleans, University of New Orleans, Dillard University, and Xavier University) to petition the EPA to respond by supporting a consortium on environmental justice. This proposal was denied; however, Xavier University was committed and able to provide the support for the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice to form in 1992, under the direction of Dr. Beverly Wright. The Center, located in New Orleans, directly serves Louisiana, East Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Alabama, and works with a variety of organizations, including Clark Atlanta University and Hampton University, to conduct research, formulate policy, and implement educational programs, all focused on empowering communities to address environmental justice issues.

Research and policy studies are the first major component of the Center's activities. All of their research endeavors are directly linked to policy planning or are conducted for later use in program implementation. Current and future research projects focus on three main areas: the documentation of the toxicology of hazards that Deep South communities currently face; the explanation of the political,

social and cultural forces which result in the inequitable distribution of environmental hazards; and the study of economic development as it relates to environmental justice.

A second component of the Center's mission focuses on community assistance and education, through which communities are made aware of local environmental threats, and are given the tools with which to effectively respond to issues of justice and acceptable risk. As Dr. Wright says, "education is the most powerful tool we have to combat environmental racism." Often communities do not have access to the scientific facts regarding the environmental problems they face, and "without this information, they are often powerless to make a difference. By forging partnerships with universities, communities can be afforded access to this scientific data and analysis they need." In keeping with this mission, the Center's Community Outreach Coordinator runs three training programs: "Information is Power," a course teaching communities the ways in which to access environmental information; "Computer Ready," a computer skills training course, and "Leadership," which teaches community members how to network and form coalitions.

Another successful Center program, the Military Toxics Education Project, worked with Mississippi communities living near the Keeslar Air Force base in Biloxi, the Naval Construction Battalion Center in Gulfport, and the Columbus Air Force Base in Columbus. Through the Freedom of Information Act, the Center was able to get full information on the degree of contamination of the sites, and conducted trainings with people of color in the communities, providing them with relevant environmental and scientific information and encouraging their participation in restoration activities. As a result of the training, a number of community members were prepared to serve as members of the Depart-

Photo:
Mississippi
River Avatar
Board
Members



Photo courtesy of Deep South Center

ment of Defense's site restoration advisory boards, while others became organized activists providing the necessary support to these board members.

Through the Mississippi River Avatar Project, leaders meet monthly with ten communities along the Mississippi River corridor. Through these meetings, the Center is able to provide ongoing assistance to the communities in responding to the emissions of toxic chemicals they face locally.



The Environmental Justice Education Program (EJEP) is the third component of the Center's work. The EJEP aims to increase familiarity with environmental justice issues at the primary, secondary, and university levels, through curriculum development, teacher trainings, and career development. The Center is currently working with public school science teachers (some of whom are members of the Center's board) to integrate the EJEP into their curriculum. Stipends are also available to community activists to facilitate their continued education in environmental justice issues.

The crucial nature of the need for the services provided by the Deep South Center is obvious. Since opening, the Center has been inundated by requests from the community for assistance in responding to accidents, registering formal complaints, accessing information, and understanding technical documents, among many other questions. The Deep South Center for Environmental Justice is playing a critical role in both creating partnerships between universities, grassroots organizations, and individuals in the communities, as well in empowering communities and giving them a voice of their own in fighting for environmental justice on the local level.

The Deep South Center will soon be renamed The Southern Center for Environmental Justice and can be contacted at Xavier University of Louisiana, 7325 Palmetto Street, Box 45-B, New Orleans, LA, 70125; Phone (504) 483-7340; Fax 504-488-7977.

by Julie Totaro

Community-Based Environmental Education for Urban Communities A Sustainable Strategy

by Lucia Hoerr

Environmental education programming has steadily increased on a global level over the past twenty years, although the methodology for program implementation has varied from country to country based on needs and requirements. In the United States, the focus has, for the most part, been on implementation of programs through schools and nature centers with little expansion into the community and little attention to poorer, urban neighborhoods. With urbanization on the rise in the U.S., the minimal attention to community-based programming is cause for concern. Community-based environmental education, which incorporates both environmental and development issues and responds directly to the expressed needs and concerns of the residents, is a common practice in other parts of the world. It may be a more effective strategy in this country to help achieve the goals of environmental literacy and responsible stewardship within all sectors of American society.

The field of environmental education expanded quite rapidly following the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972. The Stockholm meeting was a forum for the world to discuss the extent of environmental problems occurring on a global level. Delegates reported that environmental disasters were not just isolated in a few countries, but were crossing borders and cultures. Industrialization and the rapid increase of new technologies and human activities around the globe had severely altered the natural landscape and upset the ecobalance (Fensham 1978). A minority of the world's population accounted for the use of a majority of the world's resources, creating environmental disparity around the globe. Worldwide environmental degradation and the need for education about the situation had been identified.

The world responded to these needs. The Intergovernmental Conference on Environ-

mental Education, organized by Unesco with the United Nation's Environmental Program (UNEP) in Tbilisi, USSR in October 1977, was the culmination of five years of effort on an international level to create a list of feasible objectives and recommendations in environmental education (EE). At the Tbilisi conference, 143 countries were represented and more than thirty countries presented their national reports to implement EE strategies. These strategies were varied. The industrial countries were to focus on the development of curricula and the implementation of EE into existing institutions such as schools and nature centers (Fensham 1978). The "developing" countries insisted on integrating EE into development strategies which were already in place. Because of the gravity of the human condition in many Third World countries, EE took on a more serious role there.

Poverty itself is a form of environmental degradation. Viewed in this light, it is no longer possible to contrast the preservation of the environment with the necessity for development. In many of the less developed countries, and particularly among the less privileged groups, which form the vast majority, the preservation of the environment requires development as its prerequisite, especially to meet the needs of the poorest people in the world (UNEP 1977).

Since the Tbilisi conference, the term "environmental education" has taken on many different meanings. Both the industrialized and developing countries were responding to the situations at hand in their regions of the world. In the developing countries, environmental education was to be community-based, generally concentrating on the present-day needs of the people involved. On the other "experts" and delivered to the local communi-

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Getting Organized

Environmental Justice at Antioch New England Graduate School

by Steve Chase

Several students sat expectantly in Antioch's Patterns of Environmentalism class. A few of us asked ourselves silently, "What's missing from this picture?"

The instructor had just suggested that the environmental movement is best understood as a continuing argument between the ghosts of John Muir and Gifford Pinchot, the two competing icons of the Progressive Era conservation movement. To illustrate his point, he drew a line across the chalk board and asked the students to imagine that the left side of the board represented the romantic wilderness preservationism championed by Muir and the right side the natural resource management supported by Pinchot. He then asked his students to name contemporary environmental groups and place them somewhere along this continuum.

One student mentioned the Mothers of East Los Angeles. The instructor replied, "That's not an environmental group." While the student openly disagreed, there was no room for environmental justice groups anywhere in the instructor's narrow conceptual map of environmentalism. Such was the state of awareness at one of the nation's largest environmental studies programs back in October 1993.

After that class, four students—Lisa Maria Bertoldi, Carolyn White, Paul Belz and myself—talked over our frustrations with the neglected patterns of environmentalism at Antioch. By the end of the discussion, the Antioch Environmental Justice Workgroup was formed. Our goal was to render the invisible visible: to educate ourselves and the Antioch community about the grassroots movement for environmental justice that has emerged over the last decade in barrios, urban ghettos, rural poverty pockets, and Native lands across North America.

As Carolyn White asserted, "Antioch could have an important impact on the environmental movement if its graduates were challenged to grapple with the issues raised by the National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, the Citizen's Clearinghouse on Hazardous Waste, and grassroots groups as Native Action, Toxic Avengers, and the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative. How can we become good allies and supporters of such groups is the question we want to raise."

Today, the AEJW has grown to 20 active members and has made important changes in the academic life of the Department. As Lisa Maria Bertoldi notes, "We have far surpassed our original hopes." Over the course of a year, the AEJW has written several articles for student publications, donated books to the Antioch library, hosted speakers, negotiated syllabus changes in the Patterns of Environmentalism class, and successfully petitioned the Department for three new courses—Environmental Justice; Diversifying Environmental Organizations; and Urban Ecology.

Workgroup members also now serve on the Department's ongoing curriculum committee and are currently working on booking a public performance of the Underground Railway Theater's new production, *Intoxicating: an Eco-Cabaret*, at the school. On the basis of the AEJW's work, Antioch recently received a \$10,000 anonymous grant to support its new educational programming on environmental justice and diversity issues. Attention to environmental justice issues is becoming increasingly institutionalized within the Department.

