

University of Montana

ScholarWorks at University of Montana

Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, &
Professional Papers

Graduate School

1994

The Senior Environment Corps

Gwen Jacobs

The University of Montana

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd>

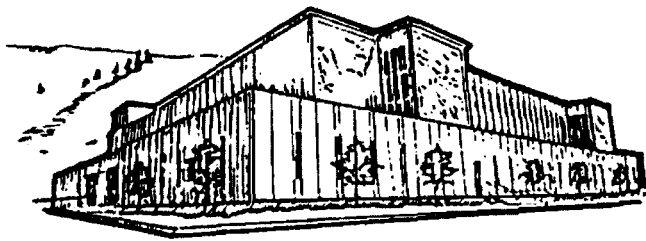
Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Jacobs, Gwen, "The Senior Environment Corps" (1994). *Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers*. 9205.

<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/9205>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.



Maureen and Mike MANSFIELD LIBRARY

The University of
Montana

Permission is granted by the author to reproduce this material in its entirety, provided that this material is used for scholarly purposes and is properly cited in published works and reports.

**** Please check "Yes" or "No" and provide signature****

Yes, I grant permission

No, I do not grant permission

Author's Signature

Date: 4/29/94

Commercial purposes or financial gain may be undertaken
without the author's explicit consent.

THE SENIOR ENVIRONMENT CORPS

By

Gwen Jacobs

B.A., Duke University, Durham, North Carolina 1989

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

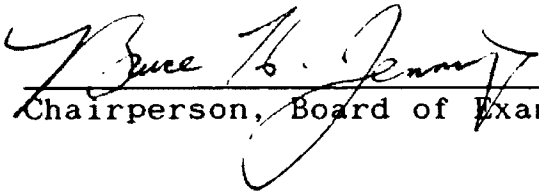
for the degree of

Master of Science in Environmental Studies

University of Montana

1994

Approved by



Chairperson, Board of Examiners



Dean, Graduate School

May 11, 1994
Date

UMI Number: EP40007

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI EP40007

Published by ProQuest LLC (2013). Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.

Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code



ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

Contents

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	2
1. The Senior Environment Corps	5
2. Decentralization in the Environmental Movement	12
3. Diversification in the Environmental Movement	20
4. Rethinking the Social Structure	37
5. Critique of the Senior Environment Corps	53

Introduction

Older adults offer an enormous, often under-utilized human resource to assist with environmental protection. Representing roughly one-quarter of the U.S. population, individuals over the age of 55 often have the skills, experience, time, and commitment necessary to make a significant contribution in dealing with environmental problems. Yet, no systematic national effort has been established to promote older adult involvement in environmental action. The Senior Environment Corps may, in part, fill this gap.

The Senior Environment Corps was established in Missoula, Montana as a national demonstration project in July 1992. In affiliation with the local Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), the Corps has worked closely with 26 Western Montana environmental organizations to fill their program needs with capable, qualified older adult volunteers. The Corps has also pursued its own environmental projects based on community needs.

As a national demonstration project, the Senior Environment Corps model in Missoula has been shared with other cities to encourage similar programs nationwide. Just as organizations, such as the Student Conservation Association, have targeted young adults, the Senior Environment Corps can focus attention on the great potential

for older adult participation in environmental protection. In this way, the Corps encourages a broader base of involvement in the environmental movement.

As a new organization, the Senior Environment Corps intended to be thoughtful and progressive in promoting environmental action among older adults. With some irony, then, the Corps has largely achieved its objective while also experiencing a number of the pitfalls common to the environmental movement. Among them, the Corps has been unintentionally centralized and hierarchical, homogenous, gender biased, and limited in its leadership opportunities. The Corps, like most environmental organizations, has also failed to focus attention on the underlying problems in our culture that contribute to environmental degradation in the first place. The Senior Environment Corps' experience demonstrates that even well-intentioned organizations will suffer from these pitfalls unless the organization first initiates a coherent plan to avoid them.

Chapter 1 of this paper will describe the Senior Environment Corps in greater detail. Chapters 2 and 3 will discuss in a general manner pitfalls common to the environmental movement, namely that the movement is highly centralized and lacking in diversity among its participants. Chapter 4 will discuss the broader context of the androcentric dominant social paradigm which leads to environmental abuses in the general society, as well as many

of the failings in the environmental movement. Lastly, Chapter 5 will critique the Senior Environment Corps' accomplishments based upon ideals offered in the previous three chapters. The paper will conclude that if future generations of environmental organizations hope to be more successful than previous generations, they must formulate and adhere to a coherent plan for avoiding the pathologies common to the present environmental movement.

Chapter 1

The Senior Environment Corps

"Today, environmental concerns are too important to be left to environmentalists alone. We must actively engage all sectors of our society."¹ One of the most important sectors will be the growing population of older adults, a population which is currently underrepresented in the environmental movement's focus on involving school-age children and young adults. The Senior Environment Corps in part fills the gap between older adults and environmental action by linking older adult volunteers with community-wide environmental needs.

The Senior Environment Corps recognizes that older adults offer diverse skills and experiences to environmental protection. Many are retired or semi-retired from careers in teaching, government, law, carpentry, business, bookkeeping, and more. Still others have no formal training or field, but do have a commitment to community service and concern for the environment.

The volunteer efforts of these individuals provide a valuable resource for the environmental movement. As the findings of the Conservation Leadership Project indicate, thousands of environmental organizations in the U.S. have no paid staff and rely entirely on volunteers. Organizers of the Project add: "it seems reasonable to assume that at

least half of the remainder could not survive without their active volunteers."² Mary Fuchs, an 81-year old volunteer historian with the Izaak Walton League, concurs claiming that older adults are especially beneficial to the environmental movement because the movement's issues are broad and require input from individuals with experience across a wide range of fields. Older adults find environmentalism a good way to apply old skills in a new area, she states.³ Indeed, older adults often find volunteering an attractive way to participate in their fields without the rigid scheduling and financial dependence characteristic of their working years.⁴

Volunteerism in general among older adults has grown considerably during the last several decades, in large part because they are living longer and retiring earlier.⁵ Combined with the fact that they now often have fewer children than in the past, older adults are experiencing a longer period of their lives free of work and family obligations.⁶ In fact, this population has been identified as "one of the most fertile areas for future recruitment of volunteers."⁷ The U.S. Department of Labor found that in 1965, only 11% of those over the age of 65 performed volunteer work. By 1990, that figure had jumped to 41%.⁸ Between 1980 and 1990, participation for those over age 70 in the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) increased

from 45% to 66%, indicating that older adult volunteers are also remaining active longer.⁹

The older adult volunteers now vital to many community organizations, such as the Red Cross, area hospitals, public schools, libraries, government offices, aging services, youth programs, and others differ in some respects from volunteers in the past. They dispel both stereotypes of older adult volunteers and the "just a volunteer" mentality. Many have competition for their time and are clear about what they want to do and how much time they would like to commit. They are accustomed to office settings and professional management, wanting to make a needed contribution in an atmosphere where their contributions are respected. They are not interested in "filling time," but in engaging in activities that have meaning to them and fulfill personal needs for social interaction, exposure to new interests, a way to utilize skills and expertise, self-worth, and remaining physically active.¹⁰

There can be little question that the potential for older adult volunteers to make a significant contribution to environmental protection is enormous considering, for example, that RSVP now has a national membership of 430,000 volunteers.¹¹ Unfortunately, however, one criticism often leveled at older adults is their complicity in many of today's environmental problems. The conservation ethic bred of necessity during the Great Depression exploded in a post-

World War II celebration of consumerism and technological innovation. In 1962, Rachel Carson lamented that 500 new chemicals were being produced yearly.¹² Carson might have foreseen that, today, that number has grown to more than 3000.¹³ It may even be argued that today's dominant social paradigm (DSP) was perpetuated, and perhaps encouraged, by today's older adults.

This chapter will treat these arguments as immaterial. Suffice it to say, as did one older adult volunteer: "At our ages, we can appreciate that we're probably at fault for many environmental problems...we have a responsibility to correct them."¹⁴ At the same time, younger generations continue to support and profit from the current DSP, even in the face of its now undeniable environmental and social impacts. The responsibility for environmental degradation is therefore intergenerational, as should be environmental reforms.

The list below summarizes the accomplishments of the Senior Environment Corps in its first 18 months of development:

- o The Senior Environment Corps works with 26 local environmental organizations linking older adults with volunteer positions.
- o At any given time, more than two dozen volunteers are actively engaged in environmental projects.
- o The Corps' volunteers are diverse in their interests, skills, and working experiences. They are retired or semi-retired from careers in accounting, carpentry, teaching, homemaking, chemistry, forestry, government, real estate, office assistance, business, journalism,

real estate, office assistance, business, journalism, and more.

