

# Deep Roots: Philosophical Dimensions of Sustainability



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# Sustainability

*“meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”*

-- World Commission on Environment and Development,  
“Our Common Future” 1987



## What

- Environmental stewardship
- Smart planning
- Saving money on resources

## How

- Lead a society-wide transition
- Research, teaching, operations and management
- Discussion and innovation

## Why



# Sustainability

# and Stewardship



*“...a responsibility to serve their own needs and the needs of society”*

-- Kansas State 2009 Sustainability Conference Website

## Quality of Life

- Human health
- Ecological health



## Economic Development

- “Now that it’s a matter of economics as well as political correctness, manufacturers are embracing environmentally friendly practices”  
-- *“Many Shades of Green”*

Why



# Sustainability and Stewardship

*“a moral, economic, and technical imperative”*

– Howard Learner, Senior Energy and Environment Advisor to President Obama



# Sustainability and Stewardship

*“To understand our contemporary industrialist thoughts and values, we have to recognize their roots – roots that inevitably have earth clinging to them” -- Faulstich 1998, p. 86*



## Dimensions of Growth

- Deep Ecology
- Bioregionalism
- Consilience

## Philosophical Roots

- Transcendentalism
- Preservation Movement
- Land Ethic

# Strive On!

*“CONTROL OVER NATURE IS WON, NOT GIVEN!”*



- Dualism
- Rationalism

“By [the] mid-[nineteenth] century...A mechanized way of life seemed on the verge of overwhelming innocence, simplicity, and good taste”  
(Nash, p. 86)

# Transcendentalism

*“I wish to speak a word for Nature, for absolute freedom and wildness... in Wildness is the preservation of the World”*



Henry David Thoreau

*Walden; or, Life in the Woods.*  
1854

- Chapter I: Economy
  - 4 necessities: food, clothing, shelter, fuel
- Chapter II: Where I Lived, And What I Lived For
- Scientific and Philosophical Observation and Experimentation
  - Ecology
  - Classical and Eastern examples

# Preservation

“The schism ran between those who defined conservation as the wise use or planned development of resources and those who have been termed preservationists, with their rejection of utilitarianism and advocacy of nature unaltered by man” (Nash, p. 129)

## John Muir

The “Publicizer” of Wilderness



# Conservation



## Gifford Pinchot

- US Forest Service, 1905 (1898)
- Yale University School of Forestry



# Land Ethic

*“That land is a community is the basic concept of ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethics.”*

## Aldo Leopold



## Ecological Conscience

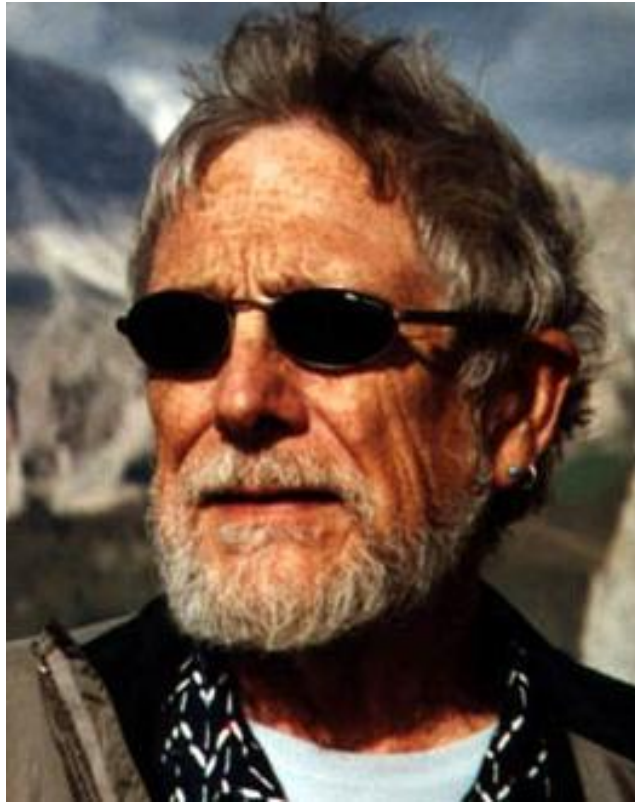
- “Ethical and Esthetic Rightness”
- “simply enlarges the boundaries of the community...”
- “individual responsibility for the health of land”

## Ecological Consciousness

- Science of Ecology
- Man part of community of life
- US Forest Service
- Yale University School of Forestry

# Bioregionalism

*“deep experience, deep questioning, and deep commitment”*



Gary Snyder

## Four Changes

- Population
- Pollution
- Consumption
- Transformation

“find your place on the planet, dig in, and take responsibility from there  
– the tiresome but tangible work...  
even while holding in mind  
the largest scale of potential change”

# Sustainability at Kansas State

*“deep experience, deep questioning, and deep commitment”*

How

What

Why

and philosophers” -- Wilson, 1998, p. 13



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