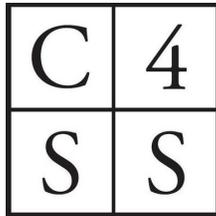


Libertarianism: An Ecological Consideration

Libertarianism and wilderness are necessary for each others survival - As Gary Snyder states: "wild doesn't mean disorderly: it means a different kind of order."

A different kind of order is what we as a living species desperately need.



Grant Mincy

Industrial Utility

In the vast arid lands of the Arckaringa Basin in Australia a major shale oil discovery has been made. Linc Energy has discovered across 16 million acres of land an estimated 133 – 233 billion barrels of shale oil that lies beneath the region's lithology. No matter how much of this oil is recoverable using modern technology, the discovery is sure to be valued in the trillions at current market value. Peter Bond, chief executive of Linc Energy, is marketing a deposit that has the potential to transform the global oil industry. This is an incredible finding with incredible consequences.

Oil is a highly sought after commodity as it currently fuels much of the developed world's economy – along with other fossil resources such as coal. Investment in this new discovery will suit well for investors. There is a lot of money to be made and the sheer volume of the discovery points to long-term production of the resource. This has major implications for the economy of the area as well. Production will raise demand for workers of all ability levels and educational backgrounds.

The immensity of this discovery is sure to plunge Australia into the latest energy boom: Shale energy. Spreading wildly across the United States and Canada, giant shale reserves have been exploited, increasing domestic energy production and causing economic booms across the region. Where there are booms, however, the business cycle illustrates a bust is sure to follow – especially when heavy government subsidies are needed to maintain the boom. Artificial bubbles always burst. For this reason a number of people protest shale energy speculation.

Shale energy is not productive enough to pay for itself, which is why governments have started heavily subsidizing natural gas extraction. It is true that the shale bubble has lowered energy costs in the short term, but this is because lenders, investors and

government subsidies have lowered prices for consumers – the (not so) secretive mega investors in shale energy are tax-payers. As for the jobs boon, it is important to note that the high wage opportunities are for specialized labor. The majority of jobs produced are low wage – truck drivers, well pad operators and so on. When the shale bubble bursts, as always, the low-income, working class and middle class will shoulder the economic burden. Big money will be made for investors while communities deal with the economic bust and captured markets that follow production.

There is also an environmental movement protesting shale energy production. This movement is frowned upon by many movement libertarians. There are good reasons why as many mainstream environmentalists would use the power of the state to interfere with voluntary contracts and the rights of individuals to decide what to do with their property. There is also reason, however, to support a libertarian case *against* such industrial activity as well – such as compulsory pooling laws and the ever powerful eminent domain. For an example: Michael Hinrichs, director of public affairs for the Jordan Cove Energy Project and the Pacific Connector Gas Pipeline, said eminent domain was not their “preferred method” of obtaining development rights, adding: “We’d much rather come to an equitable agreement with the landowners.” Very noble of a company to only use coercive force after they fail to reach their desired agreement with property owners. Any libertarian should acknowledge that eminent domain is a gross violation of property rights. Compulsory pooling laws are just as intrusive.

Along with gas extraction comes road and well pad construction, noise and air pollution, increased smog, increased water pollution and giant tanker trucks utilized for the transportation of large volumes of freshwater for hydraulic fracturing and transportation of the harvested resource. In this arid region of Australia, any undisturbed wilderness is soon to be industrialized

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for the attainment of this resource, just as the rural lands of the States and Canada have been industrialized. This is of course true for all extractive industries – be it mountaintop removal coal mining in Appalachia, open-pit mining in the great open west or large timber operations in the Pacific Northwest (just to name a few).



Of course it would be irresponsible to call for the halt all fossil energy production overnight. No responsible environmentalist should call for such an activity as our infrastructure would collapse. The very privileged argument that utility rates should be raised to pay for "green" infrastructure is also irresponsible as this would grossly impact low-income households. There is reason, however, to call for free, liberated markets where the creative labor human beings long to conduct can begin a transition economy. For if we lived in a truly free(d) market system, without state intervention, the modern, centralized fossil fuel industries would surely crumble under their enormous cost. Without federal involvement in energy markets, fossil energy firms (among the largest corporations on the planet) would instead focus on the creation of new energy models and internal risk-pooling to examine alternatives to high-risk projects.