The Three Circles Center for Multicultural Environmental Education has been an important resource to Antioch in this process. Running-Grass, an Antioch grad himself, has spoken twice at the campus and has met

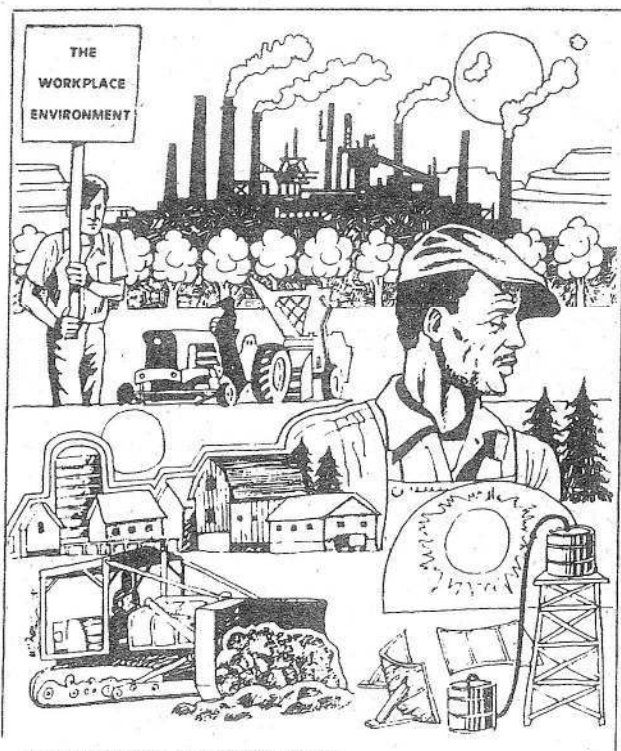
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Getting Organized

extensively with members of Workgroup and the faculty. He will teach Antioch's first Diversifying Environmental Organizations course this summer. As new AEJW member Kristin Gottschalk notes, "Running-Grass' talk inspired me to join the Workgroup. He helped me to see how I, as a white environmental professional, can effectively contribute to the goals of environmental justice and multicultural education. I want to be part of a group that pushes such changes at Antioch."

For further information about the Antioch Environmental Justice Workgroup, contact Steve Chase, c/o South End Press, 116 Saint Botolph, Boston, MA 02115 or write him at his email address: schase@world.std.com.

Steve Chase is a long time activist, writer, and book publisher. He currently works at South End Press in Boston and attends Antioch New England Graduate School half-time.



Research Notes

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Ph.D. dissertation research project entitled "The Influence of Social Movements on the Public Policy-Making Process: The Case of the Environmental Justice Movement."

On occasion, social movements have played a role in the public policy-making process. However, this is an unusual phenomenon and how such movements develop influence is not well understood. The research undertaken provides a description of social movements, an explanation of how they differ from more traditional interest groups, and the testing of an empirical model that explains the source of their power in the public policy-making process. More specifically, this research addresses the paucity of findings and material on the character, strategies, and impact of social movements on the American public policy-making process. Using a political process perspective, this investigation concentrates on the efforts of the Environmental Justice Movement to leverage the development of environmental policy in ways that promote its vision of social equity. The research problem investigates two areas or research questions. First, the research tests a theoretical model to determine to what extent the Environmental Justice Movement may be classified as a social movement. Second, it examines the movement's influence on the public policy-making process.

ties by way of established institutions. The approach was academic and institutionalized, from the top, downward in orientation. The primary focus was on issues such as blatant industrial waste and environmental pollution or "accidents" rather than on securing the basic needs of people. Because of our position in the world economy, we were afforded that luxury. The goal of environmental education in this country as it was established in 1977 was to create an ecologically literate society, one which feels a sense of responsible stewardship towards the environment and has the ability to make environmentally responsible decisions (Weilbacher 1991). For many people in our society, this required a major change in attitudes and a shift in behavioral patterns. The environmental education model cites "awareness to action": As people become more aware of the environment through educational programs, their base of knowledge increases, and they become more capable of effecting change through active participation and responsible decision-making (Tanner 1974).

Over the past fifteen years, the field of environmental education in the United States has expanded in pace with growing concern about the environment, and it now includes many different players. There are environmental educators within public agencies, private non-profit organizations, private for-profit companies, and in independent consulting firms who produce materials and market them to schools and nature centers. The top environmental organizations in the United States, such as the National Audubon Society and the Sierra Club, have education in their mission statements and have entered the business of curriculum development. The North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE), with a membership of over 1500, acts as a resource network for environmental educators at schools, museums, zoos, parks, forests, and universities. Several states now have legislation mandating that environmental education be integrated into the school curriculum for K-12. Undergraduate and graduate degree programs with a focus on environmental education are being offered at many universities and colleges across the country (Weilbacher 1991).

Despite this growth in the field of environmental education, questions remain as to its effectiveness. Have we seen marked effects within our society? Even though our society has changed demographically since the 1970's, the goals and the focus within the environmental education field have remained much the same. With urbanization and poverty on the rise, and a substantial increase in the populations of people of color in the United States, a large portion of our society resembles that of the so-called "Third World" (Pulido 1991). However, the environmental education community continues to focus on middle and upper-class Caucasian populations in suburban schools and nature centers while neglecting urban audiences, especially people of color.

The systematic exclusion of people of color from the ranks of the "Group of Ten" national environmental organizations results in a national environmental agenda that reflects only the concerns of the upper middle class white population from which they draw their membership. These concerns focus on issues such as wilderness preservation and protection of endangered plants and animals, while ignoring the critical environmental issues impacting communities populated with people of color and the economically disadvantaged ("Call to Action" 1991).

The EE strategy drawn up in the 70's has failed to recognize large segments of our society right from the start. This may not have been so obvious in 1977, but it certainly is in 1994. What is missing in the environmental education strategy here in the United States is something that is commonplace in other countries around the world, namely, the integration of environmental education into community-based development plans. Implementation of environmental education programs in schools and nature centers seems logical if there are opportunities in every community to do that, but that is not the case. Nature centers tend to be located outside of urban areas, and many inner-city schools do not have the resources to implement environmental programs. Often times, the teachers are from the "outside" and are not familiar

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with the community where they teach. When teachers are interested in incorporating environmental education into their educational agenda, the choice of curricula also illustrates the biased slant of the EE strategy. For the most part, curricula are produced for Caucasian audiences by those educators in positions of influence within the EE movement (Weilbacher 1991).

Meanwhile, many social service agencies, community groups, and neighborhood associations are working in urban areas to meet the needs of the poor. Across the country, communities are organizing to combat the social problems and environmental racism which plague poor neighborhoods and families. The Reverend Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. defines environmental racism as follows:

People of color are disproportionately exposed to toxic and hazardous waste facilities throughout the nation. During the past five years it has become clear that people of color communities also are disproportionately exposed to lead poisoning, pesticide contamination and a host of other forms of air, land and water pollution. As a consequence, there is a sharp rise in the incidence of infant mortality, cancer, respiratory disease and other public health problems in these communities. We believe that the disproportionate exposure of people of color to environmental hazards is not an historical coincidence. It has often been the result of the way in which environmental policies were set by local, state and federal institutions and agencies (Chavis 1992).

The pressing issues of poor communities, often identified as social, economic, or political issues, have everything to do with the environment around them. Social service agencies and neighborhood groups have been engaged in a form of environmental education, focusing on the health and welfare of families and communities, without the support of the institutionalized and trained EE community (Newman 1992). It is time that the EE community, with all of its vast resources and energy, dealt with the environmental issues of all sectors of our society,

rather than restrict itself to the more affluent. An estimated 50% of the world's population will live in urban areas by the year 2000 (Rodda 1991). In the United States, over 80% of the country's population already lives in areas designated as urban. There exists an opportunity for the environmental educator to work within a community setting, directly with families and residents of a particular neighborhood or through established institutions such as social service agencies or churches to develop sustainable programs for the improvement of the urban environment as well as the health of the residents. This type of environmental education work has been done in other countries quite successfully for some time.

Community-based programs, with the full support and participation of the EE community, offer the possibility of sustainable results for entire families and communities rather than primarily elementary school-aged children. One might suggest that our future and the future of our earth depends on the children and their ability to make environmentally responsible decisions. However, if we continue to rely on the children to absorb educational messages at school when there is no reinforcement at home within the family or the community, then the message will be reduced to an interesting presentation or idea which is not put into practice.

What are the messages that environmental educators are concentrating on these days? How relevant is it that a child living in an economically depressed, inner-city neighborhood in the United States focus on a Save the Whales campaign or the tropical rain forests? How can those types of messages be reinforced at home for sustainable changes in attitude or lifestyle? Conversely, can we expect Caucasian, upper-class children living in the suburbs to receive reinforcement at home within their families regarding environmental messages such as over-consumption of the world's resources? Educators have a responsibility to implement the most creative and innovative plans in order to reach the goal of an environmentally literate society. Community-based programs offer just that: a creative and sustainable way to involve communities in the development of educational programs that help the residents learn more about the envi-

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disregard the particular environmental conditions and cultural values of the communities it addresses, rendering them practically irrelevant to the students' lives.

