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Family Ties: Mainstream Environmentalists' Understanding of Radical Environmentalism in America

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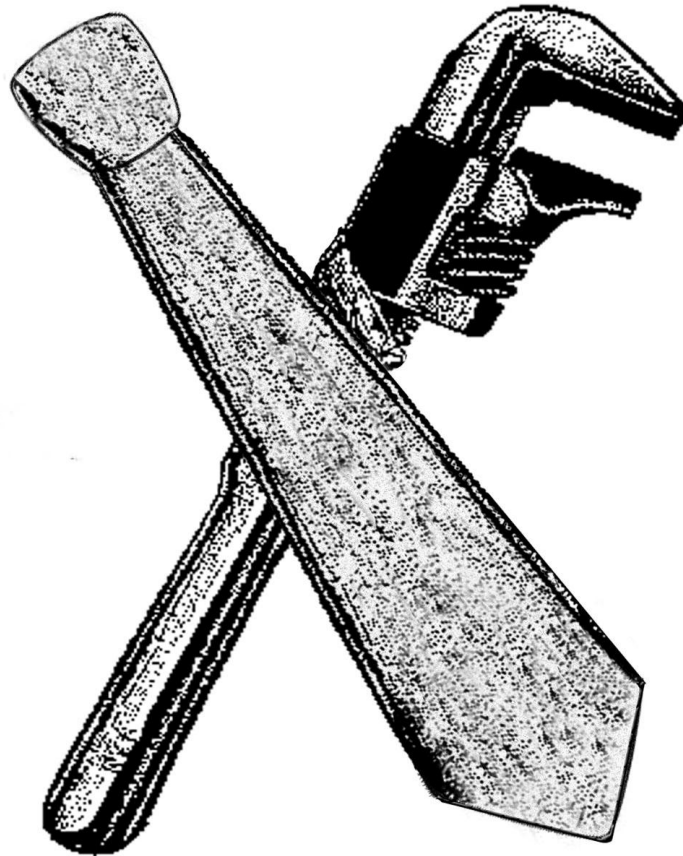
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Family Ties:

Mainstream Environmentalists'
Understanding of Radical Environmentalism
in America



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Government Department Senior Thesis

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Preface and Acknowledgements

I really like the title of this paper. In case you missed the sitcom reference, *Family Ties* aired on NBC from 1982 to 1989. The basic premise of the show was this: two hippies grow up, get married, and have three children, two of whom are (gasp!) Wall Street-bound Reaganites. The third and youngest child shares in her parents' liberal sympathies but is independent and still coming into her own. Everyone's under the same roof. Hilarity ensues. You get the picture.

Still, you may be wondering, (aside from conjuring up images of a young Michael J. Fox) what value is there in applying the title to an honors thesis about environmental politics? The family structure established in *Family Ties* is irresistibly similar to that of the American environmental movement. You have the manifestation of the liberal parents—Thoreau, Emerson, Muir—paving the way for a variety of related but sometimes resistant descendents. Mainstream environmentalists (while they certainly aren't Reaganites) resisted the flower-power tactics of their forefathers, favoring instead the world of suits and ties, corporate structure and Washington powerhouse politics. Then there are the youngest children, the modern day radicals, embracing the mantras of their parents but uniquely altering them to fit their own individuality.

Okay, so maybe it's a stretch. But there's another component of *Family Ties* that makes a lot of sense. All American environmentalists, from the Carl Pope to Julia Butterfly, are part of the same clan, the same lineage. They share the same core values, even if they pursue those values in different ways. They—we—are a family.

I would like to acknowledge some important people at Colby College. The Government Department Faculty, particularly Professors Joe Reisert, Sandy Maisel, Walter Hatch, Jennifer Yoder, and Tony Corrado for their consistent input throughout the thesis process. Professor Keith Peterson of the Philosophy Department for being my second reader. My fellow thesis "colleagues" for the mutual empathy. Andy Rougeot for being a great office-mate and an all-around superb fellow. My family and friends for putting up with me when I was grouchy and celebrating with me when I had success.

I would also like to thank all of the individuals who participated in this study—it literally would not exist without your input. I hope you find it interesting, accurate, and helpful.

Finally, much gratitude is due to Cat Ashcraft, to whom this project is dedicated, for being the best advisor a student could ask for (really).

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Introduction: When to Hold ‘em and When to Fold ‘em

Research Design, Methodology, and a History of American Environmentalism

The origins of the radical environmental movement Earth First! are legendary. As the story goes, a trio of dedicated environmental activists threw off the archaic modems of mainstream environmentalism while on a spiritual journey through the Pinacate Desert en route to Albuquerque, New Mexico. Inspired by the grandeur of the desert geology, the group discussed wilderness, their desires to foresee the collapse of capitalism, and humanity’s place in the world. It was during this trip that Dave Foreman, then an employee of The Wilderness Society, supposedly coined the term “Earth First!” which would (they hoped) become the banner cry of the newest generation of environmentalists.

That was 1980. This story typically glosses over the reasons why the environmental movement splintered into “radical” and “mainstream” camps. After all, the founders of Earth First! had previously worked for The Wilderness Society, The Nature Conservancy—giants in the world of mainstream environmental activism—and the Bureau of Land Management. In his autobiographical work “Confessions of an Eco-Warrior,” Foreman cites a specific instance of failure on the part of mainstream environmentalists as his reason for defecting: RARE II. The Roadless Area Review and Evaluation of 1977 (RARE II), was a land-use inventory evaluation conducted by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to determine which federal lands should be included in the nation’s Wilderness System (USFS 2009). A coalition of national environmental groups initially put forth large proposals, but later, worrying they might isolate their allies in the

Carter administration, reduced the scope (Foreman 1991). At the conclusion of the review, the USFS recommended that, of the 62 million acres under consideration, only 15 million acres of land should be designated as wilderness (Sierra Club: Kern-Kaweah Chapter 2001).

Foreman and others were disappointed and disillusioned by the outcome. Not only did they view the mainstream decision to moderate their proposals as an unscrupulous compromise of ideals, they saw the “civilized” approach as a plainly ineffective strategy: “[The Industry Representatives] looked like fools. We looked like statesmen. They won” (Foreman 1991).

Mainstream groups, on the other hand, have reacted to RARE II and similar experiences differently: they did not perceive these episodes as failures, but rather as unavoidable parts of a larger—and, in their view, ultimately successful—effort. They continue to use the same methods they have used since the 1970s: political compromise, moderate lobbying, and financial influence (Scarce 2005; McCloskey 2005). Furthermore, mainstream groups typically consider ineffective the methods of “direct action” used by radical environmentalists: tree spiking, civil disobedience, and arson, to name a few.

* * * *

As a student of environmental policy and an environmentalist at heart, I find the apparent dichotomy between the mainstream and radical wings of the movement both fascinating and disconcerting. Environmental disputes are as numerous and complex as ever. It seems that mainstream groups and radicals alike could benefit from a broad catharsis. Success in the future will likely not be attributed to a single set of tactics, but

to a barrage of efforts coming from various sources. While both radical and moderate approaches have their limitations, each also offers unique assets, and these assets must be understood as they are employed.

Surprisingly little research has been done on the relationship between mainstream and radical American environmentalists. While the protagonists of other social movements—such as, the American civil rights movement—have enjoyed significant objective analysis, only a select few scholars have undertaken either retrospective or contemporary analyses of mainstream-radical relationships within the environmental movement. In this paper I aim to augment the current body of study by observing how mainstream environmental groups regard radical environmentalists. Specifically, I focus on how mainstream groups perceive the influence radicals have on the success of their own policy objectives. An increased understanding of how radical behavior influences mainstream objectives could help mainstream environmental groups be more effective and provide a bridge between groups with similar values but a recent history of tension.

Research Design and Methodology

Research Question and Hypotheses

How do mainstream environmental groups perceive that radical environmentalists influence their success in achieving their policy objectives? First, do they perceive that radicals affect outcomes at all? One Sierra Club representative interviewed for this project acknowledged that most mainstream groups have little tangible contact with radicals, stating, “In our work, we have little direct interaction with

ecoradical organizations or individuals” (Interview Maine 01 2010). However, the same representative also shared stories of a perceived *indirect* influence:

I work on fuel efficiency and the wastefulness of SUVs: we were talking to public officials on all levels about the problems of fuel efficiency, the policy part, increasing fuel economy standards, all that stuff. There were direct actions by some [radical] groups—might have been ELF—that got a lot of attention. I remember having to respond to those sorts of things. [Policy makers] would become quite concerned with the spectrum of violence. They may not have referenced that action specifically, but they were concerned. (Interview Maine 01 2010)

This individual perceived radical action to worry policymakers, which indirectly made it a concern for mainstream environmentalists. Clearly there is some perceived level of influence. How, then, can this perceived influence be characterized?

Autobiographical works authored by influential environmentalists frame the question to be studied. Michael McClosky, a former chairman of the Sierra Club, writes that environmentalists in the 1970s were not “all of one mind” about how to change the environment, or about how much change was necessary (McCloskey 2005). He also provides insight into the decisions made by mainstream environmental groups to compromise or form alliances with other interests. Dave Foreman, a co-founder of Earth First!, provides the radical counter perspective to McClosky. In detailing his decision to part with the mainstream Wilderness Society, Foreman remembers the nascent relationship between the radical and mainstream wings of the movement in the early 1980s and critiques practices still employed today (Foreman 1991).

From within the academic realm, Liddick examines radical environmental and animal rights activists and the role of groups like PETA and Earth First! as megaphones for these individuals (Liddick 2006). Scarce observes that there are frequent interactions between mainstream and radical environmentalists that benefit both camps (Scarce 2005). Radicals, he notes, help to shape the debate, and offer extreme land use proposals that make mainstream proposals seem more reasonable by comparison. Switzer also studies environmental activism, and asks whether radical tactics are successful in affecting policy changes. While she finds no explicit collaboration between mainstream and radical environmentalists, she does identify a tacit link between the two in the public psyche (Switzer 2003). Finally, in their notable theoretical piece, “Break Through,” Shellenberger and Nordhouse posit that the strategies of the environmental mainstream have remained the same while the values and mindsets of the American populace have changed, and question whether the preferred method of “policy literalism” doesn’t undermine the mainstream’s effectiveness (Shellenberger and Nordhaus 2007).

The relevant literature suggests three possible answers to the question of perceived influence. Perhaps mainstream groups perceive that radicals can be beneficial when they issue contrasting land-use proposals. A more extreme proposal put forth by radicals could “moderate” mainstream environmentalists’ proposals, making them more desirable to policymakers and more likely to be adopted. Mainstream groups might also perceive that direct action tactics tarnish public opinion of all environmentalists, making it harder for them to achieve success. It is also possible that mainstream groups perceive that radicals attract more media attention to an environmental issue than it would have

received otherwise, and that this attention can be useful. The table below sums up these three hypotheses.

Table 1.1 Hypotheses and Variables		
Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable
Mainstream groups perceive that radicals <u>help</u> their level of success by <u>articulating contrasting proposals during environmental negotiations.</u>	Radicals articulate contrasting proposals.	Mainstream groups' success is perceived to have been helped/hindered.
Mainstream groups perceive that radicals <u>hinder</u> their level of success by <u>engaging in direct action, which negatively alters public opinion of all environmentalists.</u>	Radicals engage in direct action, negatively influencing public opinion.	Mainstream groups' success is perceived to have been helped/hindered.
Mainstream groups perceive that radicals <u>help</u> their level of success by <u>generating greater levels of publicity/awareness about environmental issues.</u>	Radicals draw positive attention to an issue by generating publicity/awareness.	Mainstream groups' success is perceived to have been helped/hindered.

“Success” is a relative, spectral factor that may be difficult to measure. In land-use cases like those chosen for this research it is rare that an environmental group’s top choice of usage is adopted. Realistically, groups work within a range, pushing for additional percentiles in a war of attrition. Is it possible that an outcome that preserves 25% of a forest might be considered “success” while an outcome that preserves only 24% might not? Perhaps. For mainstream environmentalists, even single-issue negotiations are treated as negotiations over a package of issues. For example, the 24% scenario may include a provision for future preservation opportunities while the 25% does not. The question “how successful was a given outcome” is, therefore, best answered qualitatively by the individuals involved. For this study, which attempts to analyze the perceived influence of one set of actors on another, what matters is how success is *perceived* in a given scenario. Did mainstream groups perceive that radical action pushed them *towards* an outcome that was, in their opinion, successful? If so, then we can say that radical

action helped in this situation. Did mainstream groups perceive that radical action pushed them *away* from an outcome that was, in their opinion, successful? If so, then we can say that radical action was hindering success in this situation.

Testing Hypotheses

Research Strategy

Case studies are an appropriate research strategy when a “how” or “why” question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the researcher has very little control. Furthermore, extreme or atypical cases can, in some circumstances, be more suitable than general cases since they attract more actors (Yin 2002). For this project I chose to focus on cases of proposed land-use regulation/designation in which specific proposals were articulated by both mainstream and radical groups. I chose land-use cases because land-use is a topic of consistent and ubiquitous environmentalist interest. Land-use cases are also highly contentious and represent classic environmental disputes: land has multiple uses, supports a diversity of life, and has great economic, sentimental, inherent, and non-use value. I selected my cases based on variation in my dependent variable, whether mainstream groups have perceived radicals as helping or hindering. Doing so eliminates some danger of selection bias and provides for a useful comparison between cases with different kinds of outcomes. Potential cases can be described according to two factors: a) did mainstream environmentalists perceive that they achieved a successful outcome, and b) did mainstream environmentalists perceive radicals to be helpful or hinder their efforts. The matrix below summarizes the case selection process.

Table 1.2 Case Selection		
	Helped	Hindered
Successful (perceived success and/or proposals were adopted)	Cases where mainstream groups were successful, and they perceive radicals to have been helpful in attaining this success.	Cases where mainstream groups were successful, but they perceive radicals to have been unhelpful in attaining this success.
Not Successful (perceived lack of success and/or proposals were not adopted).	Cases where mainstream groups were not successful, but they perceive radicals to have been helpful during the process.	Cases where mainstream groups were not successful, and they perceive radicals to have been unhelpful during the process.

The two cases chosen—The current efforts to protect Maine’s North Woods from commercial development and the Northwest Ancient Forest saga of the late 1980s and early 1990s—fell (by most accounts) into the southeastern and northwestern quadrants, respectively.¹

Case 1: Northwest Ancient Forests 1987-1994

The first case study examines the Northwest Ancient Forest Campaign. The ancient forests of the northwestern United States span from northern California throughout Oregon and Washington. The woods, which contain 1000-year-old Douglas-fir trees, are precious to environmentalists in the Northwest and elsewhere. The forests represent also a major store of timber. Historically, much of the National Forest land in the region has been open to commercial logging, serving as working forests for major corporations and sustaining timber communities throughout the region.

¹ Assigning cases to a single quadrant proved to be deceptively difficult. The perceived level of success and effect of radicals depends significantly on whom you ask. Mainstream environmental groups never comprise an entirely homogeneous block. Most observers, for example view the adoption of Plum Creek’s development plan for the Maine Woods as a failure on the part of environmental groups. The actual response to the plan, however, has been mixed: some groups have come out in support of the plan, while others are in the process of filing lawsuits. Hence, it is likely more honest to describe the Maine Woods case as falling somewhere in the bottom *half* of the matrix. Similarly, the Northwest case falls in the upper half.

The desire to harvest timber has conflicted directly with efforts to protect the ancient forests time and again. Environmentalists, however, managed to slow timber harvest significantly after the spotted owl was listed as a threatened species in June of 1990 (USFWS 2009). Though the spotted owl listing and subsequent ramping down of timber cutting are typically viewed, in retrospect, as a great (if not the greatest) endangered species victory in American history, the process leading up to that victory was full of tumult and division.

The campaign to preserve ancient forest in the Northwest can be framed as a battle between two tandems: environmentalists working with and through the federal judicial system, and timber interests working implicitly through the Northwest congressional delegation. The timeline was, broadly speaking, an example of history repeating itself. The timber industry was hit by an economic downturn in the mid-1980s. In an attempt to reconcile calls for wilderness protection with the need to maintain timber harvest levels, Congress passed wilderness bills in Oregon, Washington and California, protecting some land while opening millions of acres to multiple use management. Mainstream environmental groups, spurred on by a creative and immovable collection of grassroots forest advocates, initiated a sequence of lawsuits, which, time and again, won federal injunctions against logging. Injunctions were then overridden by congressional appropriations riders, which were sponsored by the Northwest delegation spearheaded by Senator Mark Hatfield (R-OR). Logging then continued in ecologically sensitive areas until another injunction was obtained, starting the cyclical process once again (Durbin 1996).

During this time radical environmentalists were engaged in a multifaceted approach to advocacy. A variety of grassroots groups were advancing radical agendas via more ‘traditional’ methods of public discourse, media and press manipulation, and good science, while others resorted to direct action, orchestrating tree-sits and driving nails into Douglas-firs (Barnard 1988).

Realizing that Congress would continue to override any injunctions on timber harvesting, mainstream environmentalists opted to formulate a compromise with Sen. Hatfield and the Northwest delegation. The negotiations were brief and conducted behind closed-doors. Overall, the response from the environmental community was scattered and negative. Mainstream environmentalists, though disappointed, realized that that they were getting the lesser of two evils. Radicals were livid and viewed the ‘compromise’ as a complete sellout to the whims of politicians.

The case concluded with the Northwest Forest conference and the adoption of the Clinton Forest Plan in 1994. This case is largely considered a success and mainstream groups involved in it generally perceived radicals to be helpful.

Case 2: Maine’s North Woods 2005-Present

The second case study focuses on the recent efforts to limit development in Maine’s North Woods, the largest contiguous, undeveloped forest ecosystem east of the Mississippi (AMC November, 2009). The forest, which comprises nearly a quarter of New England, has historically been open to commercial timber harvesting and recreational hunting. Regulatory authority within the area belongs to the Land Use Regulation Commission (known more colloquially as LURC), an autonomous commission of seven individuals charged with overseeing a jurisdiction of over 10.4

million acres (LURC 2010). Land ownership is divided among numerous timber companies and changes hands frequently (Crowell 2007).