Without state collusion, in other words, what would develop is an ecosystem service approach to natural resource management, with adaptive collaboration and a reliance on the resources of local communities. I will explore these opportunities in this essay as I wish to build the libertarian case for the environment, and why more self-described libertarians should engage the environmental movement.

Jefferson Over Hamilton

The mainstream libertarian movement in the United States ties its idealism to the founders of the early government. Many in the mainstream movement champion individual rights, small limited government, constitutional representation and classical liberalism. At the time the early United States government was being constructed many arguments and debates occurred among the founders, but arguably the greatest of which occurred between Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton.

In Hamilton's view it would be irresponsible to place much democratic control in the hands of the people. Hamilton and other federalists believed the country should be ruled by the economic ruling class – the elite, the educated and the privileged. Federalist John Jay put it as bluntly as possible: "Those who own the country ought to govern it." They favored a strong national government, a broad interpretation of the constitution and put national unity above individualism and states rights. Their economic model, of course, was centrally planned with strict regulation of state economies (the first national bank – which later dissolved – was established by Hamilton as well).

Jefferson was just the opposite and today is a favorite of the US liberty movement. Jefferson believed that an *informed* public would be able to make wise decisions in national policy. He favored a more open and democratic government and rather disagreed that the elite should rule. He favored a close to nature, close to our neighbors idealism for the United States and sought

devouring one another even more vigorously and ferociously than we already are.

The more wilderness and open spaces that are preserved the less space will be available for industries and governments to exploit. Wilderness preservation will slow the industrialization of the planet and it will halt the growth of governments. Protection of the environment will liberate us from consumerism, power and unjust technologies. It will liberate us from our growth mentality. It will liberate nature and ourselves from centralized power and technological supremacy. Who are we to deny the holy experience of wildness *and* wilderness for ourselves and future generations?

Libertarianism and wilderness are necessary for each others survival – As Gary Snyder states: "wild doesn't mean disorderly; it means a different kind of order." A different kind of order is what we as a living species desperately need.

differences of opinion and work to protect all forms of life (bacteria, bugs, plants, reptiles, mammals, amphibians, etc), habitats, ecosystems and our valuable natural resources. Human civilization lives by geologic/ecologic consent, is dependent on nature and is richer because of wide open places – wilderness. A libertarian society is dependent on extensive areas of the Earth where humans will not use resources for consumption, but instead rarely ever occupy with their bodies.

Biological diversity is extremely important. Homogenization of the biosphere will act like commercializing human life. As species tend towards extinction and as landscapes are altered for needless consumption this homogenization is very possible and it threatens to rob us of what John Muir deemed “places to play in and pray in.” Without natural landscapes human beings will be fully industrialized and our lives would be absolutely diminished. We would be absent of wildness and place.

Our cities and towns are absolutely incredible. We have built fascinating, sustainable communities and neighborhoods that mean so much to us. We have labored over the centuries to build these places and they should be celebrated. Colonization, however, has its consequences and too much of it would not be a good thing – as Edward Abbey notes:

But if all the United States were to become one huge colonization, one great city, there would be nothing to contrast it with. We'd lose the small-town way of life, the agrarian way of life, the farms, ranches, open spaces, forests and deserts and mountains and seashores. All of them would be completely taken over, devoured. That seems to be the direction in which we're moving right now. And if we succeed with this mad project of trying to dominate the whole planet and reduce everything to an industrial culture, we'll then turn on each other and start

states rights over federal rights while advocating for a strict interpretation of the constitution.

I understand the sentiment that Thomas Jefferson had it right (though I have no problem noting that Jefferson himself was a member of the elite and was rather hypocritical in many regards to his thoughts on liberty). As a libertarian I believe that in a truly free society we would all be owners of property, as a left-libertarian I believe that some of this property could also be commonly owned. I champion the ideas of independence and self-reliance instead of being subject to the wishes and demands of large bureaucratic institutions. It is the opposite of being a free human being when one is dependent on centralized institutions. I agree with the notion that Jefferson had it more right than Hamilton – and I would emphasize the community driven nature of the States that he argued for.

Beyond Jefferson

Like Thomas Jefferson, the transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau idealized a close to nature, communitarian approach to life and economics. Thoreau, an agrarian anarchist, also greatly championed individualism, as evident in his *Resistance to Civil Government*:

That government is best which governs not at all; and when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of government which they will have.