- People of color are severely under-represented as educators, policy-makers, and managers within the environmental movement. This under-representation is less a matter of lack of interest on the part of people of color, as is often presumed, as it is of systematic discrimination and exclusion by the environmental professions.

The Environmental Justice Movement draws connections between issues which, in the minds of many, are separate and distinct. More specifically, the movement asserts that social justice and environmental issues are inseparable, conceptually and politically. This fusion goes well beyond the mainstream call, often sounded by environmental educators, to look at issues from an interdisciplinary perspective. (See, for example, Ecological Literacy, Education and the Transition to a Postmodern World by David Orr.)

Several years ago a fire broke out and swept through a chicken processing plant in South Carolina. Escape from the plant was slowed because the emergency exits had been locked by the management. As a result, a number of woman workers, most poor and Afro-American, were killed.

By mainstream standards, this was not an environmental issue. But, in fact, this was an environmental justice issue. As such, it illustrates that the workplace is an *environment* in which workers spend substantial amounts of time and where they are exposed to a variety of hazards resulting from their contact with both substances and processes.

This example also shows that workers may have little information about or control over such hazards and may in fact be subjected to

those hazards without their knowledge or consent. (See "Work—the Most Dangerous Environment" by Charles Nobel in Toxic Struggles, the Theory and Practice of Environmental Justice, Richard Hofrichter, editor and "The Effects of Occupational Injury, Illness, and Disease on the Health Status of Black Americans: A Review", by Beverly Hendrix Wright in Race and the Incidence of Environmental Hazards, A Time for Discourse, edited by Bunyan Bryant and Paul Mohai.)

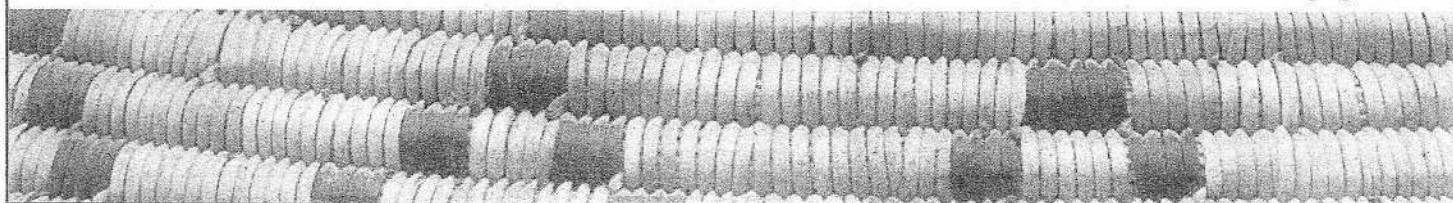
The chicken processing plant in South Carolina was a known polluter of the environment outside the plant walls and its practices had affected local water and air quality. Thus, internal substances and processes heavily impacted the larger external environment of ecosystems *and* social systems.

Principle 16 emphasizes the need for education based on "diverse cultural perspectives" and rooted in the actual experiences of people in their own communities. This promotes an environmental education approach which recognizes and acknowledges the pivotal role of culture in the process of education and its underlying values and pedagogy.

A theme which has become a touchstone of the Environmental Justice Movement is "We speak for ourselves." (See We Speak for Ourselves, Social Justice, Race and Environment, Published by the PANOS Institute, 1990). This theme evokes the sense of invisibility and enforced silence that people of color have experienced in the political and economic arenas, including the environmental arena.

The fact that these communities and citizen activists are now telling their own stories, as they engage in their struggles, illustrates that a fundamental process of political empowerment engendered by environmental crisis is underway. (See "Environmentalism and Civil Rights in Sumpter County, Alabama", by Conner Bailey and Charles E. Faupel in Race and the Incidence of Environmental Hazards, A Time for Discourse, Bryant and Mohai, editors.)

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Environmental Education for Environmental Justice

Recognition and acknowledgment of culture as a touchstone for environmental education is significant in that it affirms that the Environmental Justice Movement is a movement for political empowerment. Part of that empowerment is the recapturing and articulation of culture as expressed in the actual life circumstances of people in struggle.

Despite the seemingly all-encompassing character of the Tibilisi/NAAEE guiding principles, these principles do not explicitly recognize and address culture and people's experience in the context of their own communities as the foundation for developing appropriate environmental education programs.

Therefore, we contend that an environmental education model consistent with the terms, criteria and meaning of Principle 16, i.e. a necessarily *multicultural* environmental education, is substantively different than those present in current mainstream models.

Access to Environmental Education as an Environmental Justice Issue

Environmental educators often lament the fact that relatively few of the 3 million teachers in the US teach environmental education and that, consequently, few children in the country have access to it. It is rather frightening to consider this fact as we enter the next century, one already preceded by scientists and bureaucrats deciding which species are expendable and in which entire communities are already polluted by toxic waste spills and other contamination.

But even where environmental education is available, it largely bypasses children of color and their communities. Environmental education for most children is a privilege and, not surprisingly, it is more often found in privileged, affluent suburban settings rather than in low income, urban core or isolated rural areas.

What is commonly accepted as environmental education is distributed on the basis of race and class in a narrow range of geographic locations. Where children of color are exposed to environmental education, frequently it doesn't reflect their cultural heritage and values. It certainly does not associate environmental issues with social justice or civil rights issues.

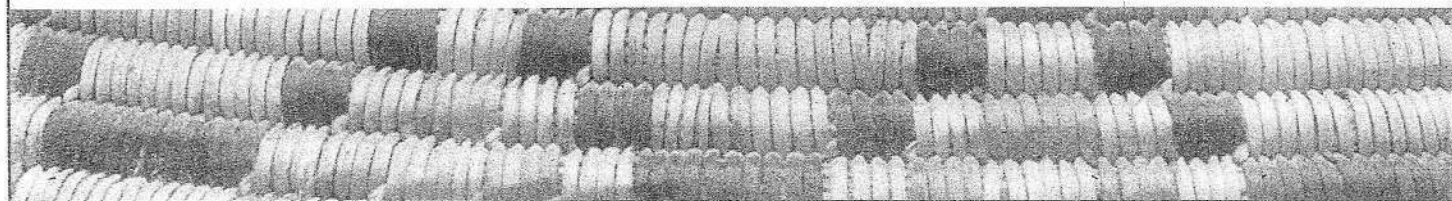
In a survey of environmental education programs in California conducted in the summer of 1992, Three Circles Center discovered that over 42% of the respondents had not identified any goals or methods for addressing diversity issues in their programs. Of the 54% which had taken steps to address diversity, nearly half felt they were wholly unsuccessful in their efforts to diversify their programs, staff and curricula. This notable lack of success illustrates the severe cultural isolation of the environmental education field.

Though forms of "environmental education" are, in fact, available in people of color communities—especially where there are on-going environmental justice campaigns—it is clear that other essential forms of environmental education, experiences and information which would support those campaigns and perhaps "immunize" communities against environmental racism, are not.

The critical need for education and informational resources is being addressed by a number of activists in the Environmental Justice Movement.

"An issue that has yet to be fully examined is simply the lack of familiarity on the part of civil rights community with (environmental issues). In many respects, environmental issues are difficult to grasp, being highly technical and regulatory in nature. Poorer communities, lacking readily available pool of residents, such as doctors, lawyers, and scientists, who are familiar with the nomenclature

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Educator Profile

Elisa Adler & Alejandro Jayo

*Educadores del Medio Ambiente Biculturales
Bilingual/Bicultural Environmental Educators*

“ Until people feel profoundly connected to the Earth, they won't really care what happens to it. Our programs invite participants to consider their relationship to the natural environment, and to discover themselves as an interdependent and interacting member of a community of diverse species.” Elisa Adler

The belief that people in today's society need to become reconnected to the Earth, and that connections need to be made between the urban and natural environments is what inspires Alejandro Jayo and Elisa Adler in their dedication to bilingual/bicultural environmental education.

The combination of Elisa and Alejandro's diverse backgrounds (Elisa is from California

and Alejandro is from Mexico) provides the basis for their work in multicultural environmental education. During the past three years, they have been leading stream restoration projects in both the United States and Mexico with groups of bilingual/bicultural youth. Their recent programs have been in collaboration with several U.S. agencies and organizations including the Student Conservation Association, the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, the U.S. Forest Service, the Mono Lake Committee, and Partners of the Americas.

