

POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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This has been an informative day for me. I look forward to a bright future and I bring greetings and sincere wishes for a successful meeting from President Clinton and Vice-President Gore.

Environmental education and the international arena in which we operate today is certainly an agenda item of the administration. It is through cooperation on the international level that environmental progress in the future can be accomplished, and this can be achieved through organizations like the Biopolitics International Organisation, of which Dr. Vlavianos-Arvanitis is President. This organization is warmly received in the United States. It is organizations of this nature which bring countries together, and provide future solutions for the common problems faced today.

This presentation will give an overview of what environmental education is, at the Environmental Protection Agency, EPA. It is a new initiative for the most part. In 1990, Congress passed a law called the National Environmental Education Act. For the first time a regulatory agency such as the EPA now looked at education as one of its mandates. The future of the environment will be based more on education and awareness than on litigation and regulation.

The United States Congress responded to a growing awareness that an informed and educated public is needed to ensure effective solutions to complex environmental problems, by passing the National Environment Education Act of 1990. The Act calls for the federal government, under the leadership of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, EPA, to increase environmental literacy and improve training for environmental careers by supporting and expanding the nation's already existing environmental education efforts. The Act encourages partnerships and builds upon long-standing efforts among federal and state agencies, educational institutions, non-profit educational and environmental organizations, and the private sector. EPA has established an Environmental Education Division, EED, to ensure the implementation of the Act and to coordinate the agency's diverse environmental education programs undertaken by its headquarters and regional offices and research laboratories.

For the past twenty years in the United States, and many other nations, environmental problems have been taken to court. Often such problems were never resolved and only the lawyers benefited financially from the exchange. Perhaps it was necessary in the early years of environmental regulation, looking back at the last twenty years, only to have what could be called the "hammer" approach, but the future of society cannot be left in the hands of the law. A longer-term view is necessary; a citizenry which is conscious of what is right and what is wrong, and concerned enough to make the change. It is certain that education is one of the key foundations for the future of the environment, and education not just defined in a narrow sense. Education is defined here in a very broad way, with a large scope. These are the four principles of environmental education, as defined by the EPA. These principles are broad enough to bring together many partnerships, and many different groups of people.

EED has established:

the National Environmental Education Advisory Council which links EPA with 11 environmentalists and environmental educators who represent diverse geographic areas and minority groups as well as schools and universities, non-profit making organizations, states, the private sector, and senior Americans.

the Federal Task Force on Environmental Education which links EPA with 15 other federal agencies: Headed by EPA, the Task Force advises EED on specific topics, facilitates communication across the federal government, and fosters interagency collaboration on specific projects.

partnerships with various non-profit educational and environmental organizations such as the North American Association for Environmental Education, Alliance for Environmental Education, National Wildlife Federation, and National Audubon Society.

partnerships with various private corporations including Time-Warner, General Motors, Keebler, Dow Chemical, Motorola, Niagara Mohawk Power Company, and Church & Dwight. Specific projects include the development and distribution of educational materials such as videos and teacher's guides and the sponsorship of youth programs.

EED supports the efforts of the newly-formed National Environmental Education and Training Foundation to leverage public and private sector re-sources for environmental education. The foundation is a non-profit making, philanthropic organization, established by Congress under the National Environmental Education Act, to foster public-private partnership building efforts.

In the past, society in the United States, and many other societies, was polarized about the environment. The issue was seen as good versus bad. Very few issues in the environment are so simple; the majority occupy the middle ground and this is where education can play a particularly important role. An analysis of these four issues follows. It consists of four goals:

The first goal is to expand communication and partnerships. This last word has been heard before. It is heard now, increasingly, at every environmental meeting and this is the way to look at the future of the environment. Some of the partnerships that the EPA has entered into would not have been possible only a few years ago. For example, it now has very successful partnerships with Dow Chemical and S.C. Johnson Corporation.

Education can be the means to bring people together. The EPA still spends a lot of time in court and still works through regulations and enforcement, but education is the means by which to start communicating with the corporate world and with other groups; a method that is not adversarial. A few years ago it would not have been possible to see the Dow Chemical logo next to the EPA logo. Now the EPA is working closely with Dow Chemical on educational initiatives.

A partnership between EPA and Motorola on international cooperation can be demonstrated by a box. On the side there are three logos: EPA, Motorola and the Audubon Society. The Audubon Society is one of the largest environmental organizations in the United States. Here are three partners which in the past would have been at opposing ends of the spectrum; the environmental community, the government and the private sector. They have all come together here; this box is a kit for Arizona, where one of the Motorola plants is located. It contains a total curriculum for seventh grade children. and is designed around the biosystem of Arizona so that the children learn about the environment, education and science, through observing what lives in their own area. This is why it has a map of Arizona. and contains a videotape, a CD, a curriculum guide, and a poster. This kit, which went to every seventh grade teacher in Arizona, was sponsored by Motorola.