Moving into the 20th and 21st centuries there are other libertarian thinkers that champion a more natural approach to social structure and economics, who emphasize on individualism and ones role in their community. Wendell Berry comes to mind. An agrarian from Kentucky, Berry has long mistrusted the government and has made his case against centralized power for a long time now – especially in regards to Appalachian coal mining and industrial agriculture. He is an out spoken critic of the heavy

government subsidies the industries receive and how these industries divorce human beings from their cultural and natural heritage. In *The Long Legged House* Berry writes:

Since there is no government of which the concern or the discipline is primarily the health either of households or the Earth, since it is the nature of any state to be concerned first of all with its own preservation and only second to the cost, the dependable, clear response to mans moral circumstance is not of law but of conscience. The highest moral behavior is not obedience to law, but obedience to the informed conscience even in spite of law.

Perhaps one of the most overlooked voices of the modern liberty movement is Edward Abbey. Abbey, an environmentalist, is also an anarchist. In 1989 Abbey wrote:

Anarchism is not a romantic fable but the hardheaded realization, based on five thousand years of experience, that we cannot entrust the management of our lives to kings, priests, politicians, generals, and county commissioners... Anarchism is founded on the observation that since few men are wise enough to rule themselves, even fewer are wise enough to rule others... A patriot must always be ready to defend his country against his government.

To Abbey, country is much more than nationalism, and it is defiantly *not* allegiance to government – or any large institution. He found that in all developed hierarchies, the larger an institution became the more oppressive it would be. Abbey instead advocated that country was the wilderness, the places that have not yet been exploited for consumption. He believed that there are “holy” and “wild” experiences for all of us out there, and that to deprive ourselves and future generations of them would be

realized state power and influence over us all will subside. There is no reason for us to be on a centralized grid, and dependent on a few corporations for our lifestyle. Democratic energy and emergent technologies will allow people to move off the grid to allow individuals and communities to power themselves with market transactions and the resources available to them. From smart grids, to new solar technology, small scale wind, geothermal, and micro-generation as well as community gardens, urban farms, emergent local economies and so on – we can begin to disassociate from large, centralized institutions.

The first step in this transition is going after a low hanging fruit – energy efficiency. Efficiency is a cost-effective means to move us into a post fossil dominated world. It is also incredibly democratic. Simply by weatherizing and upgrading our homes and business's property owners, whether private or public, will be able to keep more of *their* money in *their* pockets. Energy efficiency work in our households and places of labor will make us less dependent on centralized forms of energy production. Simply put, the more money in our pockets is less money in the hands of utility monopolies (TVA or Duke-Progress Energy) which makes it harder for business interests to be awarded rate hikes, integrated resource plans and construction work in progress. As the fossil industry has been increasingly dependent on mechanization for corporate “efficiency,” weatherization and community efficiency programs will create jobs for all education/income levels – so people who have lost their jobs to machines will have meaningful work. As the over all economy transitions, as research and development is freed from the interests of the corporation state, other technologies are sure to follow, but energy efficiency is our first step towards energy liberation.

An Ecological Consideration

A liberated, stateless society would advocate free speech, celebrate

human race (NSA leaks) and to all living things shows an absolute anthropocentric dominance over ecological systems. A great example of this, of course, is nuclear technology – especially nuclear arms. The great arms race among powerful nation states has created enough payload to end human civilization, to end the human species and to threaten the ecological evolution of our planet. Nuclear technology is centralized to states, hegemonic and terrifying. There are many other examples of dangerous technology but in the final analysis: technology has the ability to encourage an oversimplified/hegemonic view of the world – it *can* be insulting to human nature.

Technology also tends to centralize power, especially as it is the privileged intelligentsia that mainly moves innovation in this field forward. This gives the elite few the power of dominance over the many. Technology is born in a system of hierarchy and authority and champions a social structure based in tyranny. Environmentalism and libertarianism both at their core dissent against this authority as both are opposed to the privileged power of the few.

What better reason for the liberty movement to adopt environmentalism? In regards to energy, fossil fuel corporations are centralized under the state. As libertarians know “war is the health of the state,” we should also know the fossil industry fuels its aggression. In order for the state to survive its dependence on the fossil fuel industry is absolute – from arms production, to militarization (of space, even), to hegemony, to transportation, to encouraging our consumerism and so on – the reason fossil fuels are so large is because the state is dependent upon them.