One such company, Washington-based Plum Creek, acquired 900,000 acres of the North Woods in 1998 (Austin 2005). In 2005, after years of denying interest in development, Plum Creek submitted a zoning proposal to LURC for what would be the largest development in Maine history. The initial proposal, which included, among other things, plans for 975 house lots and two resorts along Moosehead Lake, met stiff opposition from the public and was retracted. However, after numerous revisions—including the addition of 233,000 acres of conservation land—the plan managed to meet LURC standards and was adopted in September of 2009 (NRCM 2010). Mainstream environmental groups are currently divided over the adopted proposal. The Nature Conservancy, for example, supports the plan and intends to purchase jointly with the AMC 400,000 additional acres of conservation land. The Natural Resources Council of Maine, on the other hand, has filed a suit against LURC appealing the adopted proposal.

Radical environmentalists, conversely, have been united in their opposition to the plan. Since the introduction of the initial proposal in 2005 radicals in the state have engaged in limited but noteworthy episodes of direct action. The laundry list of radical action in this case includes vandalism, civil disobedience, and breaking and entering—actions that clearly have the potential to affect efforts by the mainstream to limit development by Plum Creek. Furthermore, the North Woods case has a particular set of unique factors that could augment the effect of any volatile action: LURC, who is ultimately responsible for the passage or failing of any proposed development in the area,

is comprised of a few individuals and an insufficient staff that can easily be influenced by personal encounters with radical action.

By most accounts mainstream environmentalists have been unsuccessful in the Maine Woods case. Furthermore, mainstream environmentalists generally perceive that radicals have hindered their success.

Research Methodology: Interviews

The history of these cases provides some insight into how mainstream environmentalists perceive that radicals affect their level of success. However, press accounts often don't explain or describe how mainstream environmentalists feel about radical environmentalists and the effect radicals have on mainstream policy objectives. Mainstream environmentalists also have a habit of distancing themselves, as quickly as possible, from radical action when it may have an undesirable impact on public perception (Bevington 2009). Since my goal was to determine perceptions I felt it was necessary to ask representatives of mainstream environmental groups about how they perceive radicals to affect their level of success.

Seventeen interviews were conducted between November 2009 and December 2010. Interviewees were located and contacted through simple research methods—personal websites, environmental organizations, and then through a networking process called “snowballing.” The concept of snowballing is simple: a keystone contact provides a researcher with tough-to-come-by contact information for other potential interviewees and lends his/her name as a referral. In this way, two primary contacts opened the door to successful research, serving as liaisons between myself and other key individuals.

In an effort to limit the potential impact of unreliable or inaccurate responses a strategy of triangulation was used when possible—checking the responses of mainstream environmentalists against those of grassroots environmentalists, academic experts and policy makers, and secondary sources like news accounts and analyses of events. In the end, the interviews broke down as such. Ten interviews with representatives of mainstream environmental groups, two with prominent academics, two with grassroots environmentalists, two with former congressional aides, and one with a retired congressman. Summaries of the relevant data obtained from the interviews can be found in appendices A.1 and A.2.

Interviews were conducted with the understanding that all participants would remain anonymous. Anonymity was important to me as it allowed for free and comfortable discourse, and to the participants, many of whom were concerned about revealing sensitive information. All information obtained reflects the personal views of participants and in no way represents the views of an interviewee's organization(s).

Methodological Deficiencies

Some barriers to a flawless data set are worth noting. First and foremost, I could not speak to everyone I wanted to talk to. Some mainstream representatives denied my requests for an interview because of the sensitivity of the subject matter. Some individuals were worried that participation in this study would lead to an implicit association with radical environmentalists. In one instance an individual agreed to speak with me, then, after consulting with his superiors, retracted the offer. There also seemed to be a general correlation between an individual's willingness to participate in this study and their current employment status—active employees were more reticent than retirees.

Additionally, many potential interviewees were just plain busy (particularly those working on the Maine Woods, as that case is ongoing). The timeframe of this study, constrained by the school year, prohibited me from interviewing people who were unavailable before February 2010.

A History of American Environmentalism, Then and Now

The environmental movement in the United States encompasses a complex spectrum of individuals with varying pursuits—some broad and overlapping, some local and exclusive. Self-described environmentalists range from weekend recreationists to professional environmental advocates; from green-conscious shoppers to tree-sitters. Categorizing environmentalists can be tricky: internal evaluations of the movement differ from outside perspectives, and many environmentalists vary the strength of their commitment from issue to issue and throughout their lives. Classification, however, is a necessary component of this study. In this research, environmentalists are grouped by their preferred methods of advocating for environmental protection.² These approaches evolved out of an ideological dichotomy—conservationism vs. preservationism—and have been shaped by historical experience. Today this rift has primarily manifested in two broad camps: mainstream environmentalists who are willing to compromise, and

² In his book *The Rebirth of Environmentalism*, Doug Bevington suggests that the typical classification of environmentalists as either “mainstream” or “radical” is descriptively inaccurate. Focusing on tactics, he chooses to describe the movement as a tripartite blend of “insider,” “outsider: direct action” and “outsider: grassroots” actors. Groups and individuals, then, are categorized by terms that reflect their actual tactics rather than by societal perceptions.

Bevington further suggests that the term “moderate” be substituted for “mainstream,” since it provides a more accurate foil to “radical.” Within the spectrum of environmentalism, some groups are freer than others to act without constraint. To say a group is more constrained implies nothing about its effectiveness. Rather it is a simple recognition that political, social, and institutional factors may orient it towards a narrower set of tactics. Mainstream groups are moderated by such factors, whilst radicals are not. Hence, the groups we think of as “mainstream” might just as easily be thought of as “moderated” or “moderate” when compared to radicals (Bevington 2009).

radicals who are uncompromising. As one former Sierra Club lobbyist notes, in his opinion, “The difference between mainstream and radical environmentalism is simple. Mainstream folks believe that there’s always going to be another chance to sit down at the table, and they focus on securing that chance. Radicals believe there’s only one chance, or no chance at all (Interview Northwest 02 2010).” While some individuals surely fall in between, environmentalists can broadly be assigned into those two camps.

This dichotomy dates back to the rift between preservationists, who wanted to protect wilderness as it was, for its own sake, and conservationists, who wanted to sustain the earth’s bounty for multiple uses by future generations. Today, the preservationist line can be traced to radical environmentalists and the conservationist line to many mainstream advocacy groups, though the connection may not be immediately clear. The Sierra Club, for example, the first and perhaps most recognizable mainstream American environmental organization, was founded by preservationist patriarch John Muir. Does this mean the modern Sierra club, which has modeled its advocacy arm at the national level after a traditional Washington lobby, has abandoned its founding principles? Let me suggest that it has not. Rather, the history of its development has lead to a reformulation of methods. The Sierra Club and groups like it have grown symbiotically with an expanding federal government: they view policy makers as being in the best position to enact environmental protections and regulations. However, not all policy makers share the preservationist creed. In fact, very few do, as it is politically impossible in the United States to oppose the use of at least *some* public land for natural resources. Conservationism is a practical philosophy for mainstream organizations as it allows them to make incremental gains where they otherwise might not gain at all. Conservationism

now resembles a strategy more than a philosophy and is used by mainstream organizations. The motto has shifted from “Save Hetch Hetchy!” to “Save Hetch Hetchy (but we will accept just Hetch if that’s all you’re willing to give)!”

Origins of the Movement and Early Action

The genesis of environmentalism in America can be traced to the same spring of Romanticism that spawned purely *American*—that is, independent, non-European—thought. As Roderick Nash notes in his seminal *Wilderness and the American Mind*, “the literary gentleman wielding a pen, not the pioneer with his axe, made the first gestures of resistance against the strong currents of antipathy [towards the natural world]” (Nash 2001). In the 1840s transcendentalist thinkers, most notably Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson, began rejecting European history in favor of a purely American narrative, with “wilderness” at its nexus. Whereas wilderness was formerly seen as either a dark, treacherous place—the antithesis of pious, human civilization—or as mere bounty to be harnessed by man, the American idea of wilderness in the 19th century incorporated a “primitivistic idealization of a life closer to nature.” Insisting upon a new appreciation of nature, Thoreau urged that “every community should have a park, or rather a primitive forest...where a stick should never be cut for fuel, a common possession forever, for instruction and recreation” (Kline 2007). The unfortunate reality, however was that American expansionism could only occur through the destruction and alteration of wild lands. Hence a rift was born between those who appreciated natural lands as they were and those who either found them repugnant or wished to exploit them.

By the latter half of the 19th century the American government had embraced wilderness protection. During this period, even in the face of massive industrialization,

population growth, and territorial expansion, the first true National Parks in the world were created: Yellowstone under President Grant in 1872, and Yosemite under President Harrison in 1890 (WETA 2009). In a few short decades American environmentalism had grown strong enough to permeate the national government. Americans began to recognize the value of forest ecosystems as sources of clean water and air and, gradually, began to prioritize the preservation of wilderness.

Muir and Pinchot, Early Missions, and Getting Organized

Towards the end of the century a new generation of vocal wilderness champions became active. Their ideologies, however, were by no means homogenous. Continuing the transcendentalist tradition, preservationists, shepherded by the rugged and reverent John Muir, wanted the nation's forests and wild lands preserved in their natural state. The philosophy of preservation incorporated ideas about the inherent value of plants, animals, and places in nature; what Muir called being "made for itself" (Muir 1911). Alternatively, the conservationists, led by forester Gifford Pinchot, supported an increased government role in the management of natural resources for the common good. While this communalism was at odds with conventional colonial notions of private landownership and property rights inherent in early American political society, Pinchot deftly argued that science-sponsored conservation and economical forestry were not mutually exclusive (Switzer 2003). In contrast to preservationist beliefs, Pinchot's conservation ethic was purely anthropocentric, "Forestry...is the art of producing from the forest whatever it can yield for the service of man" (Pinchot 1914). This core difference between the preservationist and conservationist camps would persist. To this day

environmentalists are divided over whether or not (or how much) the integrity of wilderness can be compromised for human benefit.

As interest in environmental protection grew, environmentalists began to see the need for structured advocacy organizations. John Muir, along with 182 other charter members, incorporated the Sierra Club in 1892. Other environmental organizations soon followed: the National Audubon Society (1905), the National Parks Conservation Association (1919), the Izaak Walton League (1922), The Wilderness Society (1935), and the National Wildlife Federation (1936). Together, these six organizations would become the foundation of mainstream American environmentalism, manning the helm of the movement well into the 20th century. Consistent among their missions were themes of environmental protection and conservation for present and future generations.

Table 1.3 Early Environmental Groups and Their Missions	
Sierra Club	"To explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth..."
National Audubon Society	"To conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats..."
National Parks Conservation Association	"To protect and enhance America's National parks for present and future generations."
Izaak Walton League	"To conserve, maintain, protect, and restore the soil, forest, water, and other natural resources..."
The Wilderness Society	"To protect wilderness and inspire Americans to care for our wild places."
National Wildlife Federation	"To inspire Americans to protect wildlife for our children's future."

A New Standard of Living: Growing the Base

Until the 1960s, these organizations were largely concerned with unique land and wildlife, often focusing their attentions on tangible, site-specific issues (Mitchell, Mertig and Dunlap 1992). One such early battle involved the damming of the Tuolumne River in Yosemite National Park. The City of San Francisco supported constructing a dam at Hetch Hetchy, a strikingly beautiful glacial valley, to fuel the city's growing demands for

water and hydroelectric power. Supporters of the dam insisted that flooding the valley would actually make it *more* aesthetically pleasing as a gorgeous reservoir lake would sit in place of the valley. The conflict produced some of Muir's most famous rhetoric, "Dam the Hetch Hetchy! As well dam for water tanks the people's cathedrals and churches, for no holier temple has ever been consecrated by the heart of man" (Scarce 2005). For Muir and his followers Hetch Hetchy was intrinsically valuable just as it was—an awe-inspiring temple unblemished by human beings that deserved preservation. In spite of efforts by the Sierra Club to stall federal sanctioning of the project, Congress authorized the construction of the O'Shaughnessy Dam in 1913. The defeat, a major blow to the nascent environmental organizations, further deepened the rift between the preservationist and conservationist camps as much of the support for the dam came from Pinchot and his disciples (Kline 2007). Only several decades after the formal birth of American environmentalism, distinctions were already forming between those who were uncompromising in their defense of the earth and those who were willing to reconcile wilderness protection with conflicting interests.

Although largely dormant during World War II, the American environmental movement sprang back with new fervor in the years after the war. Discussing environmental awareness in the post-war era, Samuel P. Hays describes an unparalleled societal shift:

The environmental drive in modern society stems from new human values about what people want in their lives. For many decades, even centuries, the desire for more material goods shaped what people thought of as a higher standard of living. In the twentieth century, however, one

increasingly heard the phrase “quality of life,” a term that reflected a new dimension to “standard of living.” The “good life” now referred not only to material goods, but also to the quality of the environment where people lived, worked, and played. (Hays 2000)

As leisure time became more prominent, regular citizens started recreating and frequenting National Parks in much greater numbers. For the first time there existed a widespread public awareness about the natural environment, and environmental organizations fostered and directed this new enthusiasm by drawing attention to impending physical and biological threats. A desire arose among nature patrons to protect these areas for themselves, and, importantly, for future generations. Average Americans were invested in wilderness and had an interest in preserving it.

By the 1960s an inquisitiveness had spread through the environmental movement regarding the consequences of modern industrialization and consumerism. Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962) galvanized a new generation of environmentalists who thought deeply about the long-term implications of human actions. While mainstream groups still worked on acute, site-specific issues, they also leant their energies to combating subtler, more complex problems. Consequently, this shift of focus broadened their appeal and resulted in an upswing in membership. Between 1960 and 1972, membership in major environmental groups rose from 123,000 to 1,117,000, and on April 22, 1970 more than 20 million people celebrated the first Earth Day (Mitchell, Mertig and Dunlap 1992; EPA 2009). Additionally, the Carter administration appeared to be sympathetic to the environmental cause. Mainstream groups, attempting to take

advantage of newly available financial and political resources, adopted the tactics of traditional Washington lobbies.

Sagebrush Rebels and Conservative Backlash

Despite this explosion in environmental awareness and increased group membership the divide between preservationist and conservationist philosophy remained largely unmended. Several groundbreaking federal environmental laws were passed protecting wilderness, establishing federal agencies, cleaning up air and water, and defending threatened and endangered species. However, the implementation of these laws was not—and has not—been easy.³ The legislation had the unintended consequence of rallying opposition to the environmental movement—mainly arising from property rights advocates and industrialists. Environmentalists, disjointed, were unable to put up a united front against these attacks (Hays 2000; Salzman and Thompson 2007).

Hence, the great environmental victories of the 1960s and 70s were quickly tempered by backlash from Western property rights advocates, who were vocal, ideologically organized, and favored by the conservative Reagan administration. The Sagebrush Rebellion, as it came to be known, coalesced local conservative groups around the idea that states should have greater control over natural resources. The Rebels found allies in Washington: two Reagan appointees, Secretary of the Interior James Watt and EPA Administrator Ann Gorsuch Burford shared the president's sympathies for private interests, transforming both agencies, temporarily at least, into ranching and forestry

³ Many of these laws have become important for environmental advocacy groups that use litigation in their policy toolkit. Most notably: the Clean Water Act (1972), the Clean Air Act (1963, amended 1970, 1990), the National Environmental Policy Act (1969) and the Endangered Species Act (1973).

darlings (Kline 2007). Major environmental groups, which had evolved symbiotically with government, now found themselves downstream without a paddle.

Questioning Mainstream Tactics: Earth First! and the New Radicals

While the mainstream component of the environmental movement had oriented itself towards traditionally effective means of influencing policymakers, some environmentalists found that grassroots property rights activists were getting more attention by kicking and screaming. In the early 1980s, frustrated with the movement's ineffectiveness, a new radical faction formed. The new wing was highly critical of mainstream tactics, instead adopting a raucous, no-compromise position similar to that of the Sagebrush Rebels:

This new radical wing...was characterized by a strong critique of the conventional methods of the pragmatists. To some extent, this new radicalism embodied a reaction against the anti-environmental radicalism of the Reagan administration. It reflected a determination to go as far as possible in the opposite direction. (McCloskey 1992)

Dave Foreman, a former employee of the Wilderness Society, had formed Earth First! in 1979, proclaiming, "Let our actions set the finer points of our philosophy!" (Foreman 1991). Earth First!ers were radical, creative, and initially humorous in their approaches, relying on Ed Abbey's *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975) as an ecowarrior's bible.⁴ During this period The Animal Liberation Front (ALF) also engaged in numerous direct action stunts to publicize animal cruelty abuses (Liddick 2006).

⁴ In 1981, a small group of Earth First!ers congregated to protest the Glen Canyon Dam. During the protest, several individuals "unfurled a three hundred-foot piece of plastic down the face of the dam, producing what appeared to be a huge crack" (Liddick 2006).

At the end of the decade mainstream groups were still struggling to find reliable federal government allies. George Bush had promised to be an “environmental President,” but was falling far short of expectations. Two events—the identification of a hole in the ozone layer in 1986 and the disastrous Exxon Valdez oil spill of 1989—had brought environmental concerns back into the public discourse, but this upwelling of support was short-lived as economic concerns preoccupied both citizens and elected officials.⁵

Adapting to New Surroundings: Environmentalism Since 1990

Environmentalists found reason to be optimistic entering the 1990s. Bill Clinton had chosen Al Gore Jr., a known environmental activist, as his running mate and openly distanced himself from the Bush administration’s relaxed environmental stances during the 1992 presidential campaign. Soon environmentalists found themselves disappointed with the administration’s centrist positioning. While Clinton vehemently opposed any budgetary cuts for federal environmental agencies, he failed to move beyond defense of the status quo. The height of this charge occurred in 1994 with the passage of the Northwest Forest Plan, an overarching, multi-agency document that identified 24.4 million acres of federal lands critical to spotted owl preservation but opened up additional areas to timber harvesting (Oregon Wild 2009). National environmental groups were looking for an ally and a champion in the White House after more than a decade of

⁵ In 1992 world leaders gathered in Rio for the first UN Earth Summit. Participants hoped to address collective environmental concerns on an international scale, and sought key commitments from the United States, a world economic power. President Bush walked away from the conference with a weak commitment to a non-binding climate change plan and without having signed the Convention on Biodiversity. To many, the result classified the U.S. as a laggard. European powers attending the conference had demonstrated a willingness to consider international environmental concerns when making domestic economic decisions. The U.S. had not (Kline 2007).

rhetorical and political assault from conservatives in power. They found no such champion in Clinton.