- o Volunteer activities have ranged from public school presentations, to gardening, research, mailings, ticket sales, water quality monitoring, office assistance, artwork, trail maintenance, computer work, and others.
- o Independent Senior Environment Corps initiatives are providing the Missoula Food Bank with fresh produce for low-income families and assisting the Missoula City/County Health Department with a survey and public education on residential woodburning.
- o The Corps has been profiled in numerous local print media, including the *Missoulian*, the *Kaimin*, the *Independent*, the *Volunteer Times*, *Golden Star News*, and *Montana Senior Citizens News*.
- o The Senior Environment Corps has formed a major media partnership with KECI T.V. KECI featured the Corps in three news stories, three public service announcements, and in individual guest appearances.
- o The Corps has appeared in live interviews on KPAX T.V. and on KUFM radio.
- o Representatives of the Corps have made conference presentations on the Missoula model for the Governor's Conference on Aging in Missoula, the Environmental Alliance for Senior Involvement in Washington, D.C., the National Association of RSVP Directors in New Orleans, and for the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging and the Tri-Regional Conference of ACTION in San Francisco.
- o Grant funding to support the completion of a self-sufficient national demonstration project has been obtained through the U.S. EPA and through the Montana Governor's Council on Community Service.
- o The Senior Environment Corps is distributing its workbook to interested individuals and agencies across the country.
- o Lastly, the local environment has clearly benefited from the contributions of Senior Environment Corps volunteers, from the retired engineer who reviewed EPA Superfund documents for a local non-profit, to the crew of volunteers who spent Earth Day 1993 picking up litter along the banks of the Clark Fork River.

The Senior Environment Corps has largely fulfilled its objective to increase the involvement of older adults in environmental protection. At the same time, the Corps has experienced a number of the pitfalls common to the environmental movement, illustrating these failings in the microcosm of its day to day operations. Chapter 2 will discuss one such pitfall in its larger context within the environmental movement. Namely, the movement has created a highly centralized atmosphere in which visibility and authority have concentrated at the top.

Endnotes

1. Snow, Donald, ed. Voices from the Environmental Movement. (Washington: Island Press, 1992), p. ix.
2. Snow, p. 6.
3. Lorenz, Jack. "Developing the Complete Volunteer" from Voices from the Environmental Movement, Donald Snow, ed. (Washington: Island Press, 1992), p. 209.
4. Chambre, Susan M. "Volunteerism by Elders: Past Trends and Future Prospects." The Gerontologist. v.33 (1993), p. 226.
5. Hey, Robert P. "How the Faces of Voluntarism are Aging in America." The Christian Science Monitor, December 5, 1988, p. 7.
6. Chambre, p. 223.
7. Hey, p. 7.
8. Chambre, p. 221.
9. Chambre, p. 221.
10. Harris, Jim. Director, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Missoula Aging Services, Missoula, Montana.
11. "Americorps: Learn and Serve America." The Corporation for National and Community Service, Washington, DC, 1994.

12. Carson, Rachel. Silent Spring. (New York: Fawcett World Library, 1962), p. 17.
13. Milbrath, Lester W. Environmentalists: Vanguard for a New Society. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), p. 13.
14. Senior Environment Corps focus group. December 1, 1993, Missoula, Montana.

Chapter 2

Decentralization in the Environmental Movement

Visibility and authority have often coalesced at the top of the environmental movement in what has been referred to as the "Group of Ten" mainstream national organizations. In reaction, local grassroots organizations have increasingly pressured for decentralization, enabling them to address environmental issues more autonomously and according to local beliefs and desired outcomes.

The Group of Ten includes the Sierra Club, the Wilderness Society, the National Audubon Society, Natural Resources Defense Council, the National Wildlife Federation, the Izaak Walton League, Defenders of Wildlife, the Environmental Defense Fund, National Parks and Conservation Association, and the Environmental Policy Institute. During the 1980's, these mainstream environmental groups responded to hostile federal environmental policies with a period of re-entrenchment.¹ To gain entry in the policy arena, they professionalized, promoting legal and technical expertise, lobbying, litigation, and bureaucratization. They adopted a "corporate" structure and demeanor.² Membership swelled, and funding became a top priority. During this same period, the mainstream was embarrassed by the grassroots' lack of sophistication; it threatened the mainstream's "new found respectability as reasonable negotiators."³ When issues

became technical and complex, as they did with the 1990 Clean Air Act, grassroots groups were often alienated from the policy process and "lost in the arcane shuffle among the experts."⁴

Distrust and resentment festered among local environmental groups who felt that the mainstream was too willing to compromise and to "cut a deal." Every day that the Clean Air Act was being negotiated, one group asserted, the Act was getting weaker.⁵ Another group charged that the mainstream expects to win when they do battle, "although their definition of winning almost always entails losing something for the environment."⁶

At the same time, national organizations frequently accused the grassroots of throwing itself myopically into preserving a tributary while the whole watershed was being destroyed. Compromise and flexibility are necessary tools in working on larger issues, they reasoned. Yet, the grassroots bristled at statements like the following from Sierra Club Chairman Michael McCloskey: "You do better not having grand plans...Instead, you constantly redefine your approach as you go along, depending on the issue and the opponent, making deals as needed." The grassroots labelled this approach "muddling through."⁷ David Brower, former executive director of the Sierra Club, hotly condemns muddling through. "We're trying to be insiders, to negotiate...We're being taken out to lunch by high-level

executives," he asserts. "You're not going to make these changes by going to lunch. You're going to make them by developing a power relation from the grassroots."⁸

A collision ensued during the mid-1980's between national and local environmental groups. As a result, emphasis within the environmental movement shifted locally. Feeling co-opted by the Group of Ten, local activists sought greater control over the tactics and goals of environmental issues which they were increasingly determined to define and address at the local level.⁹ In turn, the relationship between nationals and locals grew more contractual than inspirational, centered, for example, on joint citizen suits or fights for legislation.¹⁰

However, the shift was inevitable as the environmental movement matures to encompass competing environmental issues, the immediacy of most environmental problems, and increasingly complex local issues. Centralized, national organizations simply cannot respond to all of these needs. Jack Lorenz, executive director of the Izaak Walton League, concedes that "no one likes to admit that we are still a clumsy movement, a movement largely unprepared to tackle the increasingly complex problems facing us."¹¹ These problems include such localized issues as groundwater and air quality, waste disposal, habitat destruction, and open space.

One response to the complexity is the "niche theory" introduced by Jim Norton, the Wilderness Society's southwest regional director. Norton claims that, like the niches organisms occupy in ecological communities, so too environmental groups occupy niches in a complex society.¹² Niches allow for specialization, a feature most suited to local organizations. National organizations and government agencies are often only "dimly aware" of pressing local issues.¹³ In fact, lawmakers often rely on local environmentalists to provide the information they need to craft legislation that will be area-specific in preventing pollution or protecting natural areas.¹⁴ As Nathaniel Reed, former assistant secretary of the Department of Interior, asserts, he was able to make a better case for saving places such as the New River in North Carolina and the Meramec River in St. Louis because, like the locals, he and his staff made the effort to canoe the rivers and walk the trails. "We knew them intimately," he stated.¹⁵

There can be no question that the grassroots is swelling as the emphasis shifts locally in the environmental movement. The best directory of conservation organizations in the United States lists almost 3000 environmental groups. However, the findings of the Conservation Leadership Project suggest that the actual number may be closer to 10,000.¹⁶ As Peter Borelli, former editor of *Amicus Journal*, attests, "If the growth among the nationals has been robust [up from

four million members in 1980 to seven million in 1987], the growth at the local level has been explosive."¹⁷

Now Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt claimed in 1990 that "power is being regenerated in the grassroots. Just as the Civil Rights Movement began at the neighborhood lunch counter, this new environmental movement is beginning at the neighborhood pond."¹⁸ David Brower believes that the time is ripe for a shift to the grassroots, what he labels the "new guard." He states: "The new guard...provides the constant new breath people are craving, the freshness of innovative tactics, strategies, demands, and resolutions" bred of having watched "the gentle attempt to accommodate larcenous attacks on the Earth."¹⁹

One example of the new guard is Earth First!, founded in the early 1980's as a result of profound frustration with "business as usual" in the environmental movement. The catalytic event was a U.S. Forest Service initiative to designate new wilderness areas. In its resulting RARE II study, the Forest Service set aside just 15 million acres of "rock and ice" of the 80 million roadless acres remaining on Forest Service lands. Howie Wolke, who would go on to create Earth First! participated in the RARE II survey in a moderate, reasonable, professional way, he claimed, with data, statistics, maps, and graphs of Wyoming roadless areas. But, he asserts, his work was thrown aside; "That's

what led to [the founding of] Earth First! more than anything else."²⁰

The new guard has even appeared *within* the Group of Ten as frustrated local groups sometimes splinter away from their national parent organizations to assert their own agendas. For example, in 1993 the Bozeman, Montana-based chapter of the Sierra Club publicly endorsed the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act (NREPA), an alternative piece of wilderness legislation, despite opposition from the national arm of the Sierra Club. When Sierra's national headquarters quickly issued a gag order to the Bozeman group, one local activist retorted, "I don't function well with a sock in my mouth," and the group continued its endorsement of NREPA while circumventing the gag order.²¹

Ironically, this collision between national and local, or mainstream and grassroots, groups can be useful in the short-term, even while contentious. The emergence of more radical environmental groups sometimes softens the image of the mainstream. Radical groups "take the heat," opening the way for the mainstream to negotiate.²² As Earth First! co-founder Dave Foreman explains, "Industry considers mainline environmentalists to be radical until they get a taste of radical activism. Suddenly the soft-sell of the Sierra Club and other white-shirt-and-tie eco-bureaucrats becomes much more attractive and worthy of serious negotiation."²³ Hence, when a grassroots environmental group lobbies

vociferously for 16.3 million acres of wilderness protection, as has the Montana-based Alliance for the Wild Rockies, it creates a legislative setting in which some lesser amount of wilderness protection looks like an attractive compromise to legislators and the national environmental organizations.