Their own program TIRF (Team for InterAmerican Restoration and Friendship) is an environmental education and stream restoration training network for interested communities and agencies in the United States and South America. Over the past years, they have connected U.S. professionals with Mexican and Guatemalan professionals, communities and environmental groups.



This was a bicultural team of U.S. & Mexican youth on a backpacking trip east of the Sierras following 10 days of stream restoration in Plumas County.

They offer TIRF projects on a per-trip, request basis. While specific projects change, all have a similar goal. They teach basic principles of ecology along with specific stream restoration techniques which communities can use to protect their agricultural lands, their watershed, and their streams. Program participants then teach others in their communities, and real physical problems are resolved at the same time that communities become more appreciative of and more respectful of natural systems.

During Alejandro's and Elisa's summer camping and stream restoration programs in the Sierra Nevada, U.S. and Mexican teens live together for four weeks as a "family." Many of the young people in the program had never had the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors before, and some were afraid - of the dark, of the quiet, of the vastness of the natural world. One young woman, for example, said that being naked for the first time in her life outside of a bathroom when she bathed under a solar shower behind a curtain near a mountain tarn helped her lose her fear of the outdoors. One young man bragged about his first blisters. Another young woman said simply that she had found "god" and a "home" in the world and remarked how in the wilderness there are no political boundaries and everyone is equal. These programs "help young people shed some of their fear of the 'other,' whether that other takes the form of the dark, of an animal, or of a person of a different culture, race, or religion."

Alejandro and Elisa view outdoor education "as simply the best way to get people to understand and appreciate the outdoors." They hope to see schools include the outdoors -

whether the school yard, park, or city street - as one of many available classrooms.

Their programs draw connections between the urban environment and the natural world and show how cities are dependent on natural

resources that are linked to ecosystems and habitat. But students in their programs also learn leadership skills, to value and accept diversity, and specific restoration techniques that can lead to real-world solutions.



Elisa and Alejandro are available to work with schools, agencies, communities, and individuals to develop a program to meet their specific needs. Anyone interested in working with them can contact them directly to develop a project.

Alejandro is originally from Delicias, Chihuahua, México and received his degree in Forestry from the Universidad Autonoma de Chapingo, México. He has extensive professional experience in forestry, and is a founder of Grupo de Estudios Ambientales, one of Mexico's leading environmental organizations. Elisa received her Bachelor's degree in Comparative Literature (English & Latin American) from the University of California at Berkeley and pursued her Master's in English from Mills College in Oakland after studying and working in Latin America.

by Ashley Eimers

Como realmente interesar a las personas en el ambiente natural que les rodea? La respuesta es involucrándolas en él, es decir ofreciéndoles experiencias que los conecten directamente con la naturaleza.

Viviendo al aire libre por algunas semanas, explorando a pie y acampando en parques nacionales y áreas silvestres, las personas que vienen de la ciudad tienen la oportunidad de meterse totalmente en un mundo natural (un mundo cada vez más difícil de encontrar). Eso ofrecemos en nuestros programas a cada participante. Al mismo tiempo que disfrutan de la convivencia con los otros miembros del grupo, reciben información general del manejo de los recursos naturales, aprenden los principios básicos de la ecología, y practican algunas técnicas de restauración del ecosistema. Esto les ayudará a considerar su relación con el ambiente natural, descubriéndose como miembros interdependientes e interactivos en una comunidad de seres diversos.

Nosotros esperamos que al final, los participantes experimenten un respeto y amor profundo por la naturaleza y que ese respeto y amor se traduzca en una relación de más calidad consigo mismo, con su familia y con su comunidad, a través de sus propias acciones.

-Alejandro Jayo



Photos:

Courtesy of Elisa Adler and Alejandro Jayo

Above: These four participants, two from the United States and two from Mexico, are on a mountain peak above Thousand Island Lake.

Opposite Page: A young man from Oaxaca, Mexico puts willow stakes into the soil to act as a barrier against erosion. Alejandro and Elisa teach the participants to use materials at hand in the area.

Educator profiles are included in the newsletter to illustrate the efforts of individuals to deal proactively with multicultural concerns. We hope that profiling educators will increase the dialogue and discourse leading to strategies and solutions that work.

of environmental protection, are at a distinct disadvantage.... Accessibility to persons trained in environmental fields has been found to be a major element of success by communities confronting environmental problems."

"Toxic Waste and Race in the United States", p. 21, Charles Lee, in Race and the Incidence of Environmental Hazards, Bryant and Mohai.

One of a number of suggestions offered by Dorcetta Taylor for developing and supporting a positive relationships between mainstream and environmental justice groups is to increase attention paid to education.

"Resources should be earmarked for education and training which includes everyone from grammar schools to college students and grassroots community workers with little or no schooling. In addition to education and training, provisions should be made for employment opportunities."

"Attracting and Maintaining the Support of Minorities", p. 47 Dorcetta Taylor, in Race and the Incidence of Environmental Hazards, Bunyan and Mohai.

Environmental Education and Environmental Justice

Access to environmental education should be considered an issue of environmental justice. One increasingly recognized reason environmental injustice or environmental racism occurs is because of the lack of information and educational programs extended to people of color and their communities. Inasmuch as

the Environmental Justice Movement fuses social justice, civil rights and environmental issues into a single movement and conceptual framework, clearly, environmental education, its forms and distribution is an environmental justice issue.

Access to appropriate environmental education is a civil rights issue connected historically to the struggle for equal access to educational opportunity and resources. The movement is committed to gaining access to those resources and opportunities in ways which reflect the cultural values, including linguistic values, of specific populations.

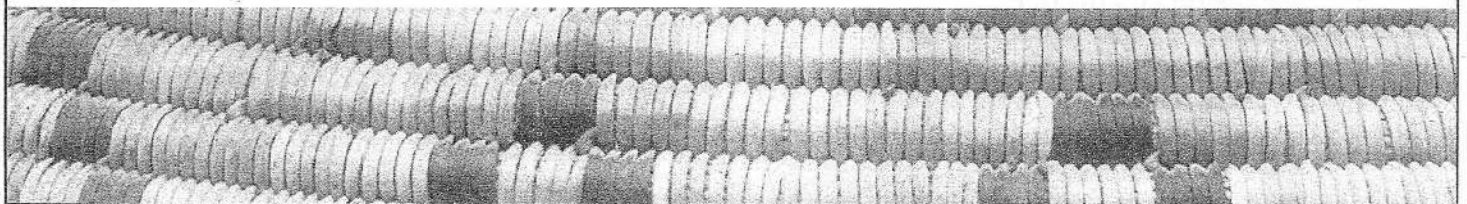
Authenticity

Access, as discussed here, does not simply mean integration of culturally diverse peoples. An environmental education program needs to involve people and communities and reflect and amplify their histories and lives. This suggested dialogue would result in transformed environmental education and a culturally vital and diverse, environmentally literate and active population.

A Socio-Ecological Vision

The vision of environmentalism and environmental education needs to be revisited in a context which has become multicultural. These are a few of the questions which should inform environmental education in revisiting its vision in light of significant demographic and political changes.

What is a socio-ecological vision of environmental education? What kind of society does it posit as an ideal and how is access to culturally authentic environmental education going to bring that preferred society to fruition? Does that social vision include justice for the earth as well as for people? Does it advocate sustainability and ecological ethics as well as the empowerment and transformation of human communities and human relationships?



Vision requires a discussion of leadership as well. A multicultural environmental education requires multicultural leadership. As in other areas of our increasingly diverse social life, authentic leadership means developing new models and social support for multicultural leadership.

PRINCIPLES OF A MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION®

What are some of the key ideas of multicultural environmental education? Three Circles Center would like to advance some preliminary ideas as a platform for continued discussion. We welcome your comments.

Each of the following principles is keyed into one of the layers discussed above, of access, authenticity and vision in environmental education.

A multicultural environmental education critiques the forces which have oppressed people as well as nature. To critique these forces means to seek their transformation through research, imagination and concerted action.

The environmental destruction of North America and the destruction of indigenous people on the continent are results of colonialism. That is, the colonization of North America marked the beginning of its environmental decline and resulted in the diaspora and genocide of numerous ethnic groups continuing to the present. This, perhaps, was the original act of environmental racism.

Biodiversity and cultural diversity are two sides of the same coin. To successfully resolve one we will have to address and resolve the other.

In order to develop more inclusive program models, a multicultural environmental education acknowledges that children may have different needs based upon and shaped by how and where they live.

Environmental education must challenge its elitist image of being for people living in certain areas such as suburbs and not for others living in highly industrialized or isolated rural areas or in the urban core.