Forced to deal with public apathy and a resurgence of sagebrush-style opposition, mainstream environmentalists started to evaluate their options and diversify their toolkit. One notable feature of the 1990s was the rise of “green consumerism.” Marketers seeking to target green-thinking consumers began promoting earth-friendly products and practices (Banerjee, Gulas and Iyer 1995). The realization that businesses and industries have enormous capacities to develop innovative eco-friendly practices, reduce material consumption and energy use, and promote environmental consciousness caught on with mainstream groups (McCloskey 2005; Anderson and Bateman 2000). Today “going green” is trendier than ever. Mainstream groups have taken advantage of this trend, pulling support (somewhat ironically) from consumers to supplement typical operations.

The 21st century has been wrought with ups and downs for the environmental movement. As Jacqueline Vaughn Switzer observes,

The new century began with a political agenda that was so filled with non-environmental concerns that groups struggled just to be heard above the din of other voices. The questions about whether or not the economy was poised for recovery, or whether defense spending would grow at the expense of social problems, forced the environment off most decision maker’s agendas all together”. (Switzer 2003)

Large groups and local activists alike have had notable success in raising public awareness about global climate change and non-renewable energy sources.⁶ But in spite

⁶ In the absence of federal climate change legislation, several states joined regional emissions agreements in the late 2000s. One such agreement, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), is expected to

of this success, environmental concerns are still consistently trumped in public opinion polls by other domestic priorities (Pew Research Center 2009; Gallup 2009).⁷ Public perceptions of radical environmentalists have also worsened with a series of arsons supposedly committed by members of the Earth Liberation Front (ELF)—actions that prompted the FBI to classify ecoterrorism as “one of today’s most serious domestic terrorism threats” (Smith 2008). Mainstream environmentalists should be concerned about these trends. Apathy and a potentially damaged public image threaten to undermine years of hard work and reputation-building.

reduce greenhouse gas emissions from member states by 10% by 2018, based on current emissions levels. The 10 RGGI member states are: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont (RGGI 2009).

⁷ A 2009 Gallup poll asked respondents “With which of these statements about the environment and the economy do you most agree—protection of the environment should be given priority, even at the risk of curbing economic growth (or) economic growth should be given priority, even if the environment suffers to some extent?” 51% favored the economy, and 42% favored the environment. This represents the first time since the poll was first taken in 1985 that economic priorities have outweighed environmental concerns. Additionally, a 2009 Pew Research Center survey found that among interviewees the environment ranked 16th out of 20 national priorities, and global warming ranked 20th (Pew Research Center 2009).

Chapter 2: Mainstream and Radical Environmentalism

An Overview of Tactics, Ideologies and Compositions

The following sections describe and define “mainstream” and “radical” environmentalism. As noted in the preceding section, mainstream and radical environmentalists are most easily distinguished by the tactics they employ. These tactics are a reflection of both underlying ideology and historical experience. Mainstream environmental groups find lobbying to be an effective means of securing environmental protection. Radicals reject that notion, favoring instead a variety of direct action approaches.

Mainstream Environmentalists: Big, Long Lasting, and Organized

When you think about the “environmental movement” in the United States, which types of groups or individuals first come to mind? Are groups within the movement large and organized, or small and disjointed? Would you consider them to be influential or not? What sorts of methods, activities, and tactics, come to mind when you think of the environmental movement?

When asked to think or make generalizations about the environmental movement most people default to the structures and practices of the “Green Lobby”—the collective term used to describe large environmental organizations and the political clout they wield. “Most observers,” says Samuel Hays, “think primarily about the national organizations headquartered in Washington...their membership size, their policies and

programs, their successes and failures” (Hays, 2000). These organizations—The Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society, and The National Audubon Society, to name a few—have long and established histories. They have played a critical role in the environmental movement, and have, more than any other contingency in the spectrum of environmentalism, become household names. Together their memberships number in the millions. They wield multimillion-dollar budgets, exert direct influence over policy makers, and employ full-time staffs of scientists, lawyers, activists, lobbyists, and administrators (Mitchell et al., 1992). While they don’t cover every inch of the camp, it is clear that these groups pitch the largest (and sturdiest) tents.

Such groups can be classified as “mainstream” environmental organizations. We should understand that this moniker is not derived from any sort of centrist or prevailing outlook held by these organizations. In fact, their stated goals and objectives have, for most of the time since their births, been out of sync with much of the American populace. Instead they are defined by the conventionality of their chosen *modus operandi*. The term “mainstream” refers to environmental organizations that use traditional political tactics such as lobbying members of Congress, initiating letter-writing campaigns, and mobilizing their membership through local, state, and national meetings to advance their agenda. Bosso and Collins find that this definition excludes groups like the Nature Conservancy and Greenpeace, which have a “narrower scope of activities through which they pursue goals” (Bosso et al. 2002). Generally, however, mainstream groups are enduring, have an established membership base, expertise, financial resources, and a track record of success in Washington (Switzer 2003).

For the purposes of this research, “mainstream environmental organizations” refers to a loose coalition of groups that are notable for their size, budget, and longevity. These groups are known collectively as “Green Group,” “The Group of Ten” (or twelve, or twenty-three, depending on how you count), and “The Green Lobby.” Many of these organizations worked together in the 1980s to promote a unified national environmental itinerary, published as *An Environmental Agenda for the Future* (Cahn, 1985). Though they differ slightly in their approaches, they are united in their willingness to compromise, alter proposals, and build broad-based coalitions with other interests (Scarce 2005) (McCloskey 2005).

Table 1.4
Membership Levels and Monetary Expenditures for Group of 10

Time Period/Organization**	Year Founded**	Membership (2008)*	Financial Expenditures \$ Million (2008)*
Progressive Era			
Sierra Club	1892	1,300,000	44.6
National Audubon Society	1905	1,000,000	92.5
National Parks and Conservation Association	1919	325,000	33.0
Between The Wars			
Izaak Walton League	1922	35,000	3.8
The Wilderness Society	1935	400,000	30.0
National Wildlife Federation	1936	4,000,000	90.1
Post WWII			
Defenders of Wildlife	1947	1,000,000	34.6
Environmental Era			
Environmental Defense Fund	1967	500,000	100.9
Friends of the Earth	1969	n/a	4.0
Natural Resources Defense Council	1970	1,300,000	85.6
Total		8,860,000	426.6

*Data obtained from annual reports for FY2008, which are available on the organizations' respective websites.

**Historical categorization and years founded obtained from (Mitchell et al.)

Why Take a Mainstream Approach?

Political scientists have long attempted to clarify why some interest groups are successful at meeting their objectives and why others fail. One theory suggests that interest groups, like organisms, occupy a certain niche within a fertile environment (containing, of course, certain criteria necessary for their survival). Writing on this theory of population ecology, Gray and Lowery suggest that if a group is to be effective, it must engage in the art of relative positioning; distancing itself from groups that occupy a similar niche. An effective group must also be adaptive, willing to alter its practices and structure to maintain public support, and, perhaps just as importantly, continue to be able to garner the resources it needs to achieve its goals (Gray and Lowery 2000).

Mainstream groups perceive there to be real advantages to operating as a conventional lobby: politicians and policy makers are the ones who can really affect things—they make the laws and they hold the purse strings. The best way to enact change, it is thought, is by influencing those who are in power.

Mainstream groups see politicians as the people who are able to implement long-lasting protection for the environment, and aim to develop a symbiotic relationship with these individuals. In “Voices and Echoes,” Shaiko determines that, for environmental groups, the most important of these resources is a sustainable and dedicated membership base (Shaiko 1999). An enduring constituency allows mainstream groups to increase their political clout in two main ways. First, membership fees fund political activities, including lobbying politicians directly and influencing them indirectly through political advertising. Second, groups with large memberships may represent a significant portion

of a policy maker's constituency, which he or she cannot ignore for fear of political backlash.

Radical Environmentalists: Passionate and to the Point

“When the law won't fix the problem, we put our bodies on the line to stop the destruction.” So reads the introduction to the Earth First! Journal, the anonymous mouthpiece for radical environmentalism (Earth First! 2009). Contrast this statement with the mission statement of the Sierra club, which reads: “To explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth...and to use *all lawful means* to carry out these objectives [emphasis added]” (Sierra Club 2009). For radical environmentalists, the Earth, quite literally, must come first. Where mainstream organizations are willing to work within the framework of the law to promote their agenda, radical environmentalists are empowered (specifically, self-empowered) to go beyond that constraint in defense of the earth.

For observers, it has been difficult to make bright-line distinctions between radical environmentalism and mainstream environmentalism. While the environmental community is disparate, many environmentalists—monkeywrenchers and litigators alike—share similar values and goals. The best place to draw distinction, it seems, is between preferred *modi operandi*.

Radical environmentalists are small groups or lone individuals who, first and foremost, confront problems through “direct action,” which can be violent or non-violent. Examples of direct action range from lawful protests to acts of civil disobedience; from

freeing animals from laboratories to destroying machinery and spiking trees.⁸ Most radical environmentalists act on their own, without direction from organized leadership (Scarce, 2006).

Philosophical Underpinnings of Radical Environmentalism and Direct Action

What encourages direct action? In order to understand the motivation behind radical environmentalism, and to better distinguish it from the mainstream, it is necessary to briefly discuss its philosophical underpinnings:

What does it mean to put the earth first? In essence, putting the earth first means giving proper moral and ethical consideration to the entire biosphere—the consideration it deserves. To do this, one must recognize that our system of ethics is currently based on an unjust hierarchy, with humans at the top. The current dominant, anthropocentric world-view is seen by radicals as destructive, unethical, and immoral.

Aldo Leopold, in his posthumous *A Sand County Almanac* discusses an evolution of ethics:

“All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. His instincts prompt him to compete for his place in that community, but his ethics prompt him also to co-operate...In short, a *land ethic* changes the role of Homo sapiens from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members and also respect for the community as such” (Leopold 1949)

Historically we have tended to broaden, rather than constrict, our conceptions of communities. Just as we’ve moved away from notions of slaves as property, of women

⁸ Environmental activists associated with the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, for example, have taken to sleeping among seal populations to defend them against poachers.

as lesser-beings than men, so too are we oriented to include other living creatures and the biosphere in our ethical considerations. Radical environmentalists believe that the next step in promoting universal equality is to recognize that, in the same way we've begun to do away with racism and sexism, we must strive to do away with 'speciesism' (Singer 1975). However they express it, most radical environmentalists believe that the expansion of the realm of ethical consideration to include non-humans—and the systems that support both us and them—is critical. Ergo, it becomes morally imperative, and for some individuals even compulsory, to protect biologically unique, vast swaths of wilderness, which remain comparatively untainted by human abuse and support a variety of life. No-compromise tactics are, for radical environmentalists, a logical way to put these beliefs into practice.

Today, the premises of radical environmental philosophy can be reduced to two pillars: *self-realization* and *biocentric equality*. Together, these notions form the basis what Arne Naess calls “deep ecology.” Self-realization is the recognition that we, as human beings, are not disparate egos on independent trajectories, rather we are part of a chain of interconnected biological, social, and spiritual webs—beginning with our friends and family, extending to the entirety of the human race and, for deep ecologists, the entire biosphere. Biocentric equality, a complementary notion, assumes that all aspects of the biosphere “have an equal right to live and blossom and to reach their own individual forms of unfolding and self-realization within the larger Self-realization” (Devall and Sessions 1993).

Deep ecologists believe that the richness and diversity of life has value in and of itself that is equal to that of human beings. Humans, they believe, cruelly abuse other life

forms, but they do not necessarily have to. The flourishing of human culture is compatible with the flourishing of non-human life, but only if the great excesses of the modern era—over population and over consumption—are substantially reduced. In fact, environmental degradation is against human self-interest, since the process of destroying and exploiting the environment devalues the systems that created and sustain us (Holland and Rawles 1995).

The transition from philosophical awakening to direct action isn't hard to understand. Once an environmentalist has determined that she has an ethical obligation to respect the inherent value of all components of the biosphere and recognized that both the survival of humanity and her own psychological wellbeing are directly related to the preservation of nature, she is immediately confronted with a new imperative. Rik Scarce elaborates:

No longer do they perceive themselves as apart from some external nature; they are part of it. Driven by their heightened awareness of the ties between humans and all else in nature, radical environmentalists refuse to compromise, believing as they do that the survival of the tiniest rainforest insect or the preservation of the most sublime side-canyon is a personal responsibility, an assurance of continued life and evolution that they owe to themselves and to all who follow. But most of all, they owe it to the Earth (Scarce 2005).

Direct action is a manifestation of core beliefs, pure and simple. Hence, “the idea of wilderness,” writes Ed Abbey “needs no defense—It only needs more defenders” (Abbey 1977).

Chapter 3: The Northwest Ancient Forest Campaign

The ancient forests of the Pacific Northwest are both serene and bustling, stoic and inquisitive, and to those environmentalists who love them, they are incredibly dear. The ancient forests represent a time predating human presence in the Northwest—a rare example of nature unobstructed—and they serve as a prime example of the type of place that has irreplaceable intrinsic value. Take, for example, one famed and integral forest species: the old-growth Douglas-fir, *Pseudotsuga menziesii*. The Olympic evergreen giants, second only to the famed Coastal Redwoods in size, have maximum heights of around 390 feet—40 stories—and maximum diameters of nearly 20 feet (U.S. National Park Service 2007). Furthermore, a Douglas-fir can live for upwards of 1,000 years, with some individuals in the Northwest reaching 1,400 years old (Van Pelt 2007). To accurately contemplate the magnitude of an ancient Douglas-Fir, I suggest imagining a full 60-car parking lot, take all of the cars in it, and stack them on top of each other. These “truly impressive,” dominant specimens (while alive, and also after death) formulate the backbone of the region’s ancient forests. The following description, taken from a 1981 Forest Service report on old-growth forests, reinforces the intrinsic, keystone importance of these trees:

The multi-layer canopy produces a heavily filtered light, and the feeling of shade is accentuated by shafts of sunlight on clear days. The under-story of shrubs, herbs, and tree seedlings is often moderate and is almost always patchy in distribution and abundance. Numerous logs, often large and in

various stages of decay, litter the forest floor, creating some travel routes for wildlife and blocking others. Standing dead trees, snags, and rotted stubs are common, although a visitor gazing toward the ground will often mistake dead trees in early stages of decay for live trees. (Franklin et al. 1981)

Loggers love the forest too, and they certainly view it as a place of great magnificence. Many timber workers are second, third, or even fourth generation loggers and are just as likely (if not more so) to have grown up playing and recreating in the ancient forests as the aforementioned environmentalists. However, these individuals place an additional value on the forest. Yes, they see trees, but they also see jobs. While old-growth forests play host to thousands of animal, plant, and insect communities, including the elusive and infamous spotted owl, they have also historically supported another fragile community: the Northwestern Lumber Company Town. American “Echo Boomers,” it seems, are quick to forget—in light of the much proliferated spotted owl success story—that at its peak in the late 1980s, the timber industry was producing over 5.2 billion board feet⁹ of timber from the Northwest, predominantly off of federal timber sales (Kenworthy 1993; Haynes and Fight 1992).¹⁰

Local mills sustained this high level of lumber output, and local timber workers sustained the mills. In Oregon and Washington timber towns were everywhere. In fact, by the late 1980s timber communities in the Pacific Northwest had become so utterly reliant on the industry that any decline in the timber harvest had rippling, dire

⁹ One board foot=12”x12”x1”, or 144 cubic inches.

¹⁰ Wood from Douglas-firs made up 3.038 billion of the 5.2 billion board feet produced at the industry’s peak. A (very) rough calculation, using average prices for Douglas-fir lumber of varying quality in 1989, reveals that at least \$677 million in sales (1989 dollars) were generated from that species alone (for raw statistics, see Haynes and Fight 1992).

implications. Carlos Schwantes describes this dependence in his regional tome *The Pacific Northwest: An Interpretive History*:

In many Pacific Northwest towns, logging was not just an industry; it was the only industry. In such communities signs proclaiming “This Family Supported By Timber Dollars” appeared in the windows of homes to emphasize the obvious economic relationship. Equally important, the loss of timber jobs had a “multiplier effect” in one-industry towns, causing the loss of tax dollars needed to support police, firefighters, libraries, and schools. (Schwantes 1996)

Timber towns relied deeply on ancient forests for their own sustenance. As such, forest exploitation was a fact of everyday life, and lumberers took great pride in their chosen livelihood. The lack of vocational diversity, however, made timber towns extremely fragile. Any threat to the timber industry was viewed as a threat to life itself.

In short, people value the ancient forests of the Northwest for different reasons. Two Oregonians may gaze upon the same ancient Douglas-fir and see two very different types of “green.” These competing viewpoints created an ultimately volatile conflict arena. Grassroots, radical, and mainstream environmental groups all sought—at different points in time and with varying degrees of intensity—the protection of the ancient forests and the species that relied on their unique ecological features. Timber communities, fearing for their towns, their heritage, and their jobs, saw environmental campaigning as a personal affront. As we will see, the three institutions that might have acted as fair arbiters in this case—the district courts, federal agencies, and regional congressional delegations—were equally conflicted.

Setting the Stage

By the late 1980s the technocrats at the United States Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) faced a no-win situation. Historical board feet output for the Pacific Northwest was high—too high—and yet Congress was pushing for more. With the luxury of hindsight, many are now able to recognize what only a few in the Forest Service, but many activists on the ground knew at the time: that the cut rates for the Northwest were unsustainable. “They were cutting two miles a day,” said one grassroots forest activist. “Our models had shown that it simply wasn’t possible to keep that rate up” (Interview Northwest 04 2010). In a 1988 report entitled “From the Forest to the Sea” a few brave USFS biologists did finally weigh in on the uniqueness of old-growth and the deleterious effects of over-logging:

Intensive forest management is the use of artificial means to produce wood fiber in the shortest time possible...[however] the current approach to intensive forest management maximizes timber output by simplifying forest biology and subsidizing it with energy inputs. This approach homogenizes the forest, thus reducing ecological diversity. (Maser et al. 1988)

The report was important for several reasons. First, the report represented a mutiny of sorts within the ranks of the Forest Service. Until that point, USFS employees were either reluctant or barred from questioning congressional mandates to increase timber outputs. Secondly, the ideas put forth in the report legitimized environmentalists’ data on unsustainable outputs and gave them an opportunity to call out the Forest Service on contradictory practices.