Unfortunately, such compromise and "reasonable negotiation" will tend to occur at the expense of the grassroots group that originally championed a greater degree of environmental protection. The ensuing alienation may only serve to further exacerbate tensions between the nationals and the grassroots and to heighten the drive to decentralize the environmental movement. However, as Chapter 3 will discuss, the environmental movement must address more than wilderness legislation and decentralization. The movement must surmount another common pitfall and diversify in its issue agenda, leadership, and participation.

Endnotes

1. Snow, Donald, ed. Voices from the Environmental Movement. (Washington: Island Press, 1992), p. 86.
2. Bullard, Robert D. Dumping in Dixie. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), p. 106.
3. Snow, p. 87.
4. Snow, p. 93.
5. Hager, George. "Closed-door Talks on Clean Air Anger Environmental Groups." Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, v.48 (February 10, 1990), p. 386.

6. Scarce, Rik. Eco-Warriors. (Chicago: The Noble Press, Inc., 1990), p. 7.
7. Scarce, p. 15.
8. Scarce, p. 20.
9. Hinds, Cathy, Lanny Roy and Evelyn Williams. "From the Front Lines of the Movement for Environmental Justice." Social Policy, v.22 (Spring 1992), p. 13.
10. Borelli, Peter, ed. Crossroads: Environmental Priorities for the Future. (Washington: Island Press, 1988), p. 17.
11. Snow, p. 213.
12. Scarce, p. 26.
13. Snow, p. 43.
14. "Green Goes Grassroots." The Christian Science Monitor, January 12, 1993, p. 10.
15. Snow, p. 45.
16. Snow, p. 25.
17. Borelli, p. 10.
18. Painton, Priscilla. "Greening from the Roots Up." Time, April 23, 1990, p. 76.
19. Scarce, p. ix.
20. Scarce, p. 23.
21. Reese, Joel. "Sierra Club Issues Gag Order." The Independent (November 12, 1993), p. 4.
22. Scarce, p. 26.
23. Foreman, Dave and Bill Haywood, eds. Ecodefense: A Field Guide to Monkeywrenching. (Tucson: Ned Ludd Books, 1985), p. 22.

Chapter 3

Diversification in the Environmental Movement

As the Sierra Club asserts (or perhaps seeks to convince itself), the era of an American environmental movement dominated by male leaders and by the interests of white people is over.¹ The environmental movement is receiving pressure not only to decentralize, as discussed in Chapter 2, but to diversify in its leadership and participation. "Manstream" environmentalism must become more accurately "mainstream"² while "Not in my backyard" (NIMBY) is being replaced by "Not in *anybody's* backyard."³ In this way, diversification will include greater numbers of women leaders, as well as greater participation from the disenfranchised working classes, the inner-city poor, and the rural poor, communities which are often disproportionately minority.⁴

Women work passionately in innumerable environmental organizations. They research, write, march, debate, take minutes, organize, tend the books, talk at public hearings, file suits, and canvass neighborhoods, but these women infrequently hold leadership positions. Critics may contend that environmental organizations focus on science, a field statistically dominated by men. Hence, men disproportionately hold leadership positions. However, this explanation ignores the true barrier which prevents greater

numbers of women from assuming leadership positions: the image of leadership is dominated by androcentric values.

Qualities associated with leadership are most closely aligned with "masculine" traits. The image of a leader, like that of men, is most typically independent, aggressive, competent, and logical.⁵ A leader must be businesslike, methodical, pragmatic, and scientific.⁶ In contrast, the traits associated with women include: emotional, sensitive, nurturing, and expressive.⁷ While the image of men is likely to be task-oriented, structured, and focused on things, the image of women is more generally people-oriented and conscious of process.⁸

By themselves, words like logical, independent, nurturing and emotional have no inherent value. It is the value *attached* to the words that creates a situation in which "masculine" qualities dictate a role of rationality and power while "feminine" qualities dictate a role of conformity and obedience.⁹ One seldom hears an accolade referring to an expressive leader or a sensitive leader because these qualities are not among the most highly valued in men or in leaders. Traditional feminine qualities have been omitted from the image of leadership, not because they lack value, but because Western patriarchal thought refuses to recognize their value. Moreover, what have come to be associated as masculine versus feminine traits have no biological basis; they represent social constructs. "The

attributes that Western society considered normal and natural for women and men...were in fact created by social pressures, in short, by what psychologists called 'conditioning'."¹⁰

The androcentric bias in the qualities associated with leadership results in role strain for women leaders. In other words, women may fear the image and repercussions of appearing too masculine, of being labeled bossy, pushy, cold, and unfeminine.¹¹ Assertive behavior in men becomes bossy behavior in women, and aggressiveness becomes overdomineering.¹² In this way, men may perpetuate, and even promote, role strain by regarding a woman leader as an "aberration" and as less qualified than a man.¹³

Such contradictions and wavering expectations generate self-consciousness as women struggle to present themselves as leaders while maintaining the elusive characteristics of femininity.¹⁴ To relieve the conflicting pressures of leadership and womanhood, women often perceive themselves as less dominant and less assertive to avoid the inner conflict between their roles as leaders and their personal sense of femininity.¹⁵ Women's self-consciousness may manifest itself as deference, conceding a point, avoiding conflict and, most tragically, as an overall lack of participation in leadership positions.

Of dubious value are the affirmative action programs which encourage women to assume leadership positions in

environmental organizations. They merely invite women to adopt a sometimes ill-fitting androcentric leadership role in a "manstream" movement. Instead, the ultimate goal must be greater involvement of women in leadership roles which are based upon less hierarchical and more holistic principles, an ideal which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

In addition to greater numbers of women leaders in a redefined leadership role, diversification in the environmental movement must include a broader spectrum of participants. The now widely recognized problem of environmental discrimination against minorities gained attention during the 1980's as minority communities increasingly recognized disparate enforcement of environmental regulations. They also recognized their own limited mobility to escape polluted environments, also known as voting with their feet.¹⁶ One of the early catalysts for this growing awareness was a 1982 incident in Warren County, North Carolina. Warren County was at that time rural and 84% Black. It was therefore regarded as no coincidence that the county was sited for a hazardous waste landfill since poor, rural, minority communities often do not have the advocacy skills, financial resources, and representation to successfully combat such decisions. In this case, however, 500 predominantly Black protestors blocked the path of

unwelcome trucks transporting PCB's and were ultimately arrested.¹⁷

The Reverend Ben Chavis, executive director of the United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice, subsequently coined the term "environmental racism." The Commission's 1987 report revealed that the most significant factor in siting hazardous waste facilities nationwide is race.¹⁸ Other statistics demonstrate that three of five Black and Hispanic Americans live in communities with uncontrolled toxic waste sites.¹⁹ 44% of urban Black children are at risk for lead poisoning from peeling paint, aging plumbing, and contaminated soil.²⁰ The National Law Journal found that EPA took 20% longer to identify Superfund sites in minority communities and that polluters in minority neighborhoods were consistently fined half as much as in white neighborhoods.²¹

Statistics for America's farmworkers are even worse. 90% of the approximately two million farmworkers in the United States are minority, mostly Hispanic. At the same time, farmworkers are excluded from the Occupational Safety and Health Act, from the Fair Labor Standards Act, and from the National Labor Relations Act while each year farmers use and expose their workers to approximately 1.2 billion pounds of pesticides.²² "It is not uncommon to see farmers spraying while workers are in the field," claims one minority rights activist. 48% of those farmworkers to whom

he spoke had been sprayed at least once.²³ In fact, Hispanic farmworkers have the highest rates of exposure to toxic poisonings of any occupational group in the country.²⁴

Other stories abound. In Kettleman City, California, a community in which 40% of the population speaks only Spanish, local officials neglected to translate the proposed Kings County toxic waste incinerator environmental impact statement into Spanish. Nor did local officials translate a summary, nor notices of public meetings, thereby precluding fair public input into the decision-making process.²⁵ In short, locally unwanted land uses (LULU's) predominate in poor, powerless minority communities, even while the benefits derived from industrial waste production are directly related to affluence.²⁶

Despite the extent and immediacy of these problems, minority community leaders charge that mainstream environmental groups have been largely unresponsive. As Victor Lewis, a founder of Oakland's Environmentalists Against Racism, claims, "We find it hard to listen to white activists who find it easy to emotionally identify with the California condor but disengage themselves [from] environmental effects on Afro-Americans."²⁷ Lewis is referring to the sometimes tremendous gap in perceived concerns between mainstream environmental and minority groups. For example, while minorities often battle issues of urban health, toxins, solid waste, and worker safety,

mainstream groups may be preoccupied with wilderness preservation and endangered species.