Some people think this is just a method by which corporations can influence the minds of children. The EPA was skeptical as well; change is never easy and this sort of change in society can be rather difficult. The EPA and Audubon however, have the final approval of the material that goes into this box. If there is anything in it that appears to be promoting only the corporate point of view, then it can be omitted; this is where partnerships come in. Similar boxes have been created with Dow Chemical, for the Great Lakes, and others have been created with utility companies. This is a product, a partnership, that was not possible before. As a result of partnerships of this nature, the EPA is now working more closely on other, more difficult issues - with companies such as Dow, Motorola, etc.

Looking at the EPA's first goal, to expand communication and partnerships, means putting communication and partnerships first. Only by starting to work together can progress be made, and there is nothing better than working together with our children. This is the common ground. Working together with someone after starting-off in court, suing each other, seldom works, it does not make a relationship which will last in the long run.

The EPA's second goal is to educate the public to protect and preserve the environment. Again, it is a very broad goal, but it has to be, because there is not only one kind of public, there are multiple kinds of public. There are pre-school children, senior citizens, corporations. The public must be viewed in the broad sense as well, so there are multiple projects to deal with the different publics. The EPA also works with the entertainment industry on some projects. It works with Warner Bros on some cartoon projects because that is what children look at. It also works with a major organization in the United States, the American Association of Retired Persons which has thirty million members, and represents the senior community. It produces a magazine which goes to these thirty million people.

If there is one theme here that should be recognized, it is this: it is not the government which should be the answer to all these issues. In the past, many people looked to government to make the answers possible, but government does not desire to do, nor should it do, all this. Government is in Washington, and does not always understand what is the best for Arizona, Michigan, or Ohio. It is a partnership, working with those other communities, that will make the changes possible.

The EPA's third goal is to promote the pursuit of environmental careers. In the past in the United States, and many other nations, it has been a question of the environment versus the economy. For example, in the United States the statement "either jobs, or owls" was made, in defense of one endangered species of owl but it is never so simple. How can ways of linking the two be found? Sustainable development means having a good environment and a good economy. The one cannot be had without the other. During the last few hours of this conference this has become clear, and it is very true. The youth of today, college students, high school students, many of whom will have careers concerned with the environment, are not even aware of its existence today. So the EPA is linking internships and fellowships with universities, with two year technical programs, in the United States. The aim is to persuade the public to realize that helping the environment is good for the economy.

The last goal, which is really the latest, because it is developing further as time goes by, is not written in law. The last goal has been to reach

across international boundaries. The result is that I am here! In the last year the EPA's office has met with over one hundred delegations from other nations. A common theme on the environment is education. The environment cannot be helped without reaching beyond national boundaries, therefore, the international component of what the EPA is doing is a growing component. In this exchange it learns always as much as, if not more than, it is able to teach.

The EPA is working closely in North America now with Canada and Mexico, using species as the teaching mechanism. The Monarch butterfly is dependent upon Canada, the United States and Mexico for its survival. What better way to reach the imagination of children and adults than a butterfly, which needs us all? This is true of Greece as well as the United States. I learned a great deal today that I will take back to share. I look at what we are doing now as the beginning of a long-term relationship; the international aspects of environmental education are with us, and I think are very strongly here to stay.

Finally, the EPA is also a grant-making organization. In the United States, this means that it grants money from the federal government, which is another new development. In the last two years it has given out ten million dollars in grants to groups, from small groups of \$200, to large sums of money, of two or three hundred thousand dollars. It has given over five hundred grants to such organizations, scattered all over the United States. It will monitor and evaluate these programs and then share with the rest of the world what it finds to be successful. Successful community groups, which with some federal support can move into another area, can also share their results. So this is something to share with Biopolitics in the future. I envisage a very strong relationship with Biopolitics International Organisation and with its exceptionally capable leader. I look forward to meeting with more of you as we go toward this common goal of educating today for tomorrow.

Professor **Bradley Smith**, who holds a Ph.D. from the School of Natural Resources and Environment, University of Michigan, is currently Dean of Huxley College of Environmental Science at Western Washington University and Advisor to the President of the United States on environmental issues. From 1991 to 1994 he served as Director, Office of Environmental Education, United States Environmental Protection Agency, in Washington D.C. He has also served as Member of the US Senior Executive Service, Acting President of the National Environmental Education and Training Foundation and US Representative to, and Chairman of, the Trilateral Committee of the Memorandum of Understanding on Environmental Education Among Canada, Mexico and the United States. Internationally, he is continuing advisor to the United Nations Environmental Program, and a member of the International Advisory Council for Education and Communication on Environment and Development, Toronto, Canada, as well as advisor to various important organisations. Professor Smith has authored or co-authored several environmentally related textbooks, including the frequently re-printed "Environmental Science: the Study of Interrelationships." He has been the recipient of numerous environmental awards, including the EPA's own Bronze Medal, in 1993.