In the years leading up to “From the Forest to the Sea”, the Northwest

congressional delegation, spearheaded by Senator Mark Hatfield (R-OR) and Congressman Les Aucoin (D-OR), pushed to at least sustain, if not increase timber sales (Durbin 1996). As one congressional aid recalls “[Politicians] were presented with this dilemma: we’ve got a big industry in Oregon, and we’ve got hundreds of jobs at stake—politically, we just can’t let [reduced cut rates] happen” (Interview Northwest 01 2010). Regardless of how conservation-minded these politicians were personally (several had won awards from national environmental organizations for their past efforts to preserve wilderness), political survival dictated they do everything in their power to protect timber interests.

Running in Circles

The political entanglement described above caused mainstream environmental groups to move away from their typical tactics of policy advocacy and instead pursue litigation. Federal District Courts in Washington and Oregon had demonstrated (see cases discussed below) sympathy for the environmentalist cause and a willingness to enjoin timber cutting that violated federal environmental law. Hence, with traditional legislative routes blocked, the courts became a desirable playing field for mainstream and radical groups alike. The repetitive sequence that resulted from litigation and legislation became one of the defining characteristics of this case and pushed forest protection out of the realm of land-management and into a separation-of-powers struggle. In several instances environmentalists were able to make convincing cases for the suspension of logging and secure court injunctions, only to have the injunctions overridden by congressional appropriations riders sponsored by the Northwest delegation.

The first attempt to use the courts to halt ancient forest logging was initiated by

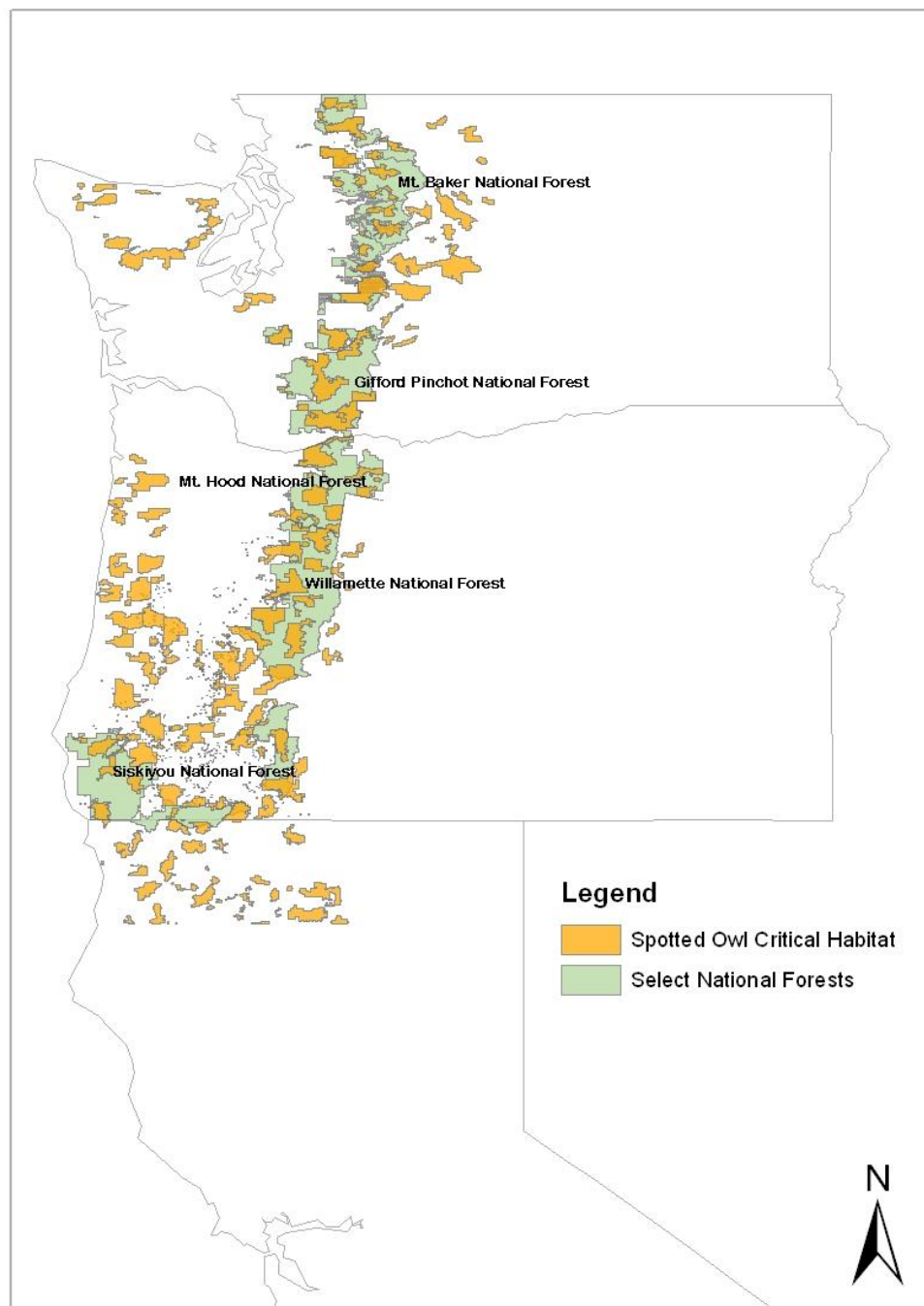
local, radical environmentalists. The 1964 Wilderness Act required the Forest Service to conduct a survey of its lands and determine which roadless areas were appropriately suited for wilderness designation. After a first review was rejected by the courts, the Forest Service conducted a second “Roadless Area Review and Evaluation” (RARE II). Like its predecessor, the RARE II process came under legal scrutiny. Opponents argued that the Forest Service had violated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires all federal agencies to consider the environmental impacts of their actions and to present a range of alternatives in an environmental impact statement. The final RARE II impact statements presented by the Forest Service were highly site-specific and failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives (Glicksman 2004). Seizing an opportunity in 1983, the Oregon Natural Resources Council (ORNC) and Earth First! filed a joint lawsuit to halt logging in roadless wilderness areas “until an adequate wilderness review [was] completed, or...until Congress passed legislation to resolve the issue” (Durbin 1996). ORNC and Earth First won, and U.S. District Court Judge James Redden issued an injunction halting all logging in Oregon wilderness areas pending resolution of the issue. The issue *was* resolved soon thereafter with the passage of the 1984 Oregon, Washington, and California Wilderness Acts, which secured 853,000, 1.03 million, and 1.8 million acres, respectively, as designated, protected wilderness. While environmentalists would have liked more acreage to be designated as wilderness, they certainly couldn’t argue with the process. They had asked for Congress to resolve the issue legislatively, and Congress did.

In the numerous litigation-injunction-legislation episodes that followed, the process was much messier. Whereas the early challenges over the wilderness review

process had been clearly resolved by the new Wilderness Acts, later cases were overturned by appropriations riders—additional texts added to appropriations bills that either limit or instruct agency action. In 1984, for example, local environmentalists secured a court order that blocked timber sales in part of the Siuslaw National Forest in the Oregon Coast Range due to the threats of severe soil erosion. In 1985, the order was soundly overridden by a Congressional appropriations rider.

In 1987 mainstream environmentalists, frustrated by traditional advocacy routes and the legislative process, opted to initiate their first serious legal challenge. The young lawyers at the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund (SCLDF), an independent corporation representing various environmental groups in court, thought they could make a good case for a little known avian known as the spotted owl. Several features about the owl made it a prime candidate for protection efforts. The owl is charismatic and its range and habitat are virtually synonymous with ancient forest boundaries. Additionally, the spotted owl prefers old-growth canopies and has shown an unusual intolerance for habitat destruction. Figure 2.1 depicts spotted owl critical habitat and well-known national forests.

Northern Spotted Owl Critical Habitat in the Northwest



Data Source: USDA Forest Service and DOI Bureau of Land Management.
Map created by Zachary Ezor at Colby College March 30, 2010.

Figure 2.1. Northern Spotted Owl Critical Habitat in the Northwest

The 1976 National Forest Management Act (NFMA) contained language requiring USFS to adopt management plans that “provide[d] for the diversity of plant and animal species” (16 U.S.C. §§ 1600-1614 1976; Glicksman 2004). SCLDF felt they had caught the Forest Service in what Kathie Durban calls a “Catch 22 of their own making”:

By suing under NEPA, environmentalists could force the agency to state clearly the environmental consequences of a timber sale project. By also suing under NFMA, they could require the forest service to choose an action that met the strict “viable populations” standard. (Durbin 1996)

The SCLDF strategy was a success, and a preliminary injunction was issued against logging trees more than 200 years old (spotted owl habitat). However, as before, the Northwest congressional delegation fought back, undoing the court order by attaching language to a BLM appropriation bill that prevented agency decisions from being challenged solely on the basis of new scientific information. The rider was particularly damaging to the case for spotted owl protection because critical scientific information about the owl’s status and range had just become known. As they prepared again for battle, SCLDF lawyers reminded their clients that “it’s not enough to win in the court of law; you have to win in the court of public opinion” (Interview Northwest 05 2010). Unless Congress was made to feel the importance of protecting the owl over protecting loggers, the cycle would likely continue.

At the very least environmentalists had managed to sway the opinion of District Judge William Dwyer. Subsequent SCLDF suits were filed in 1988 against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and in 1989 against the Forest Service. Judge Dwyer, ruling in the 1989 case, ordered a preliminary injunction blocking all national forest timber sales in

Western Oregon and Washington until the Forest Service came up with an adequate plan for the spotted owl.

Breaking the Deadlock and “The Rider From Hell”

If mainstream environmentalists had learned anything from past battles it was 1) injunctions were only temporary, and 2) the Forest Service and BLM were ultimately subject to Congress’ will. If the cyclical process of litigation-injunction-rider-litigation was to be broken, forest lobbyists would need to mobilize members of Congress from outside the Pacific region to take steps to protect the owl and the forests. “In the summer of 1989 we had a sort of informal coalition of environmental organizations that would meet together and plan strategy,” recalls a representative of a mainstream environmental group. “We thought we could rally members of Congress from around the country to fight to override the injunction” (Interview Northwest 02 2010). The “informal coalition” came to be known officially as the Ancient Forest Alliance: a loose bundling of resources from The Wilderness Society, The Sierra Club, The National Audubon Society, The National Wildlife Federation and SCLDF, along with grassroots groups. To the coalition’s detriment, no single group advocated for a unified national strategy, and the Alliance became a bond in name only.

Nevertheless, representatives from the more mainstream groups felt that “there were moderate Republicans then; that there were actually moderates in the House and Senate who could be persuaded at times to vote pro-environment” (Interview Northwest 08 2010). With this feeling in mind, percipient lobbyists from the Alliance set out to convince the Senate to halt an anticipated Hatfield rider. One lobbyist remembers this effort. “So we met with Senator Pat Leahy from Vermont. He was willing to take our

case to the Senate floor, but he said ‘you know, I need 51 votes, and I need your help getting them.’ We had no choice at that point but to lobby” (Interview Northwest 02 2010). In the end, environmentalists were able to secure only 32 votes—far short of the 51 needed to overturn an appropriations rider. Alliance members decided that their best remaining option was to attack the problem directly: they would sit down with the Northwest delegation and bang out a compromise. “We thought, couldn’t we come up with a solution that gave the environmental movement something, gave the timber industry something, and would be better than just losing?” (Interview Northwest 02 2010).

The meeting resulted in a “Section 318 Compromise.”¹¹ Environmentalists were given the opportunity to outline spotted owl habitat where logging would be prohibited, but net timber output would remain the same as logging rights to additional tracts of forest were sold off. Environmentalists also won a promise that a new study would be conducted on the owl to settle ongoing scientific disputes between environmentalist and USFS scientists. In exchange, a rider was passed which lifted the injunction for one year, releasing nearly half of the barred timber (AP 1989). Logging, it seemed, would resume in the Northwest.

“A Circular Firing Squad”; Spotted Owl Listing

In the months following the 318 Compromise, the environmental community began to splinter, forming, as one mainstream lobbyist put it, “a circular firing squad” (Interview Northwest 08 2010). “When the [Alliance] representatives returned,” said

¹¹ “Section 318” refers to the section of the 1990 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations rider that became law on October 23, 1989. The section was inserted by Senator Hatfield to exempt federal land-management agencies from developing spotted owl habitat plans.

another observer “they had their heads ripped off” (Interview Northwest 09 2010). The 318 Compromise had been a disappointing resolution to years of analysis, activism, and legal work. Frustrations on all sides came to a head. Mainstream groups felt they had done the best possible job with an unfortunate political situation and drawn nationwide attention to their cause: “it was a turning point in the whole effort to protect ancient forests...members of Congress realized just how over-cut the forest actually was” (Interview Northwest 02 2010). Grassroots and radical activists felt that they—and the forests—had been betrayed: “People saw it as a huge setback, and the environmental community began to splinter pretty quickly. People who sat at the table that morning said they couldn’t support [our efforts] anymore. Some people stayed with it, but many people outright opposed it” (Interview Northwest 02 2010). As a result, many of the local partners left the Alliance.

As environmentalists in the Pacific Northwest brooded, the agenda to save the spotted owl continued without them. In 1987 the New England-based radical environmental group Greenworld petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to list the northern spotted owl as an endangered species (Northern Spotted Owl v. Hodel 1988). Thirty-five other groups later joined Greenworld in their petition, and in June of 1990 FWS listed the northern spotted owl as an endangered species. Importantly, The Sierra Club and the National Wildlife Federation, major mainstream environmental groups, opposed listing the owl so soon. “A lot of us were worried about the political backlash. The Endangered Species Act (ESA) was up for renewal in 1992, and we didn’t want the owl listing to have an impact on the Act’s prospects” (Interview Northwest 07 2010). If listed, any “taking” of the owl or unnecessary destruction of its habitat would

become illegal. Mainstream environmentalists who were familiar with the political landscape worried that the owl listing—which would, undoubtedly, place large land areas off limits to logging—would make politicians reconsider the economic and political viability of the ESA. If ESA protection of the spotted owl alone would halt logging in much of the Northwest, how might other endangered species restrict economic activities elsewhere?

“Save a Logger, Eat an Owl”

Millworkers weren’t keen to sit on their hands and wait to be laid off. A group of grassroots activists, joined together as the Washington and Oregon Lands Coalitions, induced a threatening counter-punch to environmentalists’ efforts. In 1989 the groups organized well-attended pro-timber rallies and parades, encouraging supporters to wear yellow ribbons in solidarity. Bumper stickers read “Save a logger, eat an owl” and some activists even began holding “spotted owl barbeques” (Guynup and Ruggia 2004). The activism was generated by fear and spite. As legal and political efforts by environmentalists to protect the forest gained clout and attention, logging communities felt their lives slipping away: “Diversification is just not an option for a lot of these towns...If you shut down the forest, you shut down the town” (Knickerbocker 1990).

These “Yellow Ribbon Coalitions” mobilized and spread with incredible speed and intensity and began countering environmentalist efforts. Within a few months the Coalitions had gained national press attention and had mobilized thousands of families. They developed a political arm to influence Congress, giving the timber industry a human face (McKenzie 1989). While environmentalists continued their piecemeal advocacy strategy timber workers resolved to employ all tactics simultaneously. Because of the

Coalitions' efforts, the debate in the Northwest was quickly framed as loggers vs. owls (Dumanoski 1990).

Clinton Steps In

As it turns out, any fears environmentalists' harbored about the government's response to the owl listing and the ESA reaffirmation were assuaged. The American public ousted President George Bush in 1992 in favor of Arkansas governor Bill Clinton, and Congress handily renewed the ESA. While Clinton's own environmental credentials from his service as governor were modest, his running mate, then Senator Al Gore, was a known environmental activist and enthusiast. During the campaign both President Bush and Governor Clinton were asked to resolve the region's forestry problems. A series of court decisions after the owl's listing had enjoined the Forest Service and the BLM from selling timber, and by the fall of 1992 the timber industry had been halted for over a year. Needless to say, a real sense of distress was forming in the region—everyday citizens were palpably concerned about the owl and the fate of the logging industry. While President Bush called for weak amendments to the ESA, Clinton promised instead to host a multiparty timber conference that would equitably resolve the tension between forest protection and timber production.

Upon entering office, Clinton established an interagency task force aimed at developing possible solutions for the Northwest. The administration's goal was to establish an implementation plan that adhered to the letter and spirit of the law, protected and enhanced the environment, provided a stable timber economy that would support the region during economic transition, and insure that federal agencies worked together (Tuchmann et al. 1996).

True to his word, President Clinton headed to Portland on April 2, 1993 to host the Northwest Forest Conference. Prior to the conference a Forest Ecosystem Management Assessment Team (FEMAT), organized under the leadership of the jolly Forest Service elk-biologist Jack Ward Thomas, was charged with producing a series of possible policy options that the administration could pursue. The option chosen, “Option 9,” was met with skepticism from both environmentalists and timber barons. Under the plan, annual timber harvests would be ramped down from 5.2 billion board feet to a measly 1.2 billion board feet, and although spotted owl protection was prioritized, the FEMAT selections for designated owl reserves relied heavily on new, untested principles in conservation biology (Thomas and Steen 2004). Though the plan pleased no one, it was the administration’s best opportunity to provide “balance” between interests, and was adopted in 1994 (Durbin 1996).

On June 7 of that year Judge Dwyer ruled that limited logging could resume in the Northwest. The Clinton Plan had filled the legal void left by the Bush Administration’s inaction and was, for all intents and purposes, implementable. However, Dwyer also acknowledged that his decision did not rule on the legality of the Clinton Plan itself, leaving the door open to the bevy of law suits that soon followed (Cushman 1994).