In his May 1992 speech celebrating the Sierra Club's centennial, then executive director, Michael Fischer, described the Club as a "middle-class group of backpackers, overwhelmingly white in membership, program, and agenda." If it remained so, he contended, it would lose influence in an increasingly multicultural country.²⁸ The mainstream is acknowledging that "in order to move from isolated local victories to real national impact, the environmental movement has to confront its own whiteness."²⁹ One researcher notes ironically that environmental groups evidence less minority hiring than the toxics producing companies with which they often do battle.³⁰

Criticisms of the mainstream environmental movement are often categorized into three areas, all of which result in classism: the movement has been called compositionally elite. Its core consists of white college-educated professionals with above average incomes. The movement has also been called ideologically elite where environmental reform is actually subterfuge for distributing benefits to environmentalists while spreading costs to the rest of the population in the form of higher taxes. One example is the designation and maintenance of wilderness areas which are relatively inaccessible for the urban poor. The last, and closely related charge is impact elitism. The lower

economic strata often bears a disproportionate share of the costs associated with environmental reforms, making them regressive. For example, costs to the consumer from primary drinking water treatment or pollution controls on electricity generation consume a larger portion of total income for lower-income households.³¹ Indeed, few environmentalists realize the implications of the NIMBY phenomenon for poor and minority populations.³²

There are many other examples of such insensitivity within the environmental movement. In Los Ojos, New Mexico, the Nature Conservancy purchased a tract of land which cut Hispanic shepherds off from traditional grazing pasture. In Acoma Pueblo, New Mexico, the Sierra Club and Wilderness Society lobbied to annex tribal land for the creation of a new national park. Here, the unsettling twist was in proposing to return tribal land to the Federal government. In Alaska, Greenpeace fought for a ban on Eskimos' traditional hunting of harp seals, and in sparing Mt. Pele, Hawaii, a volcanic mountain, from hydroelectric drilling, environmental groups alienated the native population by insisting on keeping native concerns for culture and religion out of the lobbying effort.³³ The issue in these examples is not the value of each side's argument, but rather the imperative for environmental groups to understand the full impact of their proposals on affected populations. In most cases their ultimate success will depend upon a more

cooperative effort. The issue of population growth provides one clear example: as victims of genocide, Native Americans actually see population growth as *necessary* to their cultural survival.³⁴ Furthermore, "until environmentalists begin to link ecological and equity issues...social justice activists will continue to view mainstream environmental organizations as elitist and suspect."³⁵

In defense, the mainstream organizations have sometimes charged that minorities are not concerned with ecological issues. They point to Maslow's needs hierarchy as an illustration of minorities' more pressing needs for food, jobs, and housing, all of which detract from the attention and participation minorities would otherwise give to environmental issues. They also point to minorities' greater interest and resource allocation to social justice issues as evidence of their relative disinterest in environmentalism.³⁶

However, numerous researchers have demonstrated that these arguments are based on myth. "Support for the environmental movement is not limited to the affluent, the well-educated, or the young." Rather, it cuts across most demographic categories.³⁷ Their studies indicate that support for environmental protection has "trickled down" the class and social structure of our advanced industrial society as illustrated by survey data and organized activity within minority communities, like the Commission for Racial

Justice.³⁸ They underscore that the real difference is that while mainstream *activists* may be disproportionately upper-middle class, environmental *concern* reaches across all classes.³⁹

To explain minorities' lack of participation and activism in mainstream environmental groups, researchers point to *structural barriers* from these largely white, upper-middle class organizations.⁴⁰ The alienation takes many forms. One of the most basic is clashes in styles of communication. An extreme example is the following esoteric Pareto optimality model explanation for environmental support (which ran for 2 pages, and is mercifully abbreviated here): $EU = N_1/N * U_i(y_i - C(x, N_1)/N_1 - rw_i, h^i(x, Z, w_i))$, etc.⁴¹ Like the failure to translate a document into the native language of the affected community, the arcane and inaccessible equation above alienates likely participants in the discussion, and not only minorities.

Many minorities also lack stepping stones to involvement with mainstream organizations. Local groups tend to be oriented toward outdoor or political interests, and these local groups act as first steps in national affiliations. Minorities often lack the perquisites to join them, including education, a high-status occupation, and an upper-middle class orientation.⁴² *Obtaining* an outdoor activities orientation is complicated by the fact that these activities may be inaccessible due to their remote location,

required skills, and price.⁴³ In general, without the compatible socioeconomic profile, fellowship in many mainstream environmental groups is difficult, both at the local and national levels.⁴⁴ This problem is greater in the environmental movement than it is in the areas of civil rights, education, or employment which have broader representation among racial and ethnic groups.⁴⁵

Other barriers exist within minority communities themselves. Blacks are less likely to subscribe to political self-efficacy, the belief that one's own actions will impact government affairs. Low-income, less educated Blacks are unlikely to recognize advocacy channels for public participation or protest in their own communities.⁴⁶ This problem is compounded by unsatisfactory experiences with governing officials which may lead to feelings of powerlessness, defeat, and hostility. In contrast, upper-middle class protestors in this situation may redouble their efforts through more determined bureaucratic and political tactics.⁴⁷ Such groups tend also to have information first on problems and needed changes. They often have the time, financial resources, skills and experience for collective action on environmental issues.⁴⁸ In general, participation depends upon not only attitude strength, but also on a sense of self-efficacy and resource availability. Minority communities often lack the latter two requirements.⁴⁹

Yet, as minority communities are increasingly demonstrating, when they mobilize and are defeated, the ensuing acrimony often expands the scope of the initial protest to include broader issues of democratic responsiveness.⁵⁰ Hence, the environmental justice movement developed to address environmental problems within the broader context of social justice. This approach is consistent within minority communities where many environmental problems are not labelled environmental problems exclusively⁵¹ and where "few Black activists see themselves as environmentalists."⁵²

Instead, environmental issues are often intertwined with issues of equity, social justice, and resource distribution.⁵³ Environmental issues are therefore linked and addressed in tandem with existing civil rights agendas.⁵⁴ This marriage is especially true of issues such as health and worker safety, as well as the conditions surrounding inner-city children.⁵⁵ In response, minority communities frequently form their own grassroots initiatives while at times receiving assistance from mainstream environmental groups, such as Greenpeace, the Citizens' Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste, and others.⁵⁶ "Having an active environmental group within a Black community is not a prerequisite for mobilizing black citizens," claims one sociologist and civil rights activist.⁵⁷

Minority communities have "a long tradition of meshing social and political issues," especially in church services, the cornerstone of the civil rights movement.⁵⁸ These communities also organize around civic groups, neighborhood associations, community improvement groups, and an array of antipoverty and antidiscrimination groups as loci.⁵⁹ The statistics are revealing. In 1984, only 2% of those involved in large national environmental organizations were Black. At the same time, 76% of Black heads of households were church members and 28% participated in community improvement groups.⁶⁰ These statistics are based upon trust in community-based organizations. Black churches and community groups have a history of work on civil rights and social issues; they possess leadership, tactical skills and communication networks.⁶¹ The environmental movement should recognize these vehicles and support them in their attempts to improve the political efficacy of minority communities in addressing environmental problems.

What environmentalists should *not* do is to assume that environmental problems are best addressed through environmental groups. Polls taken in selected areas threatened by an environmental problem indicated the following about the local population:⁶²

- 21% marched in protest;
- 25% talked to neighbors door-to-door;
- 26% wrote letters of opposition to officials;
- 33% telephoned an influential person;
- 38% discussed the matter in a church meeting;

41% attended a meeting in someone's home;
 47% attended a public hearing;
 54% signed a petition;
 but only 10% joined an environmental group.

Even if substantial numbers of minority individuals never label themselves "environmentalist" or join environmental groups, the imperative for diversifying the environmental movement to include minority concerns is clear. However, diversification should not be narrowly viewed as recruiting minorities to work within, and conform to, existing environmental organizations. This approach will co-opt the environmental justice movement. For while the Sierra Club assures us, "We're very, very sensitive to [these issues], and we're moving heaven and earth" to attract people of color, minority groups are maintaining, "We don't want to be part of the environmental movement...we are offering to open up dialogue between the two existing movements."⁶³ However, as Chapter 4 will demonstrate, the changing face of environmentalism, alone, is insufficient to drive meaningful and long-term environmental reform in the presence of a hostile dominant social paradigm.

Endnotes

1. "A Place at the Table." Sierra, May/June 1993, p. 51.
2. Birkeland, Janis. "Ecofeminism: Linking Theory and Practice" from Women, Animals, and Nature, Greta Gaard, ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), p. 15.
3. Stults, Karen. "Everyone's Backyard." Social Policy, v.20 (Winter 1990), p. 37.
4. Bullard, Robert D. Dumping in Dixie. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), p. 14.

5. Snodgrass, Sara E. and Robert Rosenthal. "Females in Charge: Effects of Sex of Subordinate and Romantic Attachment Status Upon Self-ratings of Dominance." Journal of Personality, v. 52 (December 1984), p. 356.
6. Korabik, Karen. "Androgyny and Leadership Style." Journal of Business Ethics, v.9 (April/May 1990), p. 283.
7. Remland, Martin, Carolyn Jacobson and Tricia Jones. "Effects of Psychological Gender and Sex-Incongruent Behavior on Evaluations of Leadership." Perceptual and Motor Skills, v.57 (December 1983), p. 783.
8. Korabik, p. 283.
9. Eisenstein, Hester. Contemporary Feminist Thought. (Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1983), p. 8.
10. Eisenstein, p. 7.
11. Snodgrass, p. 356.
12. Joyce, Glenis. "Training and Women: Some Thoughts from the Grassroots." Journal of Business Ethics, v.9 (1990), p. 408.
13. Joyce, p. 408.
14. Stake, Jayne. "Situation and Person-centered Approaches to Promoting Leadership Behavior in Low Performance Self-esteem Women." Journal of Personality, v.51 (March 1983), p. 75.
15. Snodgrass, p. 357.
16. Baugh, Joyce A. "African-Americans and the Environment." Policy Studies Journal, v.19 (Spring 1991), p. 183.
17. "A Place at the Table," p. 51.
18. "A Place at the Table," p. 51.
19. Bryant, Pat. "Toxics and Racial Justice." Social Policy, v.20 (Summer 1989), p. 50.
20. Merrill, Jennifer. "Environmental Racism: the Roots of Conflict and Growth." ZPG Reporter, April 1991, p. 6.
21. "A Place at the Table," p. 51.