The renewed interest in urban environmental education illustrates the extent to which environmental education has not fully concerned itself with the dynamic environmental imperatives of urban areas and their residents. Urban environmental education must now necessarily be multicultural in its perspective and content.

A multicultural environmental education illuminates the essential idea that all cultures have a relationship with the natural world which they and all others can draw upon for understanding and for inspiration.

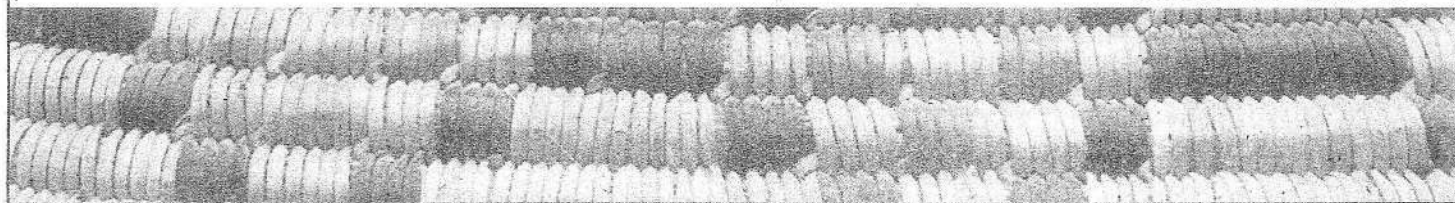
The natural environment is the "lebenswelt" of all cultures and an important source of cultural vitality. Cultural expressions of relationship with the natural world and the deep understanding of place which have allowed various cultures to thrive for thousands of years are essential missing pieces of the picture to which western environmentalism aspires.

If the ethical understanding environmental educators want to convey is a sense of universal responsibility for the Earth, then we have to acknowledge that valid cultural sources of knowledge and practice exist outside our own cultural context. To preach an environmental ethic from a single cultural perspective (our own) is to open ourselves to the charge of being "ecological imperialists," and rightly so.

A multicultural environmental education helps children become aware of, understand, accept and value other cultures and their environmental traditions.

Environmental educators must also become cultural workers, seeking to ensure the sur-

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Program Profile

XCEL

Cross-cultural Environmental Leadership Program

XCEL, a Cross-cultural Environmental Leadership Program of Audubon Canyon Ranch (ACR) and the National Audubon Society (NAS) / Richardson Bay Sanctuary is an innovative and culturally inclusive environmental education program for high school students in San Rafael, California. The much anticipated XCEL program has been a *long time comin.* Here's a brief history of our program.

Background

Audubon Canyon Ranch is a private nonprofit organization dedicated to environmental education, conservation and management of wildlife sanctuaries in northern California. Over the past 10 years the predominantly Caucasian staff and volunteers of ACR and the NAS have observed the student groups visiting their preserves grow increasingly diverse. In response to their changing student population, ACR has begun to take steps to strengthen its own diversity, and has established XCEL, a cross-cultural environmental leadership program for ethnically diverse youth. However, it was not without many years of struggle and growing pains that XCEL was born.

The primary factor that has led to this innovative program established in Marin County, a predominantly Caucasian community, is the understanding that a meaningful environmental movement in today's society must embrace the needs and issues of communities of color who have historically been left out by the mainstream environmental movement and dumped on (*literally*) by government and industry.

XCEL Profile

XCEL is a new and exciting vehicle by which ACR and NAS will address the needs and concerns of diverse communities in an effort to give greater relevance and broader meaning to a contemporary environmental movement by, and for, people of all cultures. XCEL will provide ongoing training and educa-

tion to a select number of culturally diverse high school students who bring various levels of experiences with natural science and outdoor education. The primary components of the program are: Natural Science, Urban Ecology, Cultural Inclusiveness, and Environmental Justice. The natural linkage between these components will be focused on throughout the program through an intensive summer camp training, year-long after-school activities and community projects. In turn, XCEL participants will apply their teaching and leadership skills while working with culturally diverse elementary school students during a natural history summer day-camp that XCEL will co-sponsor with ACR adult volunteers. These volunteers currently offer education programs to 4th and 5th graders throughout the Bay Area during the school year.

XCEL aims to promote leadership among culturally diverse youth by offering education in both traditional and contemporary environmentalism and by encouraging and supporting youth to become actively involved in leadership roles to address the needs of our culturally rich and diverse communities. XCEL will also provide exposure to higher education and career opportunities in Natural Science, Urban Ecology, Cultural Inclusiveness, and Environmental Justice. While XCEL students will greatly benefit from exposure to new horizons and opportunities, ACR staff, board and volunteers will also benefit from the opportunity to further their learning about issues of concern to communities of color. The ultimate goal is to build a cross-cultural alliance for a broader environmental movement.

by Cristina Valdez, XCEL Director

For more information on XCEL please call Cristina Valdez, XCEL Director at (415) 457-1394

Point of View

Environmental Justice: Enabling Whites To Be Effective Environmental Educators In A Multicultural Society

by Max Weintraub

This is an amended version of a speech given by Max Weintraub at the March 1994 Multicultural Environmental Education & Environmental Justice Workshop conducted by the District of Columbia Environmental Education Coalition.

Most environmental educators are White. Many of the people we serve are not. The environmental justice movement reflects our failure to bridge that gap and offers potential solutions.

Environmental justice is at the core of the relationship of humans to the environment. While traditional environmental education emphasizes how ecosystems operate in the absence of obvious human impacts, or about the negative impact of human activities on ecosystems, environmental justice recognizes that humans are a part of the natural world. The environmental justice movement grew out of the realization that traditional environmentalism was not serving the needs of people who were not Americans of European descent nor relatively wealthy.

Environmental justice is often misunderstood as solely addressing the disproportionate impact of environmental health hazards upon communities of color and low-income communities as a consequence of racism and classism. Yet, the Principles of Environmental Justice, adopted in 1991 by the consensus of 300 activists at the First National People Of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, reflect a much broader commitment. In fact, the first principle requires that complete ecosystems be maintained with no loss of biodiversity; a concept that guides much traditional environmental education. Considered together, the Principles provide a complete vision of how people may live in harmony with the environment. However, rather than giving an oversimplified account of the Principles, I urge you

to get a copy from the EPA Office of Environmental Justice and read them.

Because most environmental educators have failed to incorporate this larger vision of environment into curricula, we should not be surprised that many students reject the information we provide as irrelevant. I believe this challenge to environmental education must be addressed if environmental education is to remain relevant in a U.S. population that has a growing population of color and inequitable distribution of income.

If Whites, who are the people most likely to teach environmental education, have no background in environmental justice, do we at least have the potential to provide environmental education instruction that reflects an understanding of environmental justice?

My answer is a qualified "Yes." Qualified in that Whites can learn about environmental justice and can make choices that would result in the effective instruction of environmental education. However, this potential will often not be realized. Many Whites will choose not to take these actions since environmental justice poses a very real threat to White privilege and the choices associated with effective instruction of environmental education require that the power to teach be shared. Allow me to use an example from my own experience.

About five years ago, I lived in Berkeley, California. I possessed an arrogant, ignorant and common concern among White environmentalists about the lack of people of color involved in the environmental movement. The focus of this concern may be expressed as follows:

- 1) Whites care about the human-less/pristine environment.

Continued on following page

- 2) However, the population of people of color in the U.S. is growing.
- 3) Thus, if Whites want to save the environment, then we better get more people of color involved in the effort.

I responded to this reasoning by investigating environmental education outreach efforts in schools located in communities of color. I hoped that by organizing a speaker series of environmental professionals of color to accompany outreach in such a school, students of color would be more likely to pursue environmental careers.

I soon heard of the Inside/Out Academy. The Academy was an innovative environmental education program sponsored by American Youth Hostels at Parker Elementary School, a school in East Oakland with a predominantly African-American student population. The program agreed to the lecture series. Over the course of the year, ten professionals from universities and federal agencies volunteered to come to the school and speak to the students. The lecture series went very well and both students and speakers enjoyed the discussions.

At the same time, I began working for the local utility company as an energy auditor in low-income neighborhoods. I visited peoples' homes and advised them on how to lower their energy bills. I also began to understand the challenges some of the students at Parker faced in their neighborhoods and homes and why saving the whales might not top their list of concerns.

I listened as the program director used ecological metaphors to explain to students how to understand one's surroundings, one's neighborhood. Students in the Academy learned about the environmental justice movement. They developed a sense of where they fit in the world and an awareness of their relationship to the world beyond the one they saw daily. The Academy reinforced these messages by inviting student's families to participate. I began to learn how one's surroundings impact one's definition and understanding of environment.