As with the Section 318 Compromise, the Clinton Plan resulted in divisiveness among environmental groups. SCLDF suits challenged the plan on legal technicalities, but did not question Dwyer’s decision. Suits sponsored by more radical groups urged Dwyer to reinstate his 3-year ban on logging in the ancient forests. After years of relative unity, environmentalists on both ends of the spectrum were feeling underappreciated and misunderstood by their comrades. In a May 25, 1994 interview

with The Seattle Times, Brock Evans, vice president of the National Audubon Society, summed up this sentiment when he said “We get savaged more by our left now than we do by the right...The people who are making noise haven’t come out here and wrestled in the mud” (Pryne 1994).

Disobedience (Civil and Uncivil)

The foundation for the lingering animosity between mainstream and radical environmentalists was laid long before the Clinton Plan came into effect. Although environmentalists across the spectrum felt the need to protect and preserve the ancient forests, they disagreed on the best way to do so. From the start, radical environmentalists acted in ways that reflected a great sense of urgency: the forests were unique and irreplaceable, and compromising their intrinsic value was out of the question. Mainstream environmentalists pursued their usual routes of policy advocacy, congressional lobbying and (later on) litigation. They consistently demonstrated a willingness to work within the system and make compromises when necessary. Radical environmentalists lobbied and litigated too, but they also engaged in violent and non-violent direct action. If the system wouldn’t aid them, they would simply work against it. As one radical activist noted in this lapidary statement, “Realists change the boat, idealists rock the boat, and radicals are ready to capsize it” (Interview Northwest 03 2010).

What does it take to convince someone to capsize the boat? When asked how she was drawn to radical forest activism, one environmentalist responded with a tale of coincidence: “I got into the environmental movement in 1983 by happenstance. I had heard about an Earth First! gathering going on in the Kalmiopsis [Wilderness], and

resolved to check it out. A month later I was writing their press releases” (Interview Northwest 04 2010). For some environmentalists, an encounter with Earth First! can awaken an inner drive that they didn’t know existed. When places they love and connect with come under assault, the reaction can be simultaneously instinctive and calculated. These radicals resort to direct action out of perceived necessity. In the fight to save the ancient forests, radicals consistently demonstrated a willingness to put their bodies on the line.

Such was the case with the first episode of radical action undertaken by Earth First! in the Northwest Forest campaign. In the early 1980s Bald Mountain, a cherished spot in Oregon’s Kalmiopsis Wilderness, was under attack. The Forest Service had elected to split up the Wilderness through a series of timber sales, and began building a road to facilitate harvesting. Earth First!ers worried that “the road was particularly threatening because it was right along the edge of the Kalmiopsis.” The concern was that “by building a road in that place, the entire 160,000 acre roadless wilderness north of Bald Mountain would be disqualified and opened to logging” (Interview Northwest 04 2010).

On April 25 1983 four Earth First!ers stood up to a caterpillar tractor on its way to work. Though the effort was passionate and seemingly spontaneous, the Earth First! action was actually premeditated and well-organized. The Earth First! Journal “offered a list of suggested activities, which included participation in blockades, providing logistical support to those involved in blockades...[and] a Kalmiopsis Hotline phone number” (Lee 1995). The willful blockade continued for three months. In total, forty-four Earth

First!ers were arrested, enshrined henceforth as fearless forest defenders.¹²

Non-violent radical action continued throughout the Northwest saga. In June of 1987 Earth First!er Randy Prince was put in danger when a logger cut into the tree he was occupying. Prince, who was attempting a 40-day tree sit to draw attention forest destruction, nearly fell from his perch 80 feet off the ground (San Francisco Chronicle 1987). Twenty-six protestors were arrested on July 11, 1989 after they “sank their feet in cement and chained themselves to a gate to stop logging in the North Kalmiopsis” (Seattle Times 1989). In 1995 ONRC and Earth First! activists were arrested outside of Senator Hatfield’s office as they protested a timber salvage rider (Kerr 1995). The list goes on.

Unidentified radical environmentalists also participated in *violent* direct action during this period. The preferred method of action, tree spiking, involved driving long nails into trees located in valuable timber areas. The spikes, which could destroy equipment and injure loggers if hit by a saw blade, were meant to serve as a deterrent, though few would argue that spiking alone prevented any timber sales (Bari 1993). The technique was only promoted as a last resort, but several instances of heavy spiking occurred in Oregon and Washington during the fight for ancient forests. In 1984 a group called the Hardesty Avengers spiked a 132-acre area in the Hardesty Mountain roadless area. Loggers used metal detectors to find spikes and went ahead with milling anyways (Wyant 1984). Nails were then found in the trunks of 200-year old Douglas-firs on

¹² The Bald Mountain Road blockade is more widely known for an infamous exchange that supposedly occurred between Earth First! co-founder Dave Foreman and timber truck driver Les Moore. On May 12, 1983 Foreman and fellow Earth First!er Dave Willis established a road block near the Bald Mountain Road construction area. Frustrated by Foreman’s refusal to remove the blockade, Moore accelerated, forced Foreman off balance and under his truck, then dragged him more than 100 yards. In the mythical exchange that followed, Moore yelled “You dirty communist bastard!” Foreman replied “But Les, I’m a registered Republican.” For a detailed description of the encounter see page 73 of Martha Lee’s *Earth First: Environmental Apocalypse*.

Holcomb Peak in the Siskiyou Mountains in 1988, causing Oregon congressman Bob Smith to classify the act as “a radical environmentalist’s version of razor blades in Halloween candy and rat poison in Tylenol” (Barnard 1988).

Spikings occurred all over the Northwest—in the Hobson and Deer Creek sales in the Kalmiopsis, the Top and Shook sales in Hell’s Canyon, Bull Run in the Mt. Hood wilderness area, and parts of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest—but did little (at least empirically) to prevent timber sales (Bari 1993).

Mainstream Perceptions of Radical Influence in the Northwest Forest Campaign: Necessary Credibility, Arming the Opposition, and (Maybe) Making Headlines

Radical environmentalists—through their actions and, simply, their presence in the conflict arena—became an important component of the Northwest Ancient Forest Campaign. How, then, did mainstream environmental groups perceive that radical environmentalists influenced their own efforts to protect Northwest ancient forests in the 1980s and 1990s? The following sections focus on the three hypotheses detailed in the introduction: radical environmentalists 1) articulate contrasting proposals, 2) engage in direct action, which negatively influences public opinion of all environmentalists, and 3) generate greater levels of press/wide-spread attention around an issue than there would be otherwise.

“Wearing a Tie and Smiling”: Credibility in Contrasting Proposals

Mainstream respondents were hesitant to say that contrasting proposals had any real effect on their ability to achieve their goals. For many, the lack of “credibility”—meaning, in context, validity or considerable worth—in radicals’ proposals kept them off of policymakers’ radar. Mainstream environmentalists have come to view Congress (the

key policymaking body in this case) as a highly insulated institution: representatives live in a bubble and view life through a very particular, narrow frame. If a proposal is to be taken seriously or even noticed by Congress it must conform to their lens. In the Northwest case, mainstream environmentalists viewed radical proposals, where they existed, as having limited efficacy because they were not “seen” by Congress. “A lot of more radical groups weren’t engaged in congress. So members of congress never saw them. They never met with them. They never discussed things face to face. Members of congress are in their own world—the people who show up there affect them the most” (Interview Northwest 02 2010). Hence, radicals who are “disdainful of the notion of a political reality” failed to achieve the type of credibility they needed to be taken seriously (Interview Northwest 08 2010).

Still it might be possible for contrasting, radical proposals to have an effect on mainstream success. “In politics,” said one mainstream interviewee, “in trying to create any sort of compromise, people do try to find something in the middle between extremes.” However, both extremes “need to be credible...whatever you propose has to be in the ballpark” (Interview Northwest 02 2010).

Table 2.1 Examples of Contrasting Proposals in the Northwest Case			
	Mainstream Environmentalists	Radical Environmentalists*	Congress and/or Federal Agencies
<u>Listing the Spotted Owl Under the ESA</u>	Environmentalists should wait to petition for owl listing until after Congress reauthorizes the Endangered Species Act in 1992.	Environmentalists should petition to have the owl listed as a threatened species as soon as possible.	Discourage petitioning for owl listing. Allow federal agencies to continue managing timber and habitat appropriately.
<u>Section 318 Compromise</u>	One-year swap of logging in spotted owl habitat for logging outside the habitat and a new scientific study of owl management. In exchange, injunction gets overridden.	Court order remains in tact. Environmental laws are upheld and cutting does not continue.	Congressional rider voids injunction. Logging resumes in owl habitat.
<u>Clinton Forest Conference/Plan</u>	Instate permanent protection of large, congruous forest reserves.	Reduce timber harvest in ancient forests to as close to zero as possible.	Reduce timber harvest to 1.2 billion board feet. Set aside disjointed spotted owl habitat reserves.
*Note: Radical proposals were sometimes articulated in the media but not in formal settings. Though proposals are conventionally put forth in negotiation, media outlets were often the most legitimate venue available to radical environmentalists.			

Were any proposals during the Northwest case “in the ballpark?” Certainly Greenworld’s petition to list the spotted owl (against the wishes of mainstream groups) had credibility. The petition was, from the standpoints of mainstream environmentalists and policymakers, premature, but it was filed properly (and civilly) with FWS, the federal agency overseeing endangered species protection, and could not be dismissed. In fact, under other circumstances, this tactic—asking for the whole pie before negotiating for a slice—was employed by some mainstream groups in other situations: “We, the groups who are known by the policy makers, would normally take the full amount to the first discussion and say ‘this is all of the land that meets criteria’ and they would say ‘no, it’s too much, but we can do a little at a time’” (Interview Northwest 07 2010).

Despite its credibility, the Greenworld petition received mixed reviews (at least retrospectively) from mainstream environmentalists. One interviewee thought the proposal unintentionally “opened the door to a negotiated agreement” by forcing policymakers to pursue a long-term solution, but also believed it threatened the integrity of the ESA (Interview Northwest 07 2010). Another thought the proposal and the court cases that followed “catalyzed the Clinton administration in 1992,” forcing the government to devise solutions appealing to both the environmental and timber communities (Interview Northwest 05 2010). Looking back, the same respondent believes that radical proposals illuminated the possibilities of new realities in the Northwest:

One of the things that happened was there was a kind of conventional wisdom coming out of the Pacific Northwest that the timber industry drove the region’s economy. Since then, the change in public perception has created a new reality. The economy hasn’t collapsed, and in fact having some forest around isn’t a bad thing. (Interview Northwest 05 2010)

After becoming used to a strong timber presence, it might have been difficult for people in the Northwest to imagine a regional economy without it. Radicals envisioned an economy that didn’t rely on timber, and their proposals may have helped break popular adherence to the status quo.

In sum, mainstream environmentalists found that contrasting proposals articulated by radical environmentalists had either negligible effects on their levels of success, due to a lack of credibility and an underestimation of political reality, or, if credible, slightly

beneficial effects as they contributed to the efforts to elicit action from policy makers and change public perceptions.

Tarring and Issue: Violent Direct Action

When asked about whether direct action negatively influenced public opinion in the Northwest case, mainstream environmentalists quickly distinguished between violent direct action—which they viewed as detrimental—and non-violent direct action—which they perceived as having subtler and sometimes beneficial effects.

Generally, interviewees perceived violent direct action—“going past the limit of the law and endangering people”—as “a bad thing” that hindered success in two ways (Interview Northwest 07 2010). First, it was perceived that violent direct action, particularly tree spiking, gave rhetorical ammunition to the opposition. The worry was that moderate policy makers would be persuaded to vote against environmentalist causes for fear of backlash in their home constituencies: “There are the people who are almost always going to be with you, the people who are almost always going to be against you, and the people who are in the middle. You would worry that [violent direct action] would unduly influence people in the middle” (Interview Northwest 08 2010). As one mainstream environmentalist remembered “opponents used tree spiking to give congressmen a taste of what it is to get reelected and what their constituency thinks...so to some degree, a tree spiker feeds the opposition” (Interview Northwest 02 2010). Tree-spiking, it was thought, had the power to transform a non-issue into a negative issue, and allowed anti-environmentalists to hold moderate policymakers to the fire.

Secondly, mainstream environmentalists perceived violent direct action as a tarnish on the ancient forest protection agenda. “Probably more often [than not], those

kinds of tactics ended up tarring the issue. [Much of] the public said ‘that’s way too radical, something is wrong, I don’t want anything to do with this.’ It made our communications task more difficult” (Interview Northwest 05 2010). As one interviewee said, concisely, “I don’t think tree spiking gained us any friends” (Interview Northwest 08 2010). Across the board, mainstream environmentalists felt strongly that violent direct action hindered their level of success.

Getting Passionate and Creative: Non-violent Direct Action

Given their own tendencies to faithfully pursue strategies fitting within the confines of the law, I was surprised to discover that mainstream environmentalists in this case (albeit reluctantly) saw some benefit to non-violent direct action. Though they rarely engaged in this behavior themselves, mainstream representatives did recognize potentially helpful components imbedded in non-violent actions. “The activities of the radicals—tree sitting and chaining, for example—raised attention to the issue” (Interview Northwest 08 2010). “I never saw that direct action generated so much publicity that the public was drawn to our side,” said one mainstream environmentalist, “[but] having a protest and laying in front of a bulldozer—those things change over time as to how credible they are, and they were viewed as credible towards the end” (Interview Northwest 02 2010). Passionate, creative, non-violent direct action, according to those representatives interviewed, can “raise the profile of an issue” and cause people to say “wow, this is important” (Interview Northwest 05 2010). Direct action that raised the profile of the case in a positive way was perceived to be helpful because it attracted media attention in a constructive way and demonstrated how persuasive passion could be.

However, interviewees were quick to qualify any approval of non-violent direct

action. As with any tactic, non-violent direct action has its own risks and unintended consequences. In the Northwest case, mainstream environmentalists feared that protests might incite adverse responses, either from the timber industry or politicians: “a lot of people were worried about the backlash. I think there was a hesitancy [among policy makers], and the scientists were also still struggling to decide where exactly the lines should be drawn” (Interview Northwest 07 2010). Amidst the scientific and political uncertainty surrounding the Northwest case, radical, non-violent direct action induced fear in some mainstream environmentalists.

Nevertheless, even those interviewees who feared the consequences of non-violent direct action admitted that protests and acts of civil disobedience helped to elevate Northwest forest protection from a regional to a national issue.

Summary of Findings for This Case

Mainstream environmentalists in the Northwest Case perceived that radical proposals had only slightly positive, if not entirely negligible effects on their own success. Mainstream environmentalists also made an important distinction between the effects of violent and non-violent direct action. It was perceived that violent direct action gave rhetorical ammunition to the anti-environmental opposition and made public relations tasks more difficult. In contrast, non-violent direct action was perceived to draw positive attention to the case since it demonstrated just how passionate individuals were about protecting the ancient forests.

Chapter 4: The Maine Woods

On July 23, 1857 Henry David Thoreau paddled into Moosehead Lake. Thoreau and his colleague hired a Native American guide, Joe Poli, to tour them around the immense reservoir. With Mt. Kineo looking on, Thoreau voraciously absorbed the sights and sounds of the pristine water, the local fowl, and the almost anthropomorphic energy that emanated from the natural surroundings. “While we were getting breakfast,” he later recalled in *The Maine Woods*, “a brood of twelve black dippers, half grown, came paddling by within three or four rods, not at all alarmed; and they loitered about as long as we stayed, now huddled close together.” The ducks, he noted, “bore a certain proportion to the great Moosehead Lake on whose bosom they floated, and I felt as if they were under its protection.”

As they rowed northward into a large bay, the group realized that they had entered unfamiliar territory and wondered, “whether [they] should be obliged to diverge from [their] course.” “I consulted my map and used my glass,” wrote Thoreau, “but we could not find our place exactly on the map...” (Thoreau 2009). Nor could Joe Poli identify their location. Moosehead Lake and the surrounding region were untouched, uninhabited, and uncultivated. It was wilderness in every sense of the word.

The motif of Moosehead being a ‘blank spot on the map’ runs deep throughout the debate raging on today over whether or not—or, more accurately, how little or how much—development should be allowed to take place in the Maine Woods. ‘Blank spot’ status simultaneously evokes ideas of uniqueness, untapped resources, wild character, and serenity. To a land speculation firm a blank spot on the map is money in the bank. To environmentalists a blank spot is a special rarity worth preserving, better left alone

lest we risk ruining something singularly beautiful. To small, peripheral towns, a blank spot is something outsiders might like to experience and, possibly, the key to their continued existence.

The town of Greenville, Maine has been a battleground of sorts for these competing perspectives. Nestled at the southern tip of Moosehead Lake, the town merits its nickname, “the gateway to the great North Woods.” The residents share a multi-generational heritage—as third, or even fourth generation inhabitants of the area, the Maine Woods are an ingrained in them. This unique character becomes even more pronounced when we consider the smallness and the fragility of Greenville’s population. In 1970 the town’s population was 2,025. By 2000 it had dwindled to 1,623—almost a 20% decrease (University of Maine 2008).

As interested parties compete for the North Woods, the people of Greenville have to make tough decisions about their legacies and their futures. For some, limited (but significant) residential and commercial development in the area provides one opportunity for revitalization. One land-holding company—Seattle-based Plum Creek—has been working to garner state approval of a development plan for the Moosehead Lake region. “We’re trying to bring prosperity to the whole region,” says Luke Muzzy, a lifelong resident of Greenville and, as of late, a Plum Creek employee. “If we don’t get more people to use our infrastructure, we’re going to lose it” (Russell 2007). But the idea to develop the area wasn’t an epiphany. In the last two decades, the region has experienced a serious shift in land usage. While the majority of land in the North Woods was still dominated by timber barons pursuing large-scale forestry as late as 1994, the same land has been almost entirely reoriented towards non-industrial uses in recent years. Figure

3.1 shows the shifting landownership in Maine from industrial foresters to private land companies.