22. Perfecto, Ivette and Baldemar Velasquez. "Farm Workers: Among the Least Protected." EPA Journal, v.18 (March/April 1992), p. 13.
23. Perfecto, p. 14.
24. Merrill, p. 6.
25. Pfaff, Dennis. "Opponents Win Key Victory in Environmental Racism Fight." Sacramento Daily Journal (date unknown).
26. Bullard, p. 5.
27. "The Greens are White." Newsweek, October 15, 1990, p. 34.
28. "A Place at the Table," p. 51.
29. Bryant, p. 48.
30. Bryant, p. 51.
31. Morrison, Denton E. and Riley E. Dunlap. "Environment and Elitism: a Conceptual and Empirical Analysis." Environmental Management, v. 10 (1986), p. 581.
32. Bullard, p. 4.
33. "Newsmaker Interview." ZPG Reporter, April 1991, p. 5, and "Black Marks for the Greens." The Economist, October 26, 1991, p. 29-30.
34. "Black Marks for the Greens," p. 30,
35. Bullard, p. 102.
36. Baugh, p. 782.
37. Buttel, Frederick H. "New Directions in Environmental Sociology." Annual Review of Sociology, v.13 (1987), p. 474.
38. Buttel, p. 474.
39. Taylor, Dorceta E. "Blacks and the Environment: Toward an Explanation of the Concern and Action Gap Between Blacks and Whites." Environment and Behavior, v.21 (March 1989), p. 182.
40. Mohai, Paul. "Black Environmentalism." Social Science Quarterly, v.71 (December 1990), p. 761.

41. Smith, Kerry V. "A Theoretical Analysis of the Green Lobby." American Political Science Review, v.79 (March 1985), p. 132.
42. Taylor, p. 194.
43. Taylor, p. 188.
44. Taylor, p. 195.
45. Mohai, p. 762.
46. Taylor, p. 195.
47. Taylor, p. 196.
48. Morrison, p. 583.
49. Taylor, p. 197.
50. Buttel, p. 479.
51. Baugh, p. 782.
52. Bullard, p. 105.
53. Baugh, p. 782.
54. Mohai, p. 762.
55. Morrison, p. 587.
56. Baugh, p. 190.
57. Bullard, p. 98.
58. Bullard, p. 96.
59. Bullard, p. 16.
60. Bullard, p. 96.
61. Bullard, p. 101.
62. Bullard, p. 96.
63. Merrill, p. 6, and Moore, Richard. "Environmental Action in Minority Communities." Environmental Action, January/February 1990, p. 22.

Chapter 4

The Ultimate Imperative: Rethinking the Social Structure

Both the mainstream environmental movement and the environmental justice movement are demonstrating that the fundamental problem underlying each is our social structure: sometimes called the dominant western worldview and often called the dominant social paradigm (DSP). Decentralization and diversification in the environmental movement will merely improve, but not solve, current environmental problems. These problems will persist and even worsen given the exigencies of our anthropocentric, free-market economy. This chapter will discuss the current DSP, concluding that Ecofeminism offers a sound critique of the DSP and one which is sufficient to address the current system of power structures that makes decentralization and diversification critical issues in the first place.

The environmental movement must aim not simply at redistributing resources, but at restructuring society.¹ "Earth Day 1990 was no more the end of culturally sanctioned environmental degradation...than the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Bill was the end of institutionalized racism."² It has become increasingly apparent that "the policy of resisting the implementation of environmental reforms has not served the interests of the public at large or the interests of the underclass, but only the short-term

interests of the economic elite."³ Such resistance to the environmental movement is an outgrowth of the current DSP.

A social paradigm is "a society's dominant belief structure that organizes the way people perceive and interpret the functioning of the world around them."⁴ Paradigms are dominant not in the statistical sense of being held by most people, but in being held by dominant groups. In our DSP, the paradigm legitimizes and justifies institutions and practices of the market economy.⁵ When society deems this paradigm faulty, it will shift, but not without great resistance. The United States has many examples of such a shift, including the crumbling of colonialism, slavery, and an agrarian-based society.⁶ However, our current DSP seems especially intractable in reformers' attempts to change it.

The current DSP in the United States relies on industrial production and consumption in a free-market economy. It values technology, material well-being, and social competitiveness.⁷ It claims that people (and as will be discussed later, primarily men) are fundamentally different from all other creatures on Earth over which they have dominion. People are masters of their destiny, choosing their goals and learning to do whatever is necessary to achieve them. The world, for them, is vast and provides unlimited opportunities. For every problem there is a solution, and progress will likely never cease.⁸

Additional characteristics used to describe the DSP include the following:⁹

- nature as instrumental
- centralized control
- predictable patterns of action
- value-free experience
- disinterested observation
- capable only of linear growth
- mechanization
- manipulation
- isolation
- objectivity
- reductionism

When translated into doing business, the dominant objective of the DSP is to create good economic conditions. It has accepted a supply and demand market as the best mechanism for regulating economic relationships. In fact, the socio-economic system works best if it is oriented to maximize wealth for individuals *now* living. The DSP reverses the use of science and technology to accumulate wealth, accepting, to a large degree, associated social and physical risks.¹⁰

Indeed, many negative externalities can be associated with the DSP, including a societal underclass of poorly educated and economically depressed individuals, environmental pollution, resource depletion, social injustice, and lost control over individual fate. Individuals too willingly assume that "standard of living" is synonymous with "quality of life" and will label an economy "healthy" even in the midst of social injustice and environmental damage.¹¹

There is evidence that the technical-industrial-economic system dominates the population with its momentum because attempts to slow it down meet with vocal fears of a lower standard of living or unemployment. Because the system cannot absorb large corporate layoffs, the argument holds, it is forced to develop 3000 new chemicals each year, more cars, and consumer goods of every kind.¹² Defenders of the current DSP perpetuate the argument by creating confusion, such as the now familiar belief in "jobs versus the environment."¹³

Such "job blackmail" preserves pro-growth behaviors: industrial expansion, maximization of profits, deregulation. It presents environmental reforms as "prescriptions" for plant closures, layoffs, and economic dislocation using public relations campaigns, effective lobbying of public officials, and co-opting dissidents. It gives workers the choice between their jobs or personal and environmental health, seeking to make them believe there are no alternatives to "business as usual."¹⁴ When ARCO closed its Anaconda, Montana copper smelter in 1980, the plant closure had "everything to do with the worldwide competition in copper" and nothing to do with environmental regulation. Yet, impressionable laid-off workers carried signs illustrating job blackmail. "Our babies can't eat clean air," they read.¹⁵

This discussion of the current DSP runs the risk of invoking images of smoky back rooms filled with shadowy captains of industry who scheme to manipulate the public into purchasing their goods. This image is convenient but naive. The DSP is equally governed by psychological behaviors in individual citizens.

Individuals demonstrate several reactions which ultimately support the status quo. They experience denial, believing that their current distress is merely short-term and that things will soon return to "normal." They experience indifference, feeling helpless and yet assuming that someone else is in control. They experience blame, accusing someone "out there" of generating the current situation. Or, individuals may sink into a fatalistic resignation and acceptance of the DSP.¹⁶ As one psychotherapist claims, society is responding to its problems with "widespread malaise." She adds that "apathy and depression have become synonymous with adjustment."¹⁷ All of these behaviors eclipse the likelihood that individuals will actively participate in redefining the DSP, as illustrated by, among other things, the continued practice of environmentally damaging consumer choices.

The U.S. does experience stabs at minimizing the negative externalities associated with the DSP. Among them, public input on environmental decisions and regulatory fixes demonstrate the partial rejection of a pure market economy.

However, there may be an overreliance on legislative stopgaps. Congress is currently reauthorizing the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and the Clean Water Act despite, or perhaps due, to their historic failures. The chair of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, Max Baucus (D-Montana), is even sponsoring an Environmental Justice Act, as if this might ensure equal protection of public health for all individuals!¹⁸ At the same time, some believe that the U.S. *already* exists in an intermediate social phase on its way to a newly defined DSP. The U.S. clings to the values of the industrial society, pursuing material wealth and resisting change while at the same time growing increasingly aware of environmental impacts and social injustice.¹⁹

A societal value system becomes maladaptive when conditions facing that society change. The U.S. may be approaching this point. An empirical study found that many people endorse the DSP *and* support environmental protection. However, these are conflicting values and attitudes, exacerbated by the ecological improbability that the country can continue on according to current behavior. Social psychology calls this phenomenon "cognitive dissonance," and it is resolved through strengthening support for one set of values and behaviors.²⁰

In short, the DSP needs to work. It needs to reflect reality, although some may question such a homeostatic pull

toward balance.²¹ In this way, when a society reaches its peak of vitality, it will tend to "lose [its] cultural steam and decline" in favor of a new DSP.²² The shift occurs as cumulative episodes demonstrate that the current DSP does not adequately meet society's needs.²³ In the current situation, societal pressures arising from social conflict, pollution, a freeze in the standard of living, and others may undermine the existing DSP and force a shift. This will occur as individuals become estranged from the current paradigm and polarization ensues.²⁴ The existence of the environmental movement provides evidence that this may be happening in the U.S. Such social movements emphasize and interpret changing beliefs in the DSP, in this case, indicating the possibility of a post-industrial society.²⁵

It is also possible that such a shift will not occur, or that a superficial shift will prove insufficient to make meaningful changes in the current DSP. A society-wide shift in the DSP requires critical mass. "It is more or less agreed that the [DSP] will change when a critical mass of the population demands such a change...we have a number of people moving; we do not yet have a people movement."²⁶ A people movement will require a "sufficiently intense, widely spread" presence in the population, rather than discrete, dogged movements.²⁷

Until then, the U.S. remains a nation dominated by "a depressing civic stupidity...a decadent puritanism...an odd

combination of ducking responsibility and telling everyone else what to do."²⁸ A lack of environmental awareness continues. Among those individuals recently surveyed, many did not understand that drinking water originates, to a large extent, from lakes and streams. Many others were unwilling to consider restricting their use of private cars.²⁹ These individuals underscore a strong belief in the ability of technology, science, and the market to solve environmental problems. In fact, 87% of those surveyed believe technology will cure environmental ills.³⁰ As one editorialist commented, people will not settle for less material improvement in their lives "if technology can supply them with benign ways to achieve it - which it can."³¹ Such beliefs, which view technology as limitless in its potential and without impacts, merely permits the diffusion of responsibility. As behavioral psychologists contend, if more than one person witnesses a victim in need, the likelihood of each individual assisting decreases.³² In the case of a new DSP, responsibility diffuses not to other individuals, but to technology and the free-market economy.