Towards the end of the school year the program director, several parents, and myself took the students on a field trip. At five o'clock in the morning, two of the boys woke me up because they wanted to leave the dorm and walk outside. We soon came upon some deer. We sat and watched them graze. Later that day we returned to East Oakland. The boys returned not with a disbelief that they might get a chance to see the deer again (as is often the case with urban students taken on such field trips), but with plans to return sometime in the future. That was the power of the Academy's approach.

Shortly thereafter, I enrolled at one of the largest and best natural resource graduate schools in the country. When I shared my experience with students studying environmental education, all of whom were White, they were not receptive. I heard a number of excuses (and gave a number of responses). The Academy's efforts were

- 1) too labor-intensive (The Academy only required 1.5 paid personnel and volunteers this included parents, interested teachers, and college students),
- 2) too comprehensive (the "new" information about environmental justice is necessary to make environmental education relevant, and/or they were
- 3) simply unnecessary (so do you believe people of color are not concerned about the environment or that they are currently adequately represented?).

Most of these environmental educators-in-training did not see the need to require that people of color have at least some minimal involvement in teaching environmental education to students of color nor did they believe that environmental education needed to address concerns raised by the environmental justice movement. Two years ago these ideas were threatening. And they still are. They require sharing power with people of color - people environmental educators are trained to teach, not work with. And that is a MAJOR challenge for White environmental educators.

An even greater challenge, though, is for

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Research Notes

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Point of View Column

Carolyn T. White
130 School Street
Keene, NH 03431

Carolyn T. White is currently working on a master's project on environmental staff diversity for her Master of Science degree at Antioch New England Graduate School in Keene, NH. The title is "Change Agents Bridging the Environmental Justice and Traditional Environmental Movements: A Case Study in Attitudes." Ms. White plans to conduct six personal interviews with individuals from non-dominant cultures who have found a voice in both movements, thus making them the exception to the rule that only certain types of people work in the Environmental Justice Movement or in the traditional environmental movement. She calls her subjects "people with a foot in two cultures" who break down barriers. She defines them as visionaries who may lead the two movements into a more united force in the future.

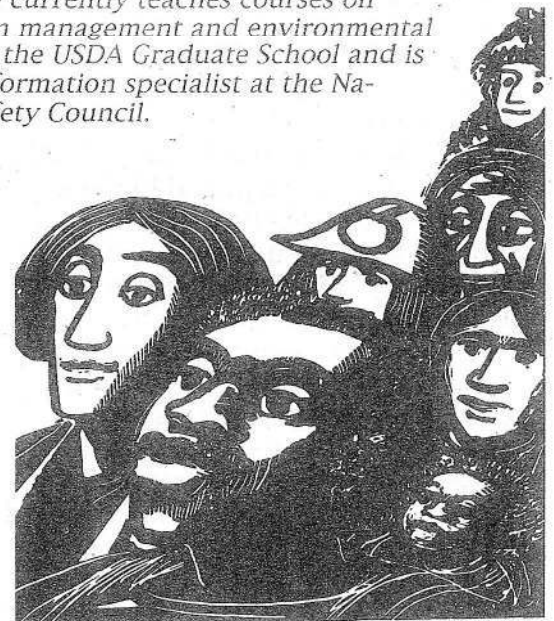
Ms. White has tailored her masters program at Antioch New England to focus specifically on environmental justice issues and more specifically on staff diversity. Last summer she worked with the national conservation organization the Trust for Public Land and developed a national diversity plan recommendation after conducting an organizational audit.

After finishing her course work at Antioch (which will include a course taught by Running-Grass this summer entitled "Diversifying Environmental Organizations", Ms. White will be a Scripps Fellow at the University of Michigan studying environmental journalism. She hopes to continue her research there with Michigan's innovative Natural Resources Department which has a strong environmental justice program.

White people to teach each other and hold each other accountable. If White people are to be effective environmental educators, we need to overcome our insecurities about discussing racism, understand White privilege, take responsibility for the role we individually have in perpetuating injustices that created a need for the environmental justice movement, and incorporate that accumulated knowledge into our efforts to provide environmental education. We can do it, and more importantly, we must, if environmental education is to be relevant in the United States in years to come.

Note: I have purposely chosen to contrast "People of Color" and "Whites" despite being fully cognizant that the pigment of one's hide is not an essential characteristic of one's behavior, intelligence or human interaction. My goal in perpetuating this insidious division by using these terms has been twofold. First, I want to make this article as accessible as possible to a broad audience. Second, I hope that by challenging people who recognize themselves as "White," we will reconsider what the term means and, in the context of the article, what unearned privileges accrue from its use. For those interested in investigating this issue in more depth, I recommend that you read the periodical "Race Traitor."

Max Weintraub received his M.S. in Environmental Advocacy from the University of Michigan in 1993. He currently teaches courses on ecosystem management and environmental justice at the USDA Graduate School and is a lead information specialist at the National Safety Council.



From "RE-SOURCES"

ronment and deal with environmental issues that are of concern to them.

Components of Community-Based Environmental Education Programs ***Community Involvement***

The community is the #1 priority. During the development of programs through to the implementation, the community should be involved, and it is the community that should make the final decisions. For example, after some conversation about local needs and concerns, a group of residents in a particular neighborhood may conclude that their children do not have enough to do on the weekends and tend to get into trouble on the streets. The residents decide, with input from an environmental educator, that they would like to set up an environmental outings program on Saturday mornings to provide an alternative for the neighborhood children. Not only does the program focus on the children participating, but it becomes a family program when parents and older brothers and sisters are asked to help as volunteers. Perhaps a local business helps out by donating food or drink for a picnic after the activity. Supplies are purchased in a local store to help generate business. Environmental education in this example serves a dual role. Not only is the environmental education message getting out, but the program is contributing to the community working together and families spending time together. This way, not only do the children learn, but other family members enjoy the same educational benefit of experiential learning. Therefore, reinforcement within the home and among family members helps to lead to sustainable environmentalism. It is precisely this type of programming, involving families in educational programs, that fits in very well with agendas at social service agencies (Durning 1989).

The Role of the Environmental Educator

Community-based programming places the environmental educator in a somewhat non-traditional role. To integrate environmental education into community development, the educator needs to have some experience and be enthusiastic about learning. Experiential

learning becomes a goal for the community and the educator as well. Because every community is unique, with individual needs and issues, each environmental education program will be different. The educator must be willing to listen to the community and to act as a resource rather than come in as an "expert." This is especially critical if the educator is an "outsider," because many times the community has learned to expect a patronizing approach. Trust in these types of working relationships takes time and commitment.

Most environmental educators are in this line of work because they are passionate about the natural environment and concerned about its preservation. They are interested in working in the "outdoor" classroom. When working in urban, community-based programs, one must realize that a great deal of time may be spent in urban neighborhoods, which are not always beautiful, are usually full of people, and represent an entirely different meaning of the word "wilderness." Educators need to be able to feel comfortable in urban spaces and to recognize the potential of such environments. An abandoned lot can become an environmental laboratory. Gardens can be cultivated in even the most unlikely spaces. Urban hikes can yield wonderful information about the cultures and the heritage of the community and its residents. People can learn a lot about plants by studying urban weeds.

This type of programming requires a large investment of time and energy in one place on the part of the environmental educator. It is not necessarily more time than, for example, a program that focuses on delivering one-hour presentations to children in different schools across a city. However, it is differently directed time. The educator is involved not only with the environmental programs, but with the community itself. There must be a sincere desire to learn what the needs of the residents are and how the community functions, as environmental issues blend with social, political, and economic concerns. Intensive work in one community can yield positive results. One environmental education program can turn into two or three after the educator has established a sense of trust with community residents. As communities begin to look at their urban neighborhoods more closely, they begin to see other areas that could use some work. They develop a sense of stewardship of their urban environments (Zorc 1983). That is a

key to sustainability, ensuring that programs will continue under the leadership of community residents.

Methods of Implementation

Environmental education programs can be implemented through established institutions such as social service agencies, churches, and schools or on a more grass-roots level with neighborhood groups, coalitions, or groups of families who live on the same street. Either way, the idea is to capitalize on existing strengths within the community and to work with leaders to develop programs based on the needs of residents. It requires immersion and participation to become educated about the community and how it works. For example, who are the "community leaders?" Sometimes so-called "community leaders," people designated as such by outsiders, local politicians, or a fraction of community residents are a real source of problems for many other residents. In other cases, it is the local government or local industry that represents a problem. Dealing with these types of issues requires experience and knowledge in community analysis and community development technique.