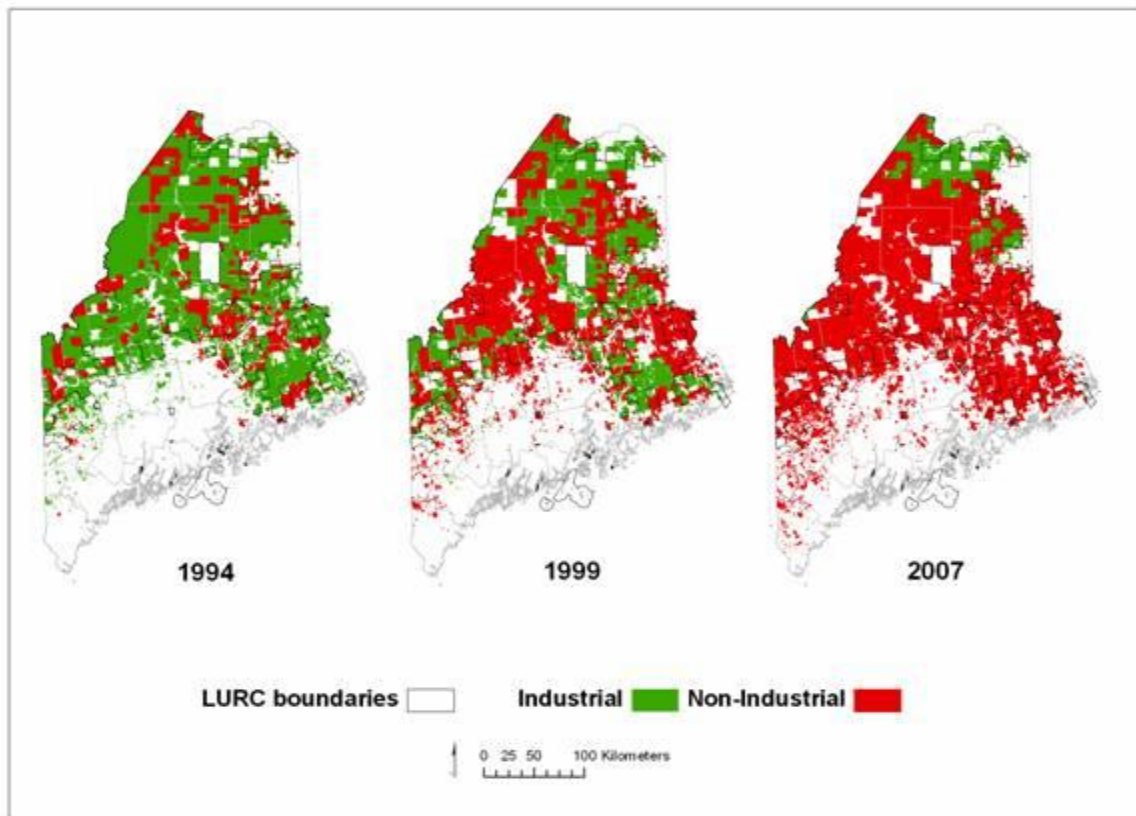


Figure 3.1: Landownership Change 1994, 1999, 2007. Source: Schwartz, Theberge, et al. 2007.

In the face of declining timber markets landholding companies are looking to secure added value on their land. The best way to do this, it seems, is by investing in real estate (Schwartz, Theberge and Sinnott 2007).¹³

This chapter discusses Plum Creek’s efforts to promote a large-scale development project around Moosehead Lake, and the efforts of environmentalists—both mainstream

¹³ Colby College students Aime Schwartz, Emmie Theberge and Emily Sinnott have done a fantastic job displaying this change visually through a series of maps created using ArcGIS software. Their full report can be viewed online at: http://www.colby.edu/environ/courses/ES493/stateofmaine2007/papers/SOME07_ResourceAccess.html

and radical—to block or diminish those efforts. Unlike the Northwest case study, which has concluded (at least in its current incarnation), the Maine Woods case is ongoing. It is, and likely will remain, one of the most contentious issues in the state. For many, the stakes involve more than a house here or a resort there; this case will undoubtedly create a precedent for the future of land use in Maine.

Plum Creek Moves In

Plum Creek Timber Company is “the largest and most geographically diverse private landowner in the nation.” With a portfolio that extends from Maine to Washington, Plum Creek employs more than 1,700 people across 19 states. The company’s stated purpose, as “stewards of these assets,” is to maximize the value of their land (Plum Creek 2010). While primarily a timber company, Plum Creek also runs a real estate development business. As land values change, so do Plum Creek’s priorities.

In 1998 Plum Creek purchased from Sappi Fine Paper North America 905,000 acres of Maine forest. Such an exchange between large semi-industrial landowners would not be viewed as uncommon were it not for the sheer size of the swap. In a single transaction, Plum Creek came to own about 5% of the state’s forested lands. However, the \$180 million purchase included more than just trees—Plum Creek bought numerous small ponds, unequivocally beautiful lakefront property, and mountains along the Appalachian Trail (The New York Times 1998).

While Plum Creek initially professed a desire to exercise sustainable forestry on their land, President and CEO Rick Holley admitted that real estate development along waterfront property was “an option we will always keep open” (Tukel 1998). In 2001 the company put forth an 89-lot residential development plan for 270 acres along First

Roach Pond. Environmental groups worried that the development represented “a systematic sell-off of beautiful shorefront land” and that the sale would be a “significant threat to traditional uses of Maine’s North Woods” (Portland Press Herald 2001). In retrospect, however, the First Roach Pond development pales in comparison to Plum Creek’s next proposal; the company may have been simply testing the waters.

LURC

We need to be familiar with one of Maine’s key decision-making bodies, the Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC), before we can really discuss the Plum Creek Concept Plans. Created by the Maine Legislature in 1971 in response to the recreational and land-development “boom” of the 1960s, LURC serves as the planning and zoning authority for the state’s townships, plantations, and unorganized territory. While many of the communities within LURC’s jurisdiction exercise municipal governmental functions, they are often too small, or too sparsely populated, or lacking the capacity to handle and appropriately process large-scale zoning proposals. LURC presides over 10.4 million acres—the largest contiguous undeveloped area in the Northeast (LURC 2010; MRS Title 12 Chapter 206-A.2 1971).

The Commission is comprised of a seven member, independent board appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Legislature. A small, stretched staff of 24 people aids members of the Commission. In recent years, worries have surfaced regarding LURC’s limited resources, and their ability to handle the big proposals coming down the pipeline. As one Commissioner, Rebecca Kurtz, noted in 2007, there is a concern that “if the staffing levels and the funding available to the agency do not keep up with the number and the scope and the complexity of the applications...then the jurisdiction's

sense of place will be lost" (Crowell 2007). The problem with limited processing capacity, at least from a zoning standpoint, is that LURC cannot aggressively engage in *prospective* zoning. Since broad zoning decisions cannot be made in anticipation of future proposals, LURC is forced to deal directly with landowners like Plum Creek. With an average load of 1,200 small proposals annually, plus any large-scale proposals like those submitted by Plum Creek, it is easy for LURC to get overwhelmed and overworked. This can lead to piecemeal planning, relatively rash decision-making, and opportunities for interest groups to inappropriately influence commissioners and their staff.

Big Plans

In April of 2005 Plum Creek submitted a 570-page application to LURC, detailing their aspirations for the largest one-time development project ever proposed in Maine. The proposal included plans for approximately 1,000 house lots, two upscale resort hotels, and numerous amenities located in the Moosehead Lake area. Of the 415,000 acres included in the original proposal, Plum Creek wanted to develop 14,000 acres, leaving the remaining 95% under commercial forestry management (Austin 2005). The plan met quick skepticism, and, in the face of some troubling public opinion poles showing 50% of respondents think plan is a "bad idea," Plum Creek withdrew its plan and went back to the drawing board (Churchill 2005). In April of 2006 Plum Creek submitted its first revision of the plan. Although the revised plan contained some superficial changes, 93% of the proposed development was exactly the same (NRCM 2010). Plum Creek was determined to develop their land in the Moosehead region.

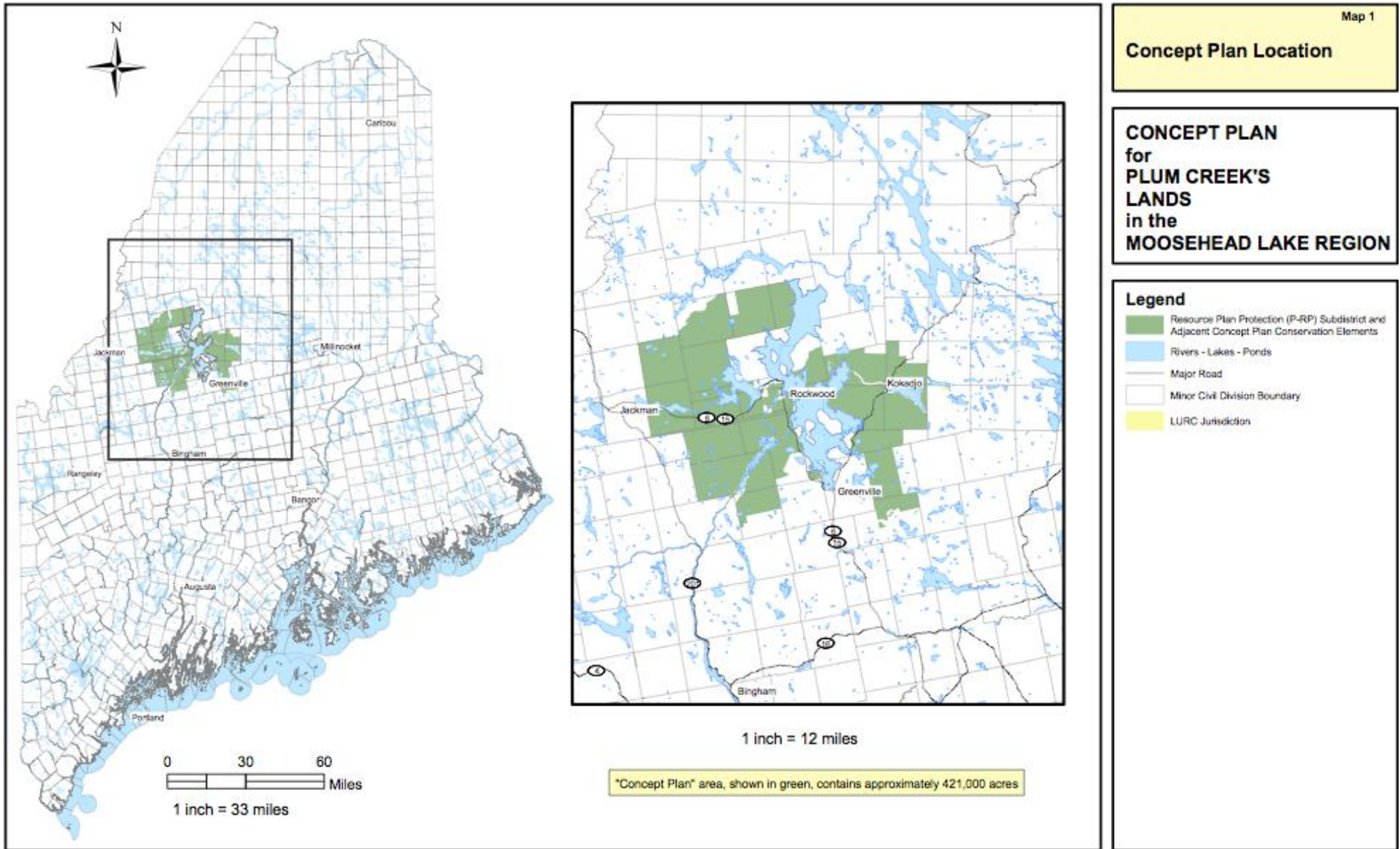


Figure 3.2: Moosehead Lake and Plum Creek Concept Plan. Source: “Concept Plan for the Moosehead Lake Region” (Plum Creek Land Company 2009).

Mainstream environmental groups, mostly those based in Maine, recognized that they were in for the long haul and hired seasoned litigators to assist them in crafting a process-oriented opposition to Plum Creek’s plan (Kesich 2006). Rather than publicly reject the idea of development outright, these groups opted for a nuanced opposition to the plan: “we wanted to see development, if it was going to happen, occur in the right places” (Interview Maine 05 2010).

On April 27, 2007 Plum Creek submitted a second revision to the original plan. The plan was exposed to a high level of public scrutiny—certainly much higher than the previous incarnations—including a series of four public hearings put on by LURC in December 2007 and January 2008. An estimated 1,200 people attended at least one of the hearings—the largest turnout in the Commission’s history (NRCM 2010). During this period LURC also sponsored technical hearings with over 30 registered “intervenor” parties.¹⁴ About 170 witnesses presented testimony at these hearings, arguing for or against the plan and investigating the implications of the proposed development.

* * * *

At this point in the history of the LURC approval process a curious thing happened. After concluding that the Plum Creek plan did not conform to regulatory criteria as submitted, LURC staff took the unprecedented step of working with Plum Creek and outside consultants to formulate “commission generated amendments.” In essence, rather than simply voting ‘yea’ or nay’ on the plan as submitted—and as

¹⁴ Interested parties apply for intervenor status with LURC. If status is granted intervenors can bring expert witnesses to public hearings and cross-examine other witnesses. The following environmental groups were intervenors in the Plum Creek hearings: Natural Resources Council of Maine, Maine Audubon, Appalachian Mountain Club, The Nature Conservancy, RESTORE: The North Woods, and Native Forest Network (LURC 2009).

reviewed by the technical interveners involved in the hearings—LURC remodeled the plan so that it met legal and regulatory standards (RESTORE and FEN 2008). This strange initiative is now fueling mainstream environmentalist appeals (discussed later in this chapter) to the LURC review process.

In the summer of 2008 a public comment period was opened to allow people to voice their opinions on the LURC-altered draft. Opponents of the plan successfully mobilized: of the 1,768 comments submitted, 1,762 were against the plan as written (NRCM 2010).¹⁵ Still, LURC approved a final Plum Creek Application in September of 2009. The plan included, among other features, 15,812 acres of “development areas,” which contain the planned sites for thousands of private lots and two resorts. Additionally, Plum Creek agreed to set aside nearly 400,000 acres in conservation easements, pending a Purchase and Sale agreement with The Nature Conservancy, a national mainstream environmental group whose Northeast branch is located in Maine (Plum Creek Land Company 2009).

Deals and Appeals: The Mainstream Environmental Response

Mainstream environmentalists’ reactions to LURC’s approval of the Plum Creek plan have varied widely, demonstrating that the mainstream community is far from cohesive. Groups may look similar and have generally similar goals and tactics, but they also occupy unique niches *within* the larger niche of mainstream environmentalism.¹⁶ Relationships are not always harmonious. One mainstream interviewee even went so far as to say that his colleagues in other environmental organizations in Maine were

¹⁵ Specifically, 1,517 of the comments opposed development at Lily Bay, a revered and sensitive peninsula in Moosehead Lake. It is believed that portions of Lily Bay are critical habitat for the Canada Lynx, which is listed as a threatened species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Maine Audubon, 2007).

¹⁶ Recall Gray and Lowery’s theory of interest group population ecology touched on in chapter two.

“horrified that we would even be talking with Plum Creek to begin with” (Interview Maine 02 2010). The following paragraphs outline the tactical responses to the Plum Creek plan chosen by those mainstream groups most active throughout the case.¹⁷

Table 3.1 Mainstream Environmental Groups’ Responses to LURC Approval of Plum Creek Proposal		
Group	Position	Rationale
<u>Natural Resources Council of Maine</u>	LURC’s decision-making process was flawed; plan should be appealed in court.	LURC’s “commission generated amendments” violate established laws governing agency operations. Plum Creek Development Plan could be subjected to entire LURC process again and face well-prepared opposition.
<u>Maine Audubon</u>	LURC’s decision-making process was flawed; “corrective policy action” should be taken to ensure a fair and lawful process in future cases.	Though LURC made procedural mistakes they were not egregious enough to warrant judicial appeal. Passage of the Plum Creek Development Plan will undoubtedly open the door to future proposals, and these must be handled properly.
<u>The Nature Conservancy</u>	LURC handled the proposal well. Plum Creek, LURC and environmental groups should cooperate to implement the final version of the plan.	Planned, anticipated development is better than typical Maine sprawl. Plan secures conservation of 400,000 acres of land, which is a win for environmentalists.

Natural Resources Council of Maine

The Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM) has decided to appeal LURC’s approval of the Plum Creek plan in Maine Superior Court, claiming that the unusual act of writing “commission generated amendments” flaws the entire process. “We believe that LURC violated established laws governing how the agency was required to conduct this proceeding,” said one mainstream environmentalist (Interview Maine 05 2010). The appeal centers on the idea that the staff and consultants who rewrote much of the final plan would be able to act as its own advocates without any opportunity for formal public critique. “It’s as if a jury at a trial decided not to return a verdict, opting instead to rewrite

¹⁷ The Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society have also been heavily involved in this case. Their lack of formal intervener status, however, makes it difficult for them to publicly critique the LURC process.

the plaintiff's claims" (Interview Maine 05 2010). NRCM believes this action to be illegal, and worries about the bad precedent it might set for transparency and public input in future development cases.

Maine Audubon

The Maine Audubon Society has also questioned the legitimacy of the LURC process, but has chosen to begin pursuing "corrective policy action"—clarifying the language, for example, of the bylaws governing the LURC approval process—rather than a judicial appeal. Like NRCM, Maine Audubon fears that procedural mistakes create a bad precedent, and that policy safeguards are needed to ensure that a similar incident doesn't happen again. Furthermore, Maine Audubon thinks it is "totally inappropriate and unprecedented" for Plum Creek to receive compensation for placing conservation easements on their land (Interview Maine 03 2010).

The Nature Conservancy

Unlike its counterparts, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has been forthcoming about being pleased with the final concept plan and the process' outcome, "applaud[ing] the outstanding accomplishments" generated by LURC for the Moosehead Lake region (TNC 2009). In TNC's view, the acts of securing lasting conservation of some 400,000 acres and, subsequently, completing a two-million-acre "emerald necklace" of connected conservation lands across the North Woods are real victories. Though TNC will be compensating Plum Creek for these easements, the outcome is still considered to be a relative success. The driving force behind its support for Plum Creek's proposal is the idea that planned, anticipated development is better for Maine (and the environment) than the sort of development that has typically been seen in the state—diffuse, unorganized

sprawl. “They could have sold off two or three acre lots here and there every few years,” reasons one mainstream representative. “There would eventually be the need for infrastructure, roads in these areas, the typical shops, video stores, and everything else people ‘need’ when they’re vacationing” (Interview Maine 02 2010). Thus, according to TNC, planned, landscape-wide development keeps this unwanted evolution under control, and is the lesser of two evils.