Any potential shift in the DSP should adhere to the Ecofeminist critique of the current social structure. A less bold *ecological paradigm* is insufficient since the current culture and societal structure, which are based upon a system of patriarchy, would remain. The existing DSP needs to shift beyond a stopgap based on ecological

consciousness to rethink the patriarchal structure that has contributed to the DSP in the first place.

Patriarchy, and the androcentric orientation which fuels it, is based upon a male-dominated system of social relations and values. Under this system, linear, objective thinking excludes intuition and subjectivity. As a result, courses of action are based on deductive reasoning and are not generally reflective of morality. Power and hierarchy are considered inevitable, while a society based on cooperative relationships is considered unrealistic and utopian. Patriarchy results in dominance relationships buttressed by objectification and control, manipulation and competitiveness.³³ These characteristics are evinced in everything from militarism, to damming a river, to advancing up the corporate ladder. In each of these examples, reward stems only from conquering and dominating either other individuals or the natural environment.

Feminist Adrienne Rich argues that a system of patriarchy means that "men - by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labor, determine what part women shall or shall not play" in society. In the process, where women are "everywhere subsumed" by men, they are deprived of their own power to define society's structure and their roles within it, as well as to define humans' relationship with nature.³⁴

While the mainstream environmental movement may recognize certain pathologies within the existing social system, it tends to view the system of patriarchy, itself, as "marginal and coincidental."³⁵ Although the movement acknowledges problems associated with *anthropocentrism*, it fails to recognize that these are more precisely problems of *androcentrism* where men have an overwhelmingly disproportionate influence on the DSP. Hence, the environmental movement tends to accept the given political system as adequate. It relies more on participating within the system to recruit greater numbers of participants in order to achieve its environmental goals.

Because the sources of the environmental crisis are deeply rooted in modern culture, fundamental social transformation is necessary. Authentic social reform must redefine the existing culture and its social institutions since both are inherently biased against environmental preservation.³⁶

The DSP fragments the environment into "resources" which have value only when they can be used to satisfy human wants, primarily in the marketplace. An outgrowth of the androcentric "power complex," this orientation drives environmental decision-making and regulations. Decision-makers can consider themselves environmentally aware and, yet, "facilitate the exponential destruction" of the environment through "incremental trade-offs of environmental

quality for economic growth." They monitor and record environmental crises, rather than finding social solutions to environmental problems. In the current structure, measuring the systematic deterioration of water quality until it reaches its *minimum* safe drinking level has become a respected profession, but eliminating the original threats to drinking water quality is dismissed as naive and unrealistic.³⁷

In this way, the environmental movement suffers from the same reductionist, linear thinking it often vilifies in society at large. Environmentalists champion 1,427,533 acres of wilderness protection even while recognizing that such numbers can be arbitrary in a system dependent on biodiversity and biological corridors. Likewise, environmentalists champion that outdoor air contain no more than 150 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ of particulates even while recognizing that 150 μg may be no safer for health than 159 μg . The androcentric DSP encourages such manipulation and compromise on issues that can not be so neatly fragmented. Environmental degradation proves this point. Yet, environmentalists increasingly participate in the system hoping to make incremental gains. As has been said so often, they may eventually win these battles but lose the war.

Certainly, it is clear that the environmental movement's goals of a larger body of participants, better

environmental policy decisions, and more scientific research "cannot change the deeply rooted behavior patterns and structural relationships that led to the environmental crisis in the first place." They merely create "environmental," but still patriarchal, economists, scientists, administrators, lawyers and planners promoting "marginal reforms."³⁸ As Elizabeth Larson, first of Greenpeace and later of the U.S. Greens, asserts, "It seems to me that by marching for the oceans, the air, and the animals, men can pat themselves on the back without having to challenge the way society is structured."³⁹

Ecofeminism, then, explores links between androcentrism and environmental destruction. It recognizes that a system of patriarchy espouses a norm in which white males practice the systematic subordination of women and the systematic subordination of nature in carving out social institutions and a market economy.⁴⁰ In this way, the subordination of both women and nature are interconnected because the exploitation of one cannot truly cease without simultaneously ending the exploitation of the other. For the exploitation of either women or of nature to persist indicates that a "power over," patriarchal system continues.

It is important to recognize the relevance of Ecofeminism to the environmental justice movement. Any discussion of the subordination of women should be expanded to include the subordination of *any* individual since people

of color have also suffered social and political oppression, as discussed in Chapter 3. Therefore, it may be argued that the environmental justice movement will also be incomplete without the elimination of a system of domination which simultaneously allows the exploitation of women and of nature to continue.

Ecofeminists redefine human relationships and humans' interconnectedness with nature in different ways. A common thread seems to challenge "power over" relationships, replacing them with ones based on empowerment, reciprocity, and mutual responsibility. In other words, merely redistributing power is not the answer. Society must move beyond power "toward an ethic based on mutual respect," whether for other individuals or for natural habitats.⁴¹ This orientation places value on integrity and completeness, rather than fragmentation and reduction.

Because Ecofeminism professes noncompetitive and nonhierarchical forms of organizations and decision-making, it has the potential to redefine thinking about organizations and leadership in both the environmental movement and in the DSP. Patriarchy and sexism within the environmental movement has excluded many selfless volunteers (mainly women) from meaningful participation.⁴² Yet, as discussed in Chapter 3, encouraging greater numbers of women to assume androcentric leadership roles is not the ultimate goal. Instead, Ecofeminism intends nonhierarchical

organizations and leadership in which influence and standing need not be labelled or appointed. As Betty Friedan, feminist and founder of the National Organization of Women states, "I have never fought for organizational power. I can have a great deal of influence just by my own voice. I don't have to be president."⁴³ As a result, the authority and domination that are currently used to suppress disparate beliefs, especially those of women and minorities, can be eliminated in the noncompetitive opportunity for all beliefs. In the meantime, however, Chapter 5 and the Senior Environment Corps will demonstrate how intractable many of the characteristics in the current DSP actually are.

Endnotes

1. Stern, Paul C., Thomas Dietz and Linda Kalof. "Values Orientation, Gender, and Environmental Concern." Environment and Behavior, v.25 (May 1993), p. 323.
2. Krause, Daniel. "Environmental Consciousness." Environment and Behavior, v.25 (January 1993), p. 140.
3. Morrison, Denton E. and Riley E. Dunlap. "Environment and Elitism: a Conceptual and Empirical Analysis." Environmental Management, v. 10 (1986), p. 586.
4. Milbrath, Lester W. Environmentalists: Vanguard for a New Society. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), p. 7.
5. Milbrath, p. 7.
6. Milbrath, p. 8.
7. Herrera, Marina. "Environmentalism and Political Participation." Journal of Applied Social Psychology, v.22 (1992), p. 672.
8. Buttel, Frederick H. "New Directions in Environmental Sociology." Annual Review of Sociology, v.13 (1987), p. 465-88.

9. Drengson, Alan R. "Shifting Paradigms: from the Technocratic to the Person-planetary." Environmental Ethics, v.2 (1980), p. 239.
10. Milbrath, p. 9.
11. Capra, Fritjof. The Turning Point (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), p. 215 and 389.
12. Milbrath, p. 13.
13. Dunlap, Riley and Kent D. Van Liere. "Commitment to the Dominant Social Paradigm and Concern for Environmental Quality." Social Science Quarterly, v.65 (1984), p. 1025.
14. Bullard, Robert D. Dumping in Dixie. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), p. 12.
15. Kazis, Richard and Richard Grossman. "The Environmental Movement and Jobs." Social Policy, v.13 (Spring 1983), p. 36.
16. Elgin, Duane. Voluntary Simplicity (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1981), p. 108-9.
17. Schaeff, Anne Wilson. "Nation of Addicts." New Age Journal (March/April 1987), p. 42.
18. Camia, Catalina. "Poor, Minorities Want Voice in Environmental Choices." Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, v.51 (August 21, 1993), p. 2260.
19. Herrera, p. 659.
20. Dunlap, p. 1014.
21. Dunlap, p. 1025.
22. Capra, p. 28.
23. Kuhn, Thomas S. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 91.
24. Kuhn, p. 92.
25. Dunlap, p. 1025.
26. Wilson, Larry. "Moving Toward a Movement." Social Policy, v.20 (Summer 1989), p. 53.