Once the educator has established ties within the community and feels sufficiently comfortable to begin working with residents to develop programs, the question of resources and curricular materials comes into play. Working with established institutions does not mean simply channeling programs or curricula through the system. Although it certainly is not necessary to think of creating new curricula for every new program that comes along, most materials are written for a Caucasian population. The educator involved has a responsibility to make sure that the curriculum used is culturally sensitive and relevant to the issues at hand. A large investment of time is needed to work with agencies and residents in program development and to integrate the program into the existing agenda.

Because this type of environmental education is somewhat unconventional in this country, the colleges and universities which offer environmental education programs need to make a concerted effort to include more community-based training for their students. One component of the training should focus on community analysis and community devel-

opment work. Educators interested in the field of environmental education need to know that there are alternatives to the traditional school-based programs. The inclusion of community-based programming in our EE agenda will take a commitment from players on all levels.

Goals for Community-Based Environmental Education Programs

- To generate goals for environmental education programs within the community, based on pertinent needs.
- To realize that "environmental education," depending on the needs of the community, can mean everything from household gardening programs to housing rehabilitation training for residents to help reduce utility bills.
- To create truly multicultural education which embraces the diversity of our people.
- To involve community agencies, institutions, families, and children so that residents will feel compelled to be the stewards of their urban environments and to create environmentally healthy and productive communities in which they have a sense of pride.
- To create a global, community-based strategy in environmental education that focuses on the basic needs of all human beings.

The idea of community-based environmental education programs is not a new one. It has existed in the world for a long time. It has been happening in this country under different names like the environmental justice movement, but the institutionalized EE community has passed over the idea in favor of what some see as a more efficient way to get the message out (Pulido 1991). However, we are at a critical stage in our development, and urban communities must be given more attention. The answer lies not in invading these communities with a pre-defined agenda, but in working with the residents of these communities and building on their strengths to create sustainable, effective programs which help to

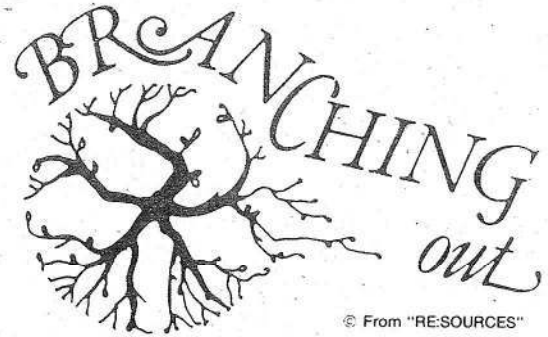
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Community-Based Environmental Education

educate people about their environment. We should learn something from so-called "developing" countries about the integration of community development strategy into environmental education programming. We should create a society-wide, environmental education agenda that brings all of the segments of our rich, diverse society to the table. We have a responsibility to do so.

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the first chapter of her Master's thesis which goes into greater detail about the process behind the development of community-based programs. For further information she can be contacted at:
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Research Notes

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This research project began with a curiosity about how healing nature might help heal humans. There is already lots of research that shows that experiences of nature, from looking at a picture, to gardening or being in the wilderness, has a positive effect on people. This project went a step further to explore what happens to people when they work to restore natural systems that have been damaged by human activity.

The early findings show that doing restoration allows people to be together in a small group outside in nature and experience themselves as a positive, contributing member of an ecosystem. As a result of this experience, people tend to feel better about themselves, proud of what they have contributed, happy about how much

they have learned, and hopeful about the future. Specifically, restoration helps people experience themselves as inter-related to other human and non-human beings, and able to have an effect on circumstances, even in other parts of their lives.

It appears that the structure of restoration projects is usually communal with a somewhat flexible hierarchy. There is an atmosphere of experimentation, curiosity and learning, and heightened respect for each individual as a contributor.

This allows each person to move at their own pace and find value in the experience for themselves, so that they move forward in their personal development, no matter what their age or circumstances.

The value of being together, working in nature for nature, seems particularly powerful. While this was a small study and these results are not conclusive, it is hoped that this information will give encouragement to all of us who are restoring nature, that as we care for the earth, we care for ourselves.

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Environmental Education for Environmental Justice

vival and enhancement of the natural world and the varied cultures it sustains. We must teach the values of diversity as well as practical ways of valuing diversity. In an increasingly diverse society, and one which is historically in conflict about diversity, we must mobilize our energies to create the conditions and institutions for a new society.

A multicultural environmental education promotes a society at peace with the natural world and itself. Such an education models its vision as part of charting a path to a society in the process of becoming healed, more inclusive and more just.

The process of "diversifying" environmental education is an essential prerequisite for becoming multicultural. We must become a profession with a vision and practices which model the multicultural society we are projecting as the preferable ideal. New models supportive of multicultural leadership are necessary.

A multicultural environmental education involves families and community institutions directly in the development and implementation of environmental education curricula and programs.

The responsibility for environmental education needs to be shared with families and communities who can provide a broader range of information on environmental issues than we have seen so far.

A multicultural environmental education affirms that, to achieve inclusiveness, community involvement at all levels—from the family to institutions like the church, social service agencies, business, etc.—need to participate in all phases of program development. This will result in more relevant and appropriate curricula and programs which communities own in new ways.

A multicultural environmental education affirms that—beyond development of environmental literacy—community empowerment and restoration are necessary steps and long term goals of our efforts.

A multicultural environmental education takes a planetary perspective, blending local and planetary environmental justice issues.

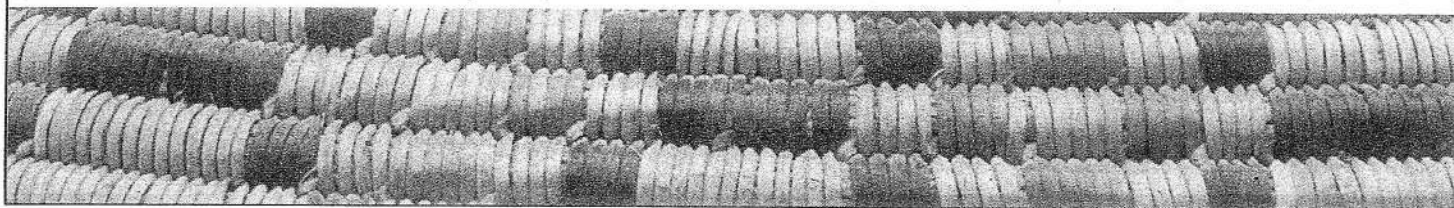
Environmental justice is increasingly being recognized as international in scope. That is, the differential effects of ecological degradation and environmental policy-making based on race, class and other factors is an international issue. Internationally, Third World countries are being destroyed because of post colonial economic and political policies, unsustainable models of development, and environmental exploitation in the form of toxic waste exports and careless resource extraction.

The challenge before us is to create an international environmental justice movement in which environmental education plays a significant role in creating awareness and a common interests among diverse cultures.

A multicultural environmental education recognizes that health of the ecosystem, communities and individuals are inextricably linked. Health, in a polluted world, is an environmental justice issue, and children in particular are susceptible to environmental threats.

A multicultural environmental education recognizes the impossibility of a "non-advocacy approach." It strongly aligns itself with the struggle for environmental justice, a struggle which, when won, will benefit all people regardless of cultural background.

Running-Grass is the Executive Director and Founder of Three Circles Center.



The Multicultural Technical Assistance Project: A Model for Sustaining Multicultural Change in Environmental Education Programs

In 1994, Three Circles Center approached the San Francisco Foundation, a noted giver of technical assistance funds, with some insights into how environmental education programs change and what resources they require to support their efforts. The result of those conversations led to the funding of the Multicultural Technical Assistance Project, MTAP. The purpose of MTAP is to support Bay Area environmental education programs in their efforts to incorporate multicultural issues and perspectives into their programs. Our consulting experience has shown us that programs can benefit from peer support and acknowledgment, identification of significant resources and supportive and visionary leadership. MTAP was designed to provide these ingredients of successful multicultural change.

To participate in MTAP, programs around the Bay Area were invited to submit an application to Three Circles Center. Detailed applications were a discovery process which also assisted programs to document and assess their efforts in making multicultural change. Applications were then evaluated on a number of criteria. Basically we were looking for programs "poised for change:" programs which could identify the pivotal factors which were barriers to their efforts and which, when overcome, were confident of their ability to move forward along the path they had set out for themselves. Ten Bay Area programs were accepted to participate.

The technical assistance was comprised of a series of three, eight hour workshops on topics which the participating programs agreed were pivotal to their progress:

- Building and Developing a Diverse Staff
- Developing Successful Relationships with Diverse Communities
- Multicultural Environmental Education

Prior to each workshop participants wrote a detailed assessment of their efforts in that area. From the applications and their self-assessments the workshop agenda was formed and materials and resources collected. The workshops were interactive and participatory. Participants shared their experiences and acted as peer consultants for each other. The groups bonded as peer professionals commit-

ted to multicultural change in their settings and in the field of environmental education in general.