Direct Action for the Maine Woods

“The Plum Creek proposal drew more radical responses than anything I can remember in Maine in the last 20 years,” said one interviewee (Interview Maine 03 2010). Even though the relative number of “incidents of radical environmental behavior” is low compared to other notable land-use cases, the direct action that did take place in the Maine case was no less diverse—and certainly no less passionate—than the civil and uncivil disobedience that took place during the Northwest case. Radical action pushed the conflict from a simple zoning case to a fever-pitched saga. In November of 2005, for example, Republican State Senator John Nutting was inspired to revitalize an eco-terrorism bill that had failed in 2001. The measure passed, making it a Class C crime to “commit a crime of violence dangerous to human life or a crime of violence destructive to property or business practices for the primary purpose of protesting the practices of a person or business with respect to an environmental or natural resource issue” (Richardson 2005; MRSA Sec. 1. 17-A §210 2005). Radical action also prompted Plum Creek to request unparalleled levels of security at public meetings. In December of 2007, the State of Maine billed Plum Creek tens of thousands of dollars for increased security at

LURC public hearings in Greenville, Augusta, and Portland. The level of security was “unprecedented for a development plan in northern Maine” (AP 2007).

The first documented direct action during this time period occurred in July of 2002. Some unaffiliated monkeywrenchers caused \$25,000 worth of equipment damage at Plum Creek construction site near First Roach Pond (which was, by that time, about to be developed) (Bowley 2002). The action was financially detrimental, but localized and impersonal. However, on October 31, 2005, vandals damaged three private homes and three office buildings associated with Plum Creek in five Maine communities, splattering orange paint, spray painting the words “Scum Creek,” pouring foul-smelling chemicals about, and strewing raccoon carcasses and animal feces over the premises. The actors also threw rocks through the windows of the Greenville home where Luke Muzzy, a Plum Creek official, lives with his family (Bowley 2005).

Three years later, on August 14, 2008, a dozen protestors, “including a woman suspended 35 feet in the air” demonstrated against Plum Creek outside of the LURC offices in Augusta (Boston Globe 2008). A month later, on September 30, four protesters entered the LURC office building, locked themselves together with U-shaped bicycle locks and held their ground in protest of LURC’s approval of the Plum Creek plan. The LURC staff in Augusta was shaken up, calling the protest “disruptive and...frightening” (Edwards 2008).

Direct action continued into March of 2009, as activists with Maine Earth First! were detained outside of The Nature Conservancy offices for breaking locks and putting on theatrics inside the building in Brunswick (Maine Earth First! "Police Detain Peaceful Protesters Outside of the Nature Conservancy Offices" 2009; Interview Maine 02 2010).

Later that month Earth First!ers hung banners on overpasses in Augusta and Waterville which read “TELL LURC: PLUM CREEK EASEMENT IS A SHAM!” (Maine Earth First! "I-95 Banners Protest Plum Creek Easements" 2009).

Finally, radical environmentalists managed to bring direct action into the final LURC hearing on September 23, 2009. As a commissioner moved to accept the staff recommendation and adopt the amended concept plan, a young man stood up and exclaimed “You wanna make a motion? Where’s our chance to vote?” Then joined by three others from the crowd, the group berated the Commission for ignoring the plights of Maine ecosystems, the Canada Lynx, and future generations. As police officers approached, the activists went limp, refusing to cooperate. In total, six people were taken into custody for disorderly conduct (Video by Maine Independent Media Center 2009).

Contrasting Proposals: A Maine Woods National Park

One of the most radical ideas put forth during (and even before) the Plum Creek episode wasn’t drummed up by radical environmentalists. Nor were radicals some of its strongest advocates. The idea of a Maine Woods National Park was perhaps the best-articulated proposal that contrasted both Plum Creek’s conception of development in the Maine Woods as well as any alternatives put forth by mainstream environmental groups. Why is the idea of a national park so contentious? To begin with, Maine has one of the smallest percentages of public land of any state: less than 5% is protected in public conservation ownership (Kellet 2007). Private ownership of large land-tracts is the status quo, and converting it to public land would be difficult. Add into the mix polarizing debates over recreational hunting, fishing and snowmobiling and skepticism surrounding

federally managed, out-of-state tourism, and the idea of a Maine Woods National Park becomes radical.

Felicity Barringer observes that “other environmental groups, while sympathetic to the idea of a national park, see it as an unwelcome distraction from their fight to block [the Plum Creek plan]” (Barringer 2006). Alternative champions advanced the proposal without them. Roxanne Quimby, founder of Burt’s Bees organic products, invested part of her fortune in the Maine Woods, buying up thousands of acres and setting it aside as conservation land. By 2006 Quimby had secured over 75,000 acres. The park, as currently envisioned, would contain 3.2 million acres and encompass Baxter State Park. Quimby’s land, which is strategically located near Baxter, could be used as a foundation for this project. With this goal in mind, Quimby has continued to buy up land in Piscataquis County and intends (someday) to relinquish the land as part of a Maine Woods National Park (Bowley 2010).

Ms. Quimby is not alone. Two local groups, RESTORE: The North Woods and the Forest Ecology Network have consistently advocated for a Maine Woods National Park since the early 1990s. In addition to filing numerous written comments with LURC in opposition to Plum Creek, RESTORE has focused on “action, not bureaucracy” in order to “revive the grassroots spirit that led to the great conservation victories of the past” (RESTORE 2001). The groups promote the park and keep tabs on the evolution and public reception of the idea (warm or otherwise).

The proposed Maine Woods National Park and Preserve (MWNP) would consist of 3.2 million acres of northern Maine territory encircling Baxter State Park and include prized recreation areas, including the “100-mile wilderness” segment of the Appalachian

Trail. The grand majority of the proposed land area is currently under private ownership, and would likely be purchased away. As a combined national park and national preserve, public fishing access would be guaranteed throughout MWNP, and hunting and snowmobiling would be allowed in select areas (RESTORE 2001).

Mainstream Perceptions of Radical Influence in the Fight for the Maine Woods: Polarization, Losing Support, and Using the Press:

Radical environmentalists have consistently inserted themselves into the Maine Woods development conflict—their presence and actions cannot be ignored. How, then, have mainstream environmental groups perceived that radical environmentalists influenced their ability to protect the Maine Woods? As with the previous chapter on the North Woods, I describe the perceived influence by focusing on the three hypotheses detailed in the introduction: radical environmentalists 1) articulate contrasting proposals, 2) engage in direct action, which negatively influences public opinion of all environmentalists, and 3) generate greater levels of press/wide-spread attention around an issue than there would be otherwise.

Useful (Just Not Right Now): The Effect of Contrasting Proposals

When asked about the effect of contrasting proposals, a surprising consensus came from the interviewees. The fact that their answers were similar wasn't so astonishing, rather it was surprising that most everyone agreed that contrasting proposals have one effect *generally* and another, different effect in this specific case.

Interviewees had an overall sense that contrasting proposals had a positive effect on their own proposals. “Yes,” said one interviewee, “radicals can *absolutely* make mainstream proposals seem more moderate...More radical groups can definitely help to

open up the middle, allowing the more moderate proposals to feel like a relief (Interview Maine 04 2010). Other interviewees concurred with answers such as “In our ability to advance pragmatic solutions to advance policy...it is useful to have people to our left who are pushing for more idealized visionary outcome” (Interview Maine 05 2010). Theoretically, if you’re a mainstream environmentalist, it is helpful to have radical, contrasting proposals on the table next to yours.

However, according to the same interviewees, the effects of contrasting proposals in the Maine Woods case have been mixed. When asked about the proposal to create a Maine Woods National Park, one respondent expressed doubt: “The concept of a three million acre national park in the north woods has been an extremely polarizing issue. So I’m not sure that RESTORE has been particularly helpful” (Interview Maine 05 2010). Another interviewee saw the park proposal as downright detrimental to mainstream efforts:

The reaction was particularly negative, especially from the folks in northern Maine. There was just tremendous backlash, very visceral, very fast, negative response to that proposal. I would say that we are still suffering from that today in terms of our ability to suggest or discuss any kind of conservation that may involve federal ownership. (Interview Maine 03 2010)

While contrasting proposals were generally viewed as a favorable factor, the perceived effect in the Maine woods case has not been positive.

It is worth noting that one interviewee found contrasting proposals in the Maine Woods case to be beneficial:

We were lucky that we had strong organizations in the state could continually speak up and pound on the table to reduce the amount of development so we could work as fair brokers. We could work with developers and not be seen as bashing them, but we did have partners who were saying “look, this is way too much development, this is not acceptable, reduce it reduce it reduce it.” So it’s been nice to have partners who are more radical than we are. (Interview Maine 02 2010)

In all likelihood, this perception stems from where the interviewee’s organization sits relative to other environmental organizations—radical and mainstream—in the state. To this individual, the spectrum of proposals that qualify as “contrasting” might be relatively large. Regardless, this response can be viewed as yet another example of variation among mainstream groups.

Lumped Together: Negative Perceptions of Direct Action

Mainstream perceptions of direct action in the Maine Woods case were overwhelmingly negative. Interviewees suggested that direct action had an adverse influence on public opinion, which in turn led to numerous undesirable effects on their own ability to be successful.

One common concern related to the instinctive “guilty by association” grouping process typically adopted by the broader, less-informed public. “The vandalism up in Greenville and the splattering of blood” said one interviewee “the risk there is for the broad middle that’s not really paying attention...they lump all environmentalists together and say ‘Jesus Christ, those guys are looney toons!’” (Interview Maine 05 2010). Other respondents echoed this view, asserting that “the public is often confused about who

these environmental groups are—why they don’t have the same position—and they tend to lump us all together” and that, due to this lumping phenomenon, direct action generally “made it a lot more difficult to do the organizing for Plum Creek” (Interview Maine 01 2010; Interview Maine 03 2010).

Interviewees also worried that direct action tarnished their well-cultivated statuses with donors and policy makers:

Negative public opinion affects us because our representatives in Washington say “whoa, we didn’t know there was controversy around this project...we thought everything was behind us and it was a win-win situation.” If we make them nervous it fouls our funding with the department of the interior and the department of commerce... (Interview Maine 02 2010)

Although much of the direct action occurred “at a point the in process where [LURC] had made up their mind” interviewees felt that “had there been some commissioners who were undecided at that point...they wouldn’t want to be associated with anyone remotely related to that sort of behavior” (Interview Maine 05 2010). Mainstream environmentalists work diligently to preserve relationships and garner support for their initiatives. In the debate over development in the North Woods—at least as mainstream representatives see it—direct action has made these tasks more difficult.

The Need for News: Utilizing the Media

In light of the negative perceptions of direct action, some interviewees perceived radical behavior to produce a beneficial byproduct: increased media attention. “Radical environmentalists or organizations certainly galvanize attention to issues” said one

interviewee (Interview Maine 01 2010). Another described the mainstream understanding of how valuable press is generated: “It’s no one’s fault—the media is supposed to write about news. Saying ‘everyone is sitting quietly in a meeting and behaving’ is not news. There’s a huge need for news all the time and visual action always draws attention” (Interview Maine 04 2010). The same representative identified the notion of “press gaps,” which can be utilized to further mainstream platforms: when radicals generate news, mainstream groups are often asked to comment—first on the incident, then on the broader issue.

Again, as with the ‘contrasting proposals’ hypothesis, one interviewee dissented, doubting that radicals brought any “further attention to an issue that might not otherwise have gotten it” (Interview Maine 05 2010). Most, however, acknowledged that “it can be very compelling to see other humans express passion when they see something that’s not right” (Interview Maine 04 2010).

Summary of Findings for This Case

Mainstream perceptions of the effects of radical proposals in this case were mixed. Perceptions varied among representatives of different groups and also between theoretical assessments and experiential assessments. As with the Northwest case, mainstream environmentalists in the Maine Woods case made a distinction between the effects of violent and non-violent direct action. Violent action was always perceived to have a negative impact on mainstream success. A real fear of “guilt by association” existed among interviewees. In contrast, non-violent direct action was perceived to generate positive media attention and have a generally beneficial effect on mainstream success.

Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussion

This chapter is divided into two sections that summarize and flesh out the results of this study. The first section presents an empirical, cross-case analysis of interview data and interprets what they say about my three hypotheses. The second section places this new knowledge in a broader scholarly context and discusses possible explanations for mainstream perceptions.

Analysis

Table 4.1 Comparing Interview Data Across Cases		
Hypothesis	NW Case	Maine Case
1) Mainstream groups perceive that radicals <u>help</u> their level of success by <u>articulating contrasting proposals during environmental negotiations.</u>	The data somewhat support the hypothesis.	The data are inconclusive.
2) Mainstream groups perceive that radicals <u>hinder</u> their level of success by <u>engaging in direct action, which negatively alters public opinion of all environmentalists.</u>	The data support the hypothesis.	The data support the hypothesis.
3) Mainstream groups perceive that radicals <u>help</u> their level of success by <u>generating greater levels of publicity/awareness about environmental issues.</u>	The data support the hypothesis.	The data generally support the hypothesis.

Looking at how well the data supported the hypotheses we see that support for Hypothesis One was relatively mixed, support for Hypothesis Two was strong, and support for Hypothesis Three was significant but weaker than support for Hypothesis Two.

Responses related to Hypothesis One varied widely within and between cases. In the Northwest case two individuals felt contrasting proposals had little to no influence on

their success and two individuals felt contrasting proposals were somewhat helpful. In the Maine case responses ran the gamut. There was complete disagreement over the effect of contrasting proposals, particularly the proposal for a Maine Woods National Park, with some mainstream environmentalists seeing these proposals as helpful, others finding them harmful, and several still uncertain about whether they've had any real impact at all.

Regarding Hypothesis Two there was almost no variation between cases: all mainstream representatives interviewed thought that direct action negatively altered public opinion and hindered their success.

Finally, Hypothesis Three responses varied between cases but only slightly. Most agreed that radicals generated additional awareness about environmental issues and that the extra press was helpful.

Discussion

On its face the dataset reveals straightforward conclusions about mainstream perceptions of radical environmentalism: mainstream environmentalists have mixed ideas about the effects of contrasting proposals, they perceive that direct action hinders their success, and they generally believe radicals can attract helpful amounts of attention to a case. However, when interview responses are examined more closely certain insights emerge.

Interviewees reacted to research questions but felt they were too broad to capture nuances in the complex research issues. They felt the need to make caveats and distinctions before responding, qualifying their answers because they found most of the hypotheses to be “true in any given situation” but “none of them to always be true”

(Interview Northwest 08 2010). If we really want to understand mainstream environmentalists' perceptions we need to dig deeper and focus on the consistent and unanticipated features of their responses.

Credibility

Mainstream environmentalists downplayed the effects of radicals' proposals on their own success. For them, only proposals that were credible could be influential. Recall that mainstream respondents in the Northwest case were hesitant to say that contrasting proposals had any significant effect on their ability to achieve their goals because they weren't "in the ballpark" (Interview Northwest 01 2010). It wasn't that contrasting proposals didn't exist—they did. Rather, mainstream environmentalists dismissed the idea that a proposal that lacked a certain type of credibility—the type most noticed by Congress—could have any real impact on their own success.

Distinguishing Between Violent and Non-Violent Direct Action

Most interviewees were quick to distinguish between violent direct action and non-violent direct action. Violent direct action was perceived to always hinder success (strongly supporting Hypothesis Two). However, many respondents suggested that non-violent direct action could be beneficial if it generated additional awareness about environmental issues through passionate, non-violent direct action (therefore supporting Hypothesis Three).

Numerous episodes of both violent *and* non-violent direct action occurred in each of the cases. The distinction made by mainstream environmentalists, then, must be considered. Though the perceptions of direct action were generally negative, those perceptions can and should be broken down and isolated into two categories: perceptions

of violent direct action, which tend to be overwhelmingly negative, and perceptions of non-violent direct action, which are sometimes positive.

“Lumpaphobia” and Problems with Association

Mainstream environmentalists, especially those in the Maine case, feared being associated with radicals. “Different groups have different missions and positions but we all get lumped together...there’s a guilt by association thing going on” (Interview Maine 03 2010). Mainstream groups spend a lot of energy attempting to create a reputation and an identity that fills a niche and is well-received by the public at large. Association with radicals, they worry, can quickly tarnish reputations.

In the following sections I aim to better explain mainstream perceptions of radical environmentalism through a discussion of these three features.

Credibility

What criteria do mainstream environmentalists use to evaluate different policy options? While each mainstream representative is shaped by his or her own unique circumstances, it is likely that a common experience of negotiating with policymakers in a traditional format has given **credibility** its great importance. For many mainstream environmentalists, particularly those in the Northwest case, credibility was cited both as a key feature of their own success and as a reason radical proposals fail. What sorts of proposals are credible? Mainstream environmentalists have typically operated in a relatively systemized, well-structured arena with established rules (both official and unofficial). One feature of this arena is an extended timeframe, what Kenneth Oye calls “the shadow of the future” (Oye 1986). Mainstream environmentalists and policymakers believe they will interact with each other again in the future, and this belief solidifies a

mutually accepted idea of what is credible and what is not. It follows that whether lobbying Congress or working with LURC, mainstream environmentalists employ bargaining tactics that are familiar to policymakers. Mainstream environmentalists feel like they *know* policy makers, *know* what they are looking for, and *know* the offers they will find credible and those they will not. Fisher and Ury encourage negotiators to consider policymakers' perspectives and the consequences they would face should a certain outcome occur: "If you were they, what results would you most fear? What would you hope for?" (Fisher, Ury and Patton 1991). Mainstream environmentalists have learned to make these considerations—a history of employing tactics that resemble traditional lobbies and operating within an extended timeframe have led them to take into account policymakers' feelings and interests. Policymakers, they believe, can't even begin to "fear" or "hope for" proposals that they don't find credible.