27. Parsons, Talcott. The Social System. (New York: The Free Press, 1951), p. 521.
28. Morrow, L. "A Nation of Fingerpointers." Time, August 12, 1991, p. 14.
29. Krause, p. 140.
30. Borden, Richard J. "Psychology and Ecology: Beliefs in Technology and the Diffusion of Ecological Responsibility." Journal of Environmental Education, v.16 (Winter 1984/85), p.18.
31. Bremner, John. "Technology Promises Salvation." Missoulian (March 10, 1994).
32. Borden, p. 15.
33. Birkeland, Janis. "Ecofeminism: Linking Theory and Practice" from Women, Animals, and Nature, Greta Gaard, ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), p. 14-28.
34. Eisenstein, Hester. Contemporary Feminist Thought. (Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1983), p. 5.
35. Birkeland.
36. Birkeland, p. 13.
37. Birkeland, p. 14.
38. Birkeland, p. 14.
39. Larsen, Elizabeth. "Granola Boys, Eco-dudes, and Me." Ms. (July/August 1991), p. 97.
40. Warren, Karen J. "The Power and the Promise of Ecological Feminism" from Environmental Philosophy, Michael E. Zimmerman, ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993), p. 321.
41. Birkeland, p. 19.
42. Birkeland.
43. Bennis, Warren. On Becoming A Leader (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Inc., 1989), p. 159.

Chapter 5

Critique of the Senior Environment Corps

During its formation in 1992, the Senior Environment Corps did not resolve that it would address the pathologies within the environmental movement. These pathologies include centralization and hierarchy, homogeneity, stereotypes of volunteers, limited leadership opportunities, gender bias, and others. Instead, the Corps focused on a more narrow mission: bridging the gap between environmental protection and the skills offered by older adults.

In seeking only to bridge the gap between environmental protection and the involvement of older adults, the Senior Environment Corps has also evidenced the very pathologies prevalent in the environmental movement. The Corps' experience demonstrates how difficult it is for even a well-intentioned organization to achieve the ideals of Ecofeminism without first having a coherent plan. It shows that operating within the DSP while escaping the failings of the DSP poses an enormous challenge. Hence, even an organization dedicated to a more thoughtful and progressive approach to environmental protection suffers from the practices it criticizes in the environmental movement and in the DSP.

This chapter critiques the Senior Environment Corps, giving particular attention to areas in which the Corps can formulate long-term goals. By recognizing its own shortcomings, and acting to remedy these shortcomings, the Corps may provide a demonstration, not only of the need for older adult involvement in environmental protection, but of the need for a new approach among environmental organizations. Future organizations like the Senior Environment Corps can build strong, effective ties across communities, but they should do so based on a coherent plan to eventually affect changes in the DSP.

Decentralization in the Senior Environment Corps

The Missoula Senior Environment Corps is, in part, a decentralized organization. In one sense, it does not reinvent the wheel by creating an entirely new organization in a community that already hosts numerous, sometimes overlapping, community service groups. Instead, it is diffuse, taking advantage of *existing* organizations by filling their needs (environmental projects) with a service (qualified volunteers). The Corps does so by linking older adults in the existing RSVP volunteer pool with volunteer needs in existing environmental organizations. Labeled the Senior Environment Corps, this link fills a gap, both among older adult volunteers who are more concentrated in social service organizations, and in environmental groups which rely predominantly on young adult volunteers. The Corps

chose this decentralized design based upon local conditions: the Missoula area is perhaps better served, not by a new organization, but by one which links existing organizations in a mutually beneficial way.

Beyond linking an aging organization with environmental groups, the Senior Environment Corps has decentralized further in its projects to links with community service organizations and the media. The Corps has drawn attention to connections which can be established between aging organizations, environmental groups, low-income and youth services, radio, and T.V., among others. These connections demonstrate that social issues, such as hunger, and environmental issues, such as large-scale agribusiness, do not exist in isolation. In this example, their interrelatedness helps to explain how food production has grown so far removed from the household level and how basic food needs have become increasingly unaffordable for low-income families. In building these ties, the Senior Environment Corps attempts to redress the problem in a more holistic way: in this case, by promoting household and community-based organic gardening.

This model of linking existing organizations has already been evidenced in the environmental justice movement. As discussed in Chapter 3, minority communities fighting for environmental justice often link their environmental problems with issues of social and economic

justice. The future effectiveness of the environmental movement will likely depend on forging such links and understanding that environmental oppression does not arise in isolation from other forms of oppression. Only a widespread, interlaced effort between organizations devoted to aging, the environment, social justice, economic reform, education, the media, and others can hope to achieve lasting reform based upon a transformation in the system that perpetuates social and environmental subordination.

Admittedly, in another sense, the Senior Environment Corps' parent organization is *highly* centralized. The RSVP Volunteer Clearinghouse operates within an enormous bureaucracy of 430,000 members nationwide. From Missoula, RSVP fans out to state and regional offices, and finally to a national headquarters in Washington, D.C. In the process, RSVP has formal lines of communication and a well-established protocol for recruiting and managing volunteers.

In Missoula, RSVP's centralization generates procedures which are clearly defined through forms, files, and databases. Its hierarchy dictates that program elements be pre-approved by the director and implemented through a linear chain of command. The Senior Environment Corps does not operate autonomously. Instead, it conforms to the practices of RSVP in everything from promotional material to fundraising. In addition, considerable effort is required to adhere to RSVP's policy that participating organizations

submit Memorandums of Understanding and Job Description Worksheets, as well as undertake site visits, volunteer interviews, and volunteer recordkeeping.

Even so, the Senior Environment Corps' experience within the RSVP infrastructure has been considerably more productive than negative in its effect, unlike some of the centralized, Group of Ten organizations described in Chapter 2. RSVP slows, without necessarily impeding, the Corps' operations. In the end, the Senior Environment Corps' strength may be attributed to RSVP's strong foundation and commitment to professional volunteer management. Participating environmental groups appreciate the Corps' organization and reliability. RSVP also offers 17 years of experience in Missoula, as well as an infrastructure, staff, and budget which make administration and marketing of the Corps possible.

A Senior Environment Corps can certainly operate independently, and such a model is encouraged in communities which feel they can support an independent effort. But established RSVP programs, or any other anchor organization, should not be avoided simply because they are centralized and hierarchical. Instead, the Corps can take advantage of the benefits of affiliation with an anchor group while striving to avoid pitfalls, such as confining procedures, narrow lines of communication, minimal opportunities for leadership, and other limitations.

Diversification in the Senior Environment Corps

The Senior Environment Corps emphasizes diversity in its participation. Yet, even while it is co-orchestrated by a woman and an African-American man, Corps volunteers remain overwhelmingly white and middle class. What volunteer diversity exists is evidenced mainly in education levels and careers, which range from geophysics to homemaking. However, the fact that just 40% of the volunteer population has completed a college degree may be attributed more to characteristics of this age group (a college degree was neither commonplace nor a career prerequisite in 1940) than to socioeconomic factors.

In giving attention to the issue of diversity, the Corps recognizes that diversity in relatively homogenous Missoula will rely less on race, gender, or ethnicity, and more on economics and social experience. For example, the Corps cultivates plots in the Missoula Community Garden, in part to supply fresh, organic produce to the Missoula Food Bank and to the Povarello Center for low-income individuals and families. Beyond providing this service, the Corps encourages low-income clients at the Food Bank and Povarello Center to join the Senior Environment Corps as integral volunteers in the Community Garden. Their participation offers clients self-empowerment, self-reliant gardening skills which they can use in their own backyards, as well as

a shared experience and camaraderie with other Corps volunteers.

Likewise, the Community Garden is assisted by at-risk youths from the Missoula Youth Home. Here, the Senior Environment Corps understands that diversity in Missoula includes disenfranchised or marginalized individuals, in this case, children who may come from dysfunctional or abusive households. Their participation offers companionship from older adults, but it also offers a self-affirming sense of helping others through the Garden project.

While the efforts mentioned above evidence a fine start, the Corps has not yet explored participation among a number of other populations. As the Corps evolves, therefore, it must make a more determined effort to outreach to these groups and to diversify its volunteer pool. For example, the Corps has not focused attention specifically on individuals with disabilities. Many of the positions available to volunteers can be accomplished by individuals with special needs, whether due to confinement to a wheelchair or to a learning disability. These positions range from technical analysis, to mailings and craftwork. Similarly, the Corps has not explored participation among Missoula's Native American population. Issues of water conservation, wildlife habitat, and even home weatherization, to name a few, are certainly strong concerns

among Native Americans. As discussed in Chapter 3, no *true* barriers to Native American participation exist, only social hurdles which the Corps needs to address.

Defining Volunteer Roles in the Senior Environment Corps

The Senior Environment Corps has been modestly successful in dispelling stereotypes about older adults and in dispelling the "just a volunteer" mentality. Corps volunteers have demonstrated that they have competition for their time. They are clear about what they want to do and how much time they would like to commit to it. They are accustomed to office settings and professional management, wanting to make a needed contribution in an atmosphere where their contributions are respected. They are not interested in "filling time," but in engaging in activities that have meaning to them and fulfill personal needs for social interaction, exposure to new interests, a way to utilize skills and expertise, self-worth, and remaining physically active.

For example, at the Ninemile Ranger Station, the Senior Environment Corps volunteer host appreciates managing the Ranger Station alone on the weekends. She fills most management needs and serves as a liaison to the public. This position encompasses a fair number of responsibilities and requires decision-making and self-direction, characteristics not generally associated with volunteer work.