Each workshop had an action planning component in which participants developed a simple series of next steps for their efforts based on the workshop experience and the resources made available to them. These were shared in the group to develop a feeling of peer accountability.

During the two month period after the workshops, participants came back together twice to share their challenges and successes with facilitating multicultural change in their programs. Here are comments from two participants:

"We're dedicated to making our programs more multicultural in terms of staff, curriculum, and participants, and MTAP was valuable in providing us with support and inspiration. The action plan we developed during an MTAP activity helped us focus our program goals, and many of these goals have now been reached. MTAP also provided a valuable opportunity to network with other organizations." - Carl Grimm, San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners (SLUG)

"I participated in MTAP before I worked at the Lindsay Museum, so I found it very useful, upon arriving at the museum, to be able to immediately place my work there in the context of environmental education and multicultural environmental education. MTAP gave me the tools to assess where this institution is in terms of its readiness to begin addressing the goals of diversifying programs, audiences and staff. It was also great connecting with my colleagues in the Bay Area who have worked on these issues on a variety of levels. ... I appreciate the work of the Three Circles Center — it's wonderful to have a center that works on these issues in the Bay Area, in the state, and nationally, that can serve as a resource for our work at the museum." - Jennifer Bevington, Lindsay Museum, Walnut Creek, CA

by Running-Grass

Postscript: Environmental Education and Environmental Justice: What's Law Got To Do With It?

Verdese Carter Park and the African-American Development Association in Oakland, CA.

The area around 98th Ave. in East Oakland, California, the Elmhurst District, is comprised of neighborhoods of African-Americans, Latinos, American Indians and recent Asian immigrants. At the corner of 98th and Bancroft there is Verdese Carter Park which is now closed and surrounded by chain link fence. The park sits on the former site of a battery factory which operated for 50 years, from 1912-1976. In 1978, the site began its life as a park. The park was closed that same year for "clean up" and reopened in 1979. It was closed again in the spring of 1993 for continued cleanup.

Because the site was inadequately cleaned up before it was given to the City of Oakland for a park, lead, and probably other contaminants, dispersed throughout the park site and into the surrounding neighborhood. Possibly thousands of children have played in the park since it opened. There was considerable community opposition to the siting of a park there for a variety of reasons, including some local knowledge of its prior land-use. No one, least of all the children, knew or suspected they were playing in heavily contaminated soil and contaminated puddles of water when it rained.

At a recent monthly meeting of neighborhood residents, organized by the African-American Development Association, many senior citizens and middle aged home owners asked insightful questions about the nature of lead, how it enters the body, accumulates and impacts people, especially children. They also asked about remedies of a legal nature. What was a class action suit? Who would clean up their homes and yards? What was the liability of the company—long swallowed up in buyouts—for contamination of the site? What was the liability of the city for constructing a children's park on a site that was not cleaned up adequately when the city assumed ownership?

The African-American Development Association, based in Oakland, plays a major role in bringing the park and its conditions to the attention of the neighborhood as well as bringing the neighborhood to the attention of the relevant agencies such as the EPA and the Alameda County Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. Education is a major activity of the Association. Both Allen Edson and Rafeeq Naji, co-directors of the Association are lead assessors and inspectors. In those roles they have a great deal of contact with residents of the district and are

able to educate families about lead hazards. Recently, they have given leadership to the community encouraging public participation in the development of a community vision for the park as plans are made for its reopening.

Environmental Education in Environmental Justice Contexts

The situation at Verdese Carter Park, which is similar to hundreds of situations around the country, is a interdisciplinary problem. Technical issues such as those scientific ones pertaining to lead and lead poisoning as well as legal issues, are very much on people's minds. The involvement of professionals from the EPA law clinics is engaging the residents in a process of mutual education. Residents are learning about environmental issues with immediate and on-going impact on their quality of life. They are learning about laws and legal processes which they may never have thought of—not to mention call upon—if they had lived in a neighborhood less at risk. Lawyers and technical personnel are learning the facts of life from the inside of frequently forgotten and disempowered communities.

It is clear that this type of education, spanning disciplines, while not environmental education as many of us might immediately recognize, is in fact an education residents are getting about their environment. The Tbilisi statement suggests that this educational experience is actually environmental education at its best, inclusive, interdisciplinary and facilitating awareness, understanding and action.

Traditional environmental education has isolated itself from participation in such educational and eminently practical endeavors such as this one in a heavily—and disproportionately—impacted neighborhood in East Oakland. Urban environmental issues and the impacted populations, especially those of the urban core, are not the issues or populations central to traditional environmental education. Instead, it has concerned itself with issues such as natural resources, wildlife, recycling and other conservation/preservation issues. Even programs and curricula which are concerned with urban environmental education generally do not pertain to these issues or engage residents on topics such as those encountered in the Elmhurst District.

As a result of the absence of environmental educators from contexts such as the one described above,

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What's The Law Got To Do With It?

lawyers and technical scientists, often mediated by community relations personnel, are providing specialized information to communities but may not recognize they are doing environmental education.

Nevertheless, traditional environmental education has a role to play in the urban core, an essential one not being fulfilled by lawyers and other specialized actors. Such specialized actors have something to gain by being introduced to the environmental education aspect of the work they are performing, which often circumscribed by arbitrary rules and political considerations. And urban populations have a need to recognize the linkages between urban lifestyles and natural resources and cycles in a way that expands their ability to make a difference in their communities.

Profile of the Environmental Law Community Clinic

The Environmental Law Community Clinic, directed by Anne Simon, occupies a small storefront on Shattuck directly across the street from the famous La Peña. It is the Clinical site for students at Boalt Law School of the University of California, Berkeley. Second year Boalt students work on the Clinic's cases, which are heavily focused on environmental justice cases. These cases include facility siting, community control of air pollution and clean up cases such as the one at Verdese Carter Park described above. Two other recent cases in which they assisted, however, are of special interest to environmental educators.

San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners (SLUG)

The first involved legal research. The San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners (SLUG) was seeking access to city owned park land in urban core areas to set up community gardens. Specifically, they were interested in setting up an "urban farm" on a site in Lower St. Mary's Park. There, local youth would engage in bio-intensive organic gardening. The urban farm and such community gardens have been greatly utilized by SLUG as sites for community participation/building, economic development and environmental education. SLUG wanted to know about the legal issues surrounding such access, liability, permit issues and their ability to sell the produce they raised. The Environmental Law Community Clinic was able to do the research necessary which led to the use of such lands for community gardens. The Clinic provide examples of people working on public lands who were operating enterprises and was able to clarify permitting issues.

San Francisco Estuary Challenge Program

The second was a case in which an environmental educator, Mandi Billinge, working with the San Francisco Estuary Action Challenge Program began a restoration project with two Highlands Elementary fifth grade classrooms on Kirker Creek, which had been heavily polluted by a local industry.

At the same time, Baykeeper, an organization which acts as a watchdog for pollution in and around the San Francisco Bay, brought to light the pollution in Kirker Creek, which was reportedly being discharged by Praxair into a ditch which flowed into Kirker Creek. Baykeeper sent a letter of intent to sue to Praxair and then held public hearings. Mandi was invited to testify, and spoke about the value of the creek to the community and to the children. Shortly after, Praxair applied for a permit to divert the effluent from the Creek to the Delta Diablo Sanitation District.

Baykeeper was still concerned, however, about the effects of diverting the water, and decided to pursue the issue through administrative means, rather than through litigation. At this point, they requested the help of the Environmental Law Community Clinic. Students from the Clinic wrote letters, spoke at hearings, and in general represented Baykeeper, which was attempting to block Delta Diablo's issuance of the permit. As a result of the Clinic's efforts, the situation had a positive resolution. Delta Diablo revised their ordinances to include the consideration of environmental effects resulting from their permits. Another positive outcome is that Praxair offered to become involved in Mandi's creek restoration project, and in fact gave \$8000 to support her program during the 1994-1995 school year. Praxair also began a native plant nursery at their plant; the plants will later be replanted at the creek.

Mandi said the ELCC, along with Baykeeper, was very helpful in "acting as a catalyst to bring to light the pollution problems surrounding Kirker Creek." In addition to doing creek cleanups, her students are also growing native plants from seed, and are studying the differences in the level of maintenance between the upstream and the downstream areas of the creek. The downstream section is located in a low-income neighborhood, where many of the kids live; the upstream section is closer to the school and in a more middle class neighborhood, and is much better maintained.

These are two examples of how environmental education programs which had environmental justice aspects were able to utilize an environmental law clinic to enhance and accomplish their educational goals.

by Running-Grass
research assistance: Julie Totaro, Ashley Eimers