In addition to viewing credibility as a necessary component of proposals mainstream environmentalists have come to believe that policymakers only respond to **alternatives** to proposals that are credible as well. In his analysis of pretrial negotiations, Barry Nalebuff observes "the defendant's willingness to accept any pretrial settlement depends on his belief that the plaintiff will otherwise carry out his threat to litigate" (Nalebuff 1987). Policymakers' willingness to consider environmentalists' proposals may be traced to the perceived dangers of *not* considering them. How will their constituencies view them if they deny consideration to said proposals? Do the environmentalists themselves have enough clout to inflict serious electoral or legal consequences? Mainstream environmentalists have learned that a credible participant

brings real threats to the table; threats that can be understood as legitimate by the other parties involved.

The perception that radical proposals are often incredible may be related to the idea that—at least for much of the mainstream experience—radicals could not bring legitimate threats to the table. Radical proposals, it was believed, could not achieve the necessary level of credibility because policymakers doubted their ability to follow through with threatening alternatives.

However, recent evidence puts the accuracy of this perception into question. Doug Bevington studied modern grassroots biodiversity activism in the United States and found that local, outsider groups were able to reliably employ litigation as a tactic and an alternative to traditional negotiations. Furthermore, these groups were able to push litigation in instances where mainstream environmental groups were otherwise constrained: “although both the nationals and the grassroots groups used litigation...the grassroots groups applied it much more extensively in cases that the national groups avoided as too politically controversial” (Bevington 2009). As radicals continue to follow through on threats to litigate, these threats will undoubtedly become more credible.

There seems to exist, then, a growing disconnect between the *perceived* credibility of radical proposals and their *actual* credibility. For example, the Section 318 Compromise between mainstream environmentalists and the Northwest delegation largely ignored radical demands that the injunction against logging stand. While that radical proposal was perceived by mainstream environmentalists to lack credibility, the alternative—petitioning for the spotted owl to be listed as a threatened species—was *very*

credible (and potentially detrimental to both the mainstream and congressional agendas). In other words, once we consider the effects of credible alternatives to radical proposals the perception that radical proposals have no effect on mainstream success is undermined. I suspect that as radicals become more adept at litigation the perceived credibility of their contrasting proposals will increase, and mainstream environmentalists will notice a greater effect on their own success.

Distinguishing Between Violent vs. Non-Violent Direct Action

In both cases mainstream environmentalists consistently made careful, unprompted distinctions when responding to interview questions. The most common distinction (made by almost every interviewee) was between violent and non-violent direct action. Though I consistently asked about direct action *generally*, respondents felt it was important to clarify their disapproval of violent direct action before conceding any positive or neutral feelings about non-violent civil disobedience.

How can we account for the need to make such distinctions? Both the outright opposition to violent direct action and the openness to non-violent direct action can be traced back to the differing ideological takes mainstream and radical environmentalists have on humanity's relationship with the environment. You'll recall from chapter two that many radical environmentalists adhere to deep-ecological philosophies that put the well being of the biosphere above all else. This philosophy is capable of justifying illegal action that potentially puts human beings and their property at risk. Mainstream environmentalists do not take this approach. Instead they choose to work within the confines of a legal system designed to protect human interests, safety, and property.

It follows that mainstream environmentalists oppose violent direct action because it directly conflicts with their own identity as defenders of human safety. On the other hand, non-violent direct action that does not threaten human safety is not so repugnant to the mainstream identity. In *Making Sense of Intractable Environmental Conflicts* Gray and Peterson et. al posit that “identities of social groups are constructed through social comparison processes with other groups.” “Group members,” they say, “tend to see each other in a positive light, while conceiving of other groups in a less favorable light” (Gray 2003).¹⁸ Environmental groups are no exception—they work hard to carve out manageable niches for themselves and define their own identity based on what they are not, as well as what they are. Gray et al. also note that when “strong identity frames were present that sharpened distinctions among disputants, this generally exacerbated the conflict among them, whereas the development of a common identity created opportunities to reduce the conflict” (Gray et al. 2003).

Mainstreamers found radicals to be helpful when their identity frames overlapped and hindering when their identity frames conflicted. Mainstream groups identify with being passionate about the environment—a place-based and interest-based identity frame that radicals also share. But mainstream groups also identify with legal and ethical principles that frown upon actions that endanger human beings. In cases of violent direct action, radicals have shown a willingness to push these boundaries, creating a conflicting identity frame. Thus, when asked about perceptions of direct action, mainstream environmentalists felt the urge to distinguish between violent action, which conflicts with

¹⁸ Here Gray et. al are speaking about Identity Frame Theory, which focuses on three types of identity frames—place-based identity, interest-based identity, and institution-based identity—that inherently define social groups and dictate many of their actions.

one of their identity frames, and non-violent action, which is in sync with another of their identity frames.

“Lumpaphobia” and Problems with Association

Mainstream environmentalists, especially those in the Maine Woods case, expressed fears about being “lumped together” with radical environmentalists in the eyes of the public. The worry goes beyond a few acute episodes of negative backlash; the guilt-by-association phobia is a constant concern. What causes this fear and why might a perceived association with radicals be particularly unnerving for mainstream environmentalists? Environmental groups can definitely benefit from a positive public image. A good reputation can enhance their active membership bases and give them additional clout in the policy arena. But a solid reputation—even one built on a large record of favorable achievements—can be threatened, if not wiped away, by a small amount of negative information. Good reputations are fragile, and mainstream environmentalists fear any factors that can threaten their reputations.

It doesn’t help that mainstream environmentalists’ objectives put them in a precarious position from the start. John Meyer suggests that mainstream environmental groups possess both paternalistic and populist tendencies. While the public is seen as “an obstacle to effective environmental action,” their participation is required to achieve most successful outcomes (Meyer 2008). Environmentalists view themselves as wise mothers and fathers who have a responsibility to guide the unknowing public towards choices that are in their best interests. These choices, however, often go against the public’s instincts

and short-term interests. The difficult task, then, is mobilizing public support while acting paternalistically.¹⁹

This need to reconcile paternalism and populism helps to explain the “lumpaphobia” expressed by interviewees. Public favor is important to these groups, and, as such, fear of possible association—even if it is nonspecific—with individuals that lack public favor is understandable. Economists and political scientists have long been familiar with the idea that a small amount of bad, inflammatory information can push out a long history of good work. Gresham’s Law, as it is known, was originally developed to describe the ability of debased currency (fiat money, like we have in most countries today) to push out commodity-based currency (like gold and silver coins). Today Gresham’s Law is used in a political context to describe the disproportionate influence negative information has compared to positive information. Samuel L. Popkin, author of *The Reasoning Voter*, explains Gresham’s Law of political information: “a small amount of personal information can dominate a large amount of historical information about a past record...just as bad money drives good money out of circulation, so does easily absorbed personal information drive more relevant but hard-to-assimilate political information out of consideration” (Popkin 1991). In the realm of public opinion a little bad can go a long way and must be defended against.

But mainstream environmental groups engage in this sort of public relations armoring all the time. Is there some quality about radical environmentalism that makes it more toxic to a favorable public image than, say, an ordinary scandal or faulty decision?

¹⁹ Ironically and unfortunately, populist support can be damaged by paternalistic tendencies. Meyer sees this situation exemplified in the mainstream’s inability to swiftly and comprehensively absorb the local populist power of the environmental justice movement: environmentalism itself was seen as an elite luxury reserved for the well-off, out of reach (and at odds with) the grassroots populace.

Perhaps the potency of the term “eco-terrorism”—now used to describe many instances of direct action and ecotage—in the post-9/11 era has something to do with it. Here, there seems to be some legitimacy in the mainstream perception that radical action provides fuel for the anti-environmental opposition. Steve Vanderheiden argues that use of the word eco-terrorism “has entered the public lexicon at a convenient time for those brandishing it as a legal and rhetorical weapon.” In unearthing the origin of the term, Vanderheiden discovers an etymology crafted and proliferated by anti-environmentalists to suit the very purpose of precipitating associative fear: “the association found favor among allies...planting a seed that would later blossom under the nurturing atmosphere of the ‘war on terror’” (Vanderheiden 2008). As a term crafted to damage the reputation of the environmental movement, eco-terrorism has an even greater potential to tarnish now that fears about terrorism have been universalized. Violent direct action has always elicited negative blowback from the anti-environmental opposition. But today (as opposed to in the late 1980s) the public relations consequences of these actions are capable of spreading outside of timber constituencies and into the broad population. In this regard mainstream environmentalists have real reason to fear association with radicals.

* * * *

This section has touched upon three insights from this study and has offered possible explanations for each. First, mainstream environmentalists employ tactics that are familiar to policymakers and deeply consider the effects of a negotiated outcome on all parties involved. For them, credibility is achieved when positions are backed up by reliable threats and alternatives to negotiated agreements. Radicals are perceived to be

lacking credibility because they cannot back up their proposals with threats and alternatives that make sense to policymakers. Second, the need to make distinctions between violent and non-violent direct action is related how mainstream groups define themselves. Those aspects of identity which are shared by radical and mainstream environmentalists alike create positive inter-group perceptions while those frames which conflict reinforce negative inter-group perceptions. Finally, mainstream environmentalists must balance paternalistic and populist tendencies and fear having their public image tarnished. Gresham's Law tells us that a bit of bad, easily interpreted information can destroy a solid, well-developed reputation. The classification of radical action as eco-terrorism augments the negative connotations mainstream environmentalists face when they are lumped together with radicals. In this sense their fear of association is understandable.

Conclusion: Reassessing Ties and Wrenches

Summary of Chief Findings and Suggestions for Further Research

Two ideas lie at the heart of this study. First, the environmental movement faces—and will undoubtedly continue to face—big challenges in the future. Second, mainstream and radical environmentalists, whether they like it or not, are inextricably tied to one another and to the broader movement. Both contribute to the movement's achievements and shortcomings. Both are responsible for the broader implications of their actions. Furthermore, as a multi-generational, multi-issue movement environmentalism must evolve and adapt in order to persist. What does this adaptation entail? How do we ensure that we don't tamper with a good thing? Did we even have a good thing to begin with? As I discussed early on mainstream and radical environmentalists have both adopted and become comfortable with certain tactics that they believe are both effective and in line with their own ideologies. It is important that we constantly reassess these tactics. By examining the successes and failures of American environmentalism we can pinpoint areas for improvement.

Unfortunately, studying such a complex subject is quite difficult. Where do we start? Throughout this project my aim has been to identify some possible indicators that will help us know where to look. My hope is that this study will help us to develop a keener understanding of the relationship between radical and mainstream environmentalism and contribute in some way to a movement-wide evaluation of tactics.

What We've Learned

This study examined two cases, the Northwest forest saga of the 1980s and 1990s and the ongoing effort to protect the Maine Woods. Through these cases and the accompanying interviews much has been learned about how mainstream environmentalists perceive that radicals environmentalists help and hinder their success in achieving their policy objectives. We have seen that mainstream environmentalists have mixed feelings about the effects of contrasting proposals but that they consistently emphasize credibility as an important component of proposals. Even those mainstream environmentalists who couldn't see the effects of contrasting proposals on success in their own experiences acknowledged that radical proposals could theoretically influence their own proposals *if they were credible enough*. We have learned that mainstream environmentalists definitely perceived direct action to influence their success, but that whether direct action helped or hindered success depended on whether that action was violent or non-violent. In the two cases violent direct action was always perceived negatively. Some mainstream environmentalists, however, were open to the idea that passionate, non-violent direct action can draw positive media attention to an issue. Finally we have been able to identify a tangible fear that mainstream environmentalists have of being associated with radical environmentalists. Reputations are of the utmost concern to mainstream groups—they really do worry about being lumped together with radicals who are seen unfavorably by the broader public.

Moving Forward: Using Indicators to Pursue True Evaluations of Tactics

In this study I have identified and discussed mainstream perceptions of radical environmentalism. I have isolated key features of these perceptions—distinctions between violent and non-violent direct action, understandings of credibility,

“lumpaphobia”—in hopes that they will aid environmentalists in evaluating their preferred modus operandi. I initially chose to focus my efforts on mainstream perceptions because I struggled to develop the appropriate means for testing the actual successes and failures of preferred mainstream and radical tactics. I now believe that, using the knowledge developed in this study, future researchers could pursue a real “report card” for American environmentalists. Below I offer three (brief) suggestions for further study.

1) Connect publicity generated by direct action to public opinion of the environmental movement. Given the modern capabilities of university libraries a researcher could feasibly conduct extensive searches of newspapers for specific terms. We now know that mainstream environmentalists perceive non-violent and violent direct action to have different effects on their success. A researcher could first isolate instances of violent action from non-violent action in an environmental conflict and then perform a search to determine how often the larger conflict appears in national newspapers before and after those incidents. The researcher could then cross-reference her findings with references to mainstream environmental groups as well as anti-environmental opposition during the same time period. By doing so she could uncover a) if direct action can actually be tied to increased publicity and b) if increased publicity can be traced to favorable or unfavorable public opinions of mainstream environmentalists.

2) Investigate credibility. We now know that credibility is very important to mainstream environmentalists. We also know that mainstream environmentalists have often perceived radical proposals to be incredible. It would be interesting to investigate this notion of credibility further to see if it has expanded or contracted over time. Does a

history of successful litigation, for example, increase a group's credibility, even if they don't engage in traditional forms lobbying and policy advocacy? If credibility does indeed matter both mainstream and radical environmentalists alike could benefit from a fuller understanding of which tactics increase credibility and which tactics diminish it.

3) Research "niches" in environmental politics. Given the real fear mainstream environmentalists have expressed about being associated with radicals it would be interesting to research how groups within the environmental movement can distinguish themselves from one another. Answers may be found through a comparison of mainstream and radical factions within various different social movements. If techniques for minimizing the negative effects of association exist, I suspect mainstream environmentalists would be eager to hear of them.

* * * *

Environmentalism in America is truly a fascinating subject. While the environmental movement shares similarities with other social movements, I would argue that its scope is much broader. It touches people and places everywhere. Environmentalists are driven by philosophical, political, economical, and ideological forces. Some wear suits while others wear overalls. Some smile and carry briefcases while others throw wrenches. And yet these individuals are all part of something larger than themselves—the struggle to make right the relationship between humanity and the earth, however they define it.

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Appendix A
Interview Data for North West Case Study

Interview Code	Response	Effect on Success
<u>Radical environmentalists articulate contrasting proposals:</u>		
NW 02	Radical proposals are only significant if they have credibility in the eyes of policy makers. Radicals are not engaged on Capital Hill, and, as such were not taken seriously by Congress during the NW Forest Campaign.	None
NW 05	Radical proposals challenged the conventional wisdom about the timber industry and the northwest economy, helping to catalyze the Clinton administration.	Somewhat Helpful
NW 07	Mainstream groups would always take extreme proposals to the table initially along with a willingness to negotiate. Radical proposals, which were akin to the pre-negotiation proposals brought forth by the mainstream, further enhanced the desirability of a negotiated outcome for policymakers.	Somewhat Helpful
NW 08	Policy makers recognized that radicals were not cognizant of political reality and chose not to take their proposals seriously.	None
<u>Radical environmentalists engage in direct action:</u>		
NW 02	Violent direct action gave rhetorical ammunition to the opposition. While this action may not have directly impacted policy makers' decisions, it did allow opponents to frame the issue negatively, inducing fears about reelection/public support should they sympathize with the environmental cause.	Hindered
NW 05	Violent criminal activity was used as a weapon against all environmentalists, and damaged public reputation.	Hindered
NW 07	Illegal, violent action created a bad name for environmentalists by potentially injuring innocent people.	Hindered
NW 08	Violent action was highly detrimental.	Hindered
<u>Radical environmentalists generate publicity around an issue:</u>		
NW 02	Non-violent direct action had some credibility and drew media attention to the environmental cause.	Somewhat Helpful
NW 05	Much of the non-violent radical activity was largely ignored. Some, however, managed to generate national attention for the cause.	Somewhat Helpful
NW 07	Passionate, creative, non-violent efforts to draw attention to the issue were beneficial.	Helpful
NW 08	Nonviolent action raised positive attention to the issue.	Helpful

Appendix B
Interview Data for Maine Woods Case Study

Interview Code	Response	Effect on Success
<u>Radical environmentalists articulate contrasting proposals:</u>		
Maine Woods 01	If radical environmentalists have alternative proposals they have not articulated them in a way that makes sense to the public or to policy makers.	None
Maine Woods 02	Radical demands for less development have allowed mainstream groups to assume a “fair broker” status, which was appealing to policymakers.	Helpful
Maine Woods 03	Radical proposals have received particularly negative reactions, and have created a “tremendous backlash” which restricts mainstream policy options.	Hindered
Maine Woods 04	Radical proposals generally <i>do</i> cause policy makers to take mainstream proposals more seriously by “opening up the middle,” but it has been hard to see that effect in this case.	Somewhat helpful
Maine Woods 05	Some radical proposals have been particularly polarizing.	Somewhat Hindered
<u>Radical environmentalists engage in direct action:</u>		
Maine Woods 01	Violent direct action, particularly that which puts innocent people at risk, removes any moral or ethical high ground radicals may have had. Furthermore, this action has a negative effect on public opinion of environmentalists, mainstream and radical.	Hindered
Maine Woods 02	Direct action makes forest protection a contentious issue, and puts pressure on the relationships between policy makers and mainstream environmentalists.	Hindered
Maine Woods 03	Mainstream and radical groups are often “lumped together” by the press and the public. Violent direct action initially raised suspicion as to who was responsible for vandalism.	Somewhat Hindered
Maine Woods 04	Violent direct action can <i>never</i> have a positive effect.	Hindered
Maine Woods 05	Direct action always carries an associated risk of negatively influencing the “broader public.” Direct action in this case, however, likely had little effect on policy makers, since most had already made up their minds.	Somewhat Hindered.
<u>Radical environmentalists generate publicity around an issue:</u>		
Maine Woods 01	Non-violent direct action can create good media visuals and has drawn positive attention to the case.	Somewhat Helpful
Maine Woods 02	Radicals do generate publicity, which mainstream organizations can potentially use to bring attention to their initiatives.	Somewhat Helpful
Maine Woods 03	N/A	N/A
Maine Woods 04	If executed properly, non-violent direct action can garner positive media attention. Mainstream groups have used these press openings to their advantage.	Helpful
Maine Woods 05	Radicals didn’t bring any further attention to the issue than it would have gotten otherwise.	No Effect