At the Clark Fork/Pend Oreille Coalition, the volunteer office administrator retired from her Forest Service career before the advent of personal computers in every office. At the Coalition, she is learning word processing for the first time and with great enthusiasm. This volunteer's situation perpetuates a stereotype that older adults sometimes lack the skills common in today's working world; but it also demonstrates a keen interest in acquiring these skills.

There are also volunteers who have requested positions high in social interaction and low in level of commitment. For these volunteers, environmental organizations frequently need assistance with bulk mailings, ticket sales, phone calls, etc. Even here, however, volunteers are clear that they do not want to "fill time." Rather, they want to support a worthy program with a finite commitment of hours, and without the frustrations of "standing around."

Rather than second-guess the motivations or capabilities of volunteers, the Senior Environment Corps should be vigilant only in providing additional *opportunities*. Where a volunteer would legitimately like to restrict his or her participation to office filing or to trail maintenance because of time constraints, or other factors, the Corps should be non-judgemental in supporting the individual's contribution to the organization. Such work, after all, provides a tremendous service. However, the Corps can help to ensure that growth opportunities are

also available for interested individuals, such as moving from filing to research, or from trail maintenance to crew leader.

This goal requires a tremendous amount of one-on-one interaction with both volunteers and participating organizations. Volunteers sometimes sell themselves short to minor tasks, and organizations sometimes relegate volunteers to minor tasks without thinking constructively about the volunteer's abilities and interests. The Corps can mediate these situations, encouraging volunteers to challenge themselves or to assume greater responsibility. Likewise, the Corps can encourage organizations to continue to offer involved and self-directed projects.

Leadership Opportunities in the Senior Environment Corps

Expanding the role of volunteers also means expanding leadership opportunities. This is particularly true among women, as discussed in Chapter 3. Volunteerism has been too often synonymous with following a simple, pre-determined course lacking in creativity, autonomy, or leadership.

The Community Garden Project aims to redress this failing in volunteer opportunities. The Garden is a self-directed project within the Senior Environment Corps. Its coordinator is a woman while its team of volunteers consists predominantly of men. The Gardeners follow a team-based approach to planting, maintenance, and harvesting. They

have determined the scope of the project, its organization, and their own levels of participation.

From the Community Garden, a high visibility opportunity has evolved for two Senior Environment Corps volunteers: these volunteers serve as gardening tips spokespeople in conjunction with the evening weather report once each week on the local NBC television station. The volunteers are formulating, researching, and scripting each tip independently with support from a local environmental group. Most importantly, of course, their weekly appearance promotes environmentally safe and enjoyable organic gardening.

To provide these leadership opportunities, the Corps looked inward at its own organization. Yet, leadership opportunities should also originate within the 26 participating environmental organizations. For example, when Save Open Space needs a representative for a City planning board, the organization should consider a Senior Environment Corps volunteer as readily as anyone else within their organization. Again, one-on-one interaction will be necessary to encourage environmental organizations in this thinking, as well as to encourage interested volunteers in assuming a greater level of participation.

In the process, the Corps must be sensitive to volunteers' desires. Leadership, in the dominant social paradigm, connotes capability and stature. As such,

individuals who pursue leadership receive admiration for their ambition and drive. Conversely, individuals who eschew leadership frequently receive judgement and doubts about their confidence and skills. These prejudices should not be imposed on volunteers. Leadership should not be promoted in name, only, where volunteers may feel more comfortable or more effective in a non-leadership role. Of course, these questions can only be answered through thoughtful interaction with volunteers.

Paid Positions in the Senior Environment Corps

Given the contributions and levels of responsibility described in the preceding pages, it will sometimes be desirable and appropriate to compensate Senior Environment Corps participants. "Retirement" is a floating term as a number of the Corps' participants are not fully retired or have cultivated income-earning pursuits, such as consulting and part-time work. In this way, older adults perhaps cannot afford, or do not desire, to work for free. In essence, volunteerism is critical to the operation of many community services, and a spirit of volunteerism should be cultivated as a sign of civic responsibility and a belief that meaningful activity occurs outside of the marketplace. At the same time, older adults should not represent a free labor pool.

The Senior Environment Corps recognizes that paying positions should be cultivated for older adults in the

environmental movement. For this reason, the Corps secured \$3000 from the Governor's Advisory Council on Community Service for a Summer 1994 three-quarter time program coordinator. However, like the dilemma posed in providing leadership opportunities, the Corps in this instance, too, should not operate alone in offering compensation. Many of the 26 participating environmental organizations segue young adult volunteers into paid internships and part-time positions. These organizations should do no less for their older adult volunteers. Again, however, it will likely fall to the Senior Environment Corps to educate the organizations in such thinking.

Sex Roles in the Senior Environment Corps

The subtle forms of sex role stereotyping which arise in the Senior Environment Corps do not differ significantly from sex roles in the general population. Women disproportionately fill clerical positions while men disproportionately fill technical and outdoors positions. For older adults, such gender-typing has deep roots in an earlier time when women in technical fields were considered to be even greater anomalies than they are today. However, the Senior Environment Corps has no institutionalized stimulus for continued sex-role stereotyping. On the contrary, the Corps has a number of instances of dissolving these barriers: one volunteer coordinator is female, and

the other male. The Community Garden leader is female, and the crew is predominantly male.

Even so, the Corps can be more proactive in demonstrating that technical work does not require a purely technical background and, hence, the skills predominantly of men. Examples include public presentations and conducting aspects of a research project, such as interviewing or performing a literature review. Such projects rely on interest and organization, not on a chemistry degree. In fact, a retired teacher, when provided with a helpful amount of training and background material, will likely offer school groups an excellent presentation on wildlife or water pollution. In such cases, whether the volunteer is a woman or man, retired chemistry or art teacher, is actually immaterial. The volunteer's skills in working with school-age children are easily supplemented with the environmental information.

Attention to Discrimination in the Senior Environment Corps

The subtle forms of discrimination which arise in the Senior Environment Corps also do not differ significantly from those in the general population. Recipients of low-income services sometimes face judgement about their inability to provide for family needs. They may be accused of taking advantage of free services without "pulling their weight." These charges arose from one Community Garden volunteer. The charges were not particularly surprising

considering that this generation was largely reared during the Great Depression only to face a few years later wartime rationing and dependence on household victory gardens.

The Corps responded with several thoughtful truths about the circumstances that many local welfare recipients face. More effective, however, will be participation of low-income individuals and families in the Community Garden as integral volunteers. The resulting companionship and contributions of the various volunteers will provide the best education about the individuality of each person or family receiving low-income assistance.

Discrimination has also appeared in assumptions about the abilities of Senior Environment Corps Volunteers. When the Missoula City/County Health Department requested a volunteer to assist the Department in water quality monitoring, the Corps referred to them a retired geophysicist. This enormously capable volunteer has over 30 years of experience in geophysics and has initiated water quality protection studies at both Stone Container through the Clark Fork Coalition and at the Milltown Dam through the Milltown Technical Assistance Committee. He was, however, unable to read the Health Department's data collection device ten feet down a dark shaft (who could?). In response, the Department informed the Corps that their project work may be ill-suited to Senior Environment Corps volunteers.

The Corps disagreed. Rather than concede to what may have been age discrimination, the Senior Environment Corps mapped out a partnership project with the Health Department: an update of the woodstove use survey. Hopefully, the Corps' intervention will demonstrate to organizations like the Health Department that age discrimination is not only inappropriate, it also deprives them of valuable skills so essential to myriad other environmental projects.

Yet, discrimination has also arisen within the Corps' own ranks. In the Community Garden, one volunteer appears to have a concentration disability. He participates without being interactive and performs gardening chores best when they are clearly portioned and defined. The Community Garden leader questioned whether this volunteer would be helpful based on his disability. The Corps instead suggested that this volunteer receive very clear and supportive instructions indicating what needs to be done. As is often the case, the discrimination focused at this volunteer had no basis in reality. He offers a tirelessness and enthusiastic contribution to the work in the Garden, and is considered indispensable.

Continued awareness serves as the most important tool in combatting such incidences of discrimination. The Corps has addressed the cases described above, but it goes without saying that other incidences have escaped the Corps' attention.

Conclusion

Lastly, much of the DSP is supported by resource consumption and pro-growth behaviors even in the face of their oppressive impacts on nature and individuals. The Senior Environment Corps does not address this issue directly. Instead it provides participants with opportunities to address the issue through their work with environmental groups. However, such an approach assumes that individuals active in the environmental movement will make these connections in their own thinking. In reality, Chapter 4 indicates that few in the environmental movement understand that the underlying power complex and system of patriarchy must be transformed in order to affect lasting environmental and social reforms. Environmental groups and, with them, Senior Environment Corps volunteers often simply continue to pursue incremental gains within the existing system.

No obvious remedy exists for this situation. Certainly the Senior Environment Corps, alone, cannot affect such a fundamental shift in the DSP, perhaps even after adopting a coherent plan. In fact, even as the U.S. moves ever more clearly toward a post-industrial paradigm, there is no indication that the new DSP will transform the continued system of patriarchy and oppression.

At the very least, the Corps can provide more widespread environmental education. It can support ongoing

environmental protection programs. It can even encourage more benign, environmentally friendly practices among its participants. It can do these things through more than just incremental gains by also building strong links among organizations in the community. In this way, the Senior Environment Corps perhaps exemplifies a new generation of cooperative organizations with loose, professional ties connecting issues associated with aging, the environment, social services, and others. In the end, however, and as stated simply in the Corps' brochures, "doing something for the Earth is everyone's responsibility...giving them the opportunity is ours."