The real solution to the energy/environmental crisis is social empowerment instead of social faith in centralized, dominate institutions. This will not put us back in centuries past, but move us, via transition economies to democratic technology. Democratic energy is a large worry of the state, because once it is

a great tragedy. Abbey also noted that community, and more importantly, the individual’s role in the community is also very important. Though he had great distrust for large institutions, he believed greatly in family, friendship, fellowship and human labor. To him “America” was not the government or government sanctioned economic activity, but it was land, wild spaces, individuals and communities.

Karl Hess, in his talk *Tools to Dismantle the State*, also shares this notion. In this talk Hess says “to truly love your country you must loathe the nation.” To libertarians the state is an outside force. It weighs down on our creative labor, it wishes to regulate the spontaneous order of markets and it wishes to execute authority over all aspects of liberty. As an environmentalist and a libertarian, I also see that it creeps into the natural world- our wild open spaces as well.

Beyond the federal governments giant grab of “public lands” it also supports large financial institutions and global corporations. So as the government “manages public lands” (read allows public property to be used by industry) it also champions consumption. Corporate logos are well-known across the states (and the world for that matter). Much fewer people can identify rocks or trees or land-plants – the very resources we are dependent upon for our survival. Is this liberating? I would argue not. I would argue this is designed, this is manufactured consent and that we are manipulated. I believe in a truly free market setting there would be more advocacy for wild places, for life experiences, for liberated time and less emphasis on consumption, debt and materialism. We would care much more about country in a liberated society.

Environment and the State

There is a common sentiment among movement libertarians that one cannot be a libertarian and an environmentalist because environmentalism requires the state. I do not find this to be the

case and argue that libertarianism should engage the environmental movement – and the environmental movement needs to adopt libertarianism.

I will start with the National Forest Service and the National Park Service (favorites of environmentalists and many Americans) because they are, unfortunately, very much under the influence of commercial interests. Concessions in parks, hotel lodging, loggers, fish stockers and miners in national forests all encroach on wilderness – the very thing these institutions are charged to protect. Though parks and national forest lands are championed as safe havens for wildlife (and understandably so, they are the best hope for wilderness in this country) there is a tendency in these “safe havens” state environmentalists tend to forget – the tendency to build facilities and roads in the parks and to open up our forests to industrial/commercial exploitation.

Environmentalists are often at odds with the state. There is a continual process of compromise between conservationists, big business and government courts that results in ever more encroachment on wilderness. Every time industry gets a new piece of the landscape it is because environmentalists have had to sacrifice lands or waters they cared about in the name of compromise. Government and industry continually sacrifice natural lands for development to fuel our consumption, which makes it necessary for state and industry to sacrifice more natural areas. In short, whatever the state has done to preserve natural areas it has done even more to help industry exploit them.

Is the biggest threat to our environment the extraction/production/use of fossil fuels? Politicos seem to focus on energy consumption at home and abroad as the reason to champion “green” industries. What is often overlooked in this dialogue is war. War is waged (or just carried out without declaration) by states, for states. War is carried out to expand state power and to obtain more natural resources. War is the health of

In short, we would get our cultural heritage back. As anarchist Gary Snyder ultimately argues in *The Practice of the Wild*, if people move beyond political institutions and see our jurisdictions as innate and natural landscapes then political action would seek to protect more of that natural landscape. As we are proud of our communities and neighborhoods, as well as our individual labor, there would develop a collective interest to protect our natural landscapes – our new connection with culture would demand it. We would seek to take care of water, plants, animals and all of our resources because they too would be part of our neighborhood – this is a new way to organize politically and I believe this would happen in a stateless society.

Today this is the core of the environmental movement: protect place connections, protect watersheds and landscapes, protect biodiversity and move beyond the destruction of these ecological communities. These ideas should be triumphed by libertarians as well as it will free society from centralized economies and hegemonic governments.

Questioning Technology

Well surely if environmentalists get their way we will all be living in dirt huts! This is a common objection to the greens, but it is short-sighted to say the least. Any good environmentalist knows that cities are (or can be) incredibly sustainable and the more of us who voluntarily live in them means the more land can be protected from urban sprawl. There is no reason to go back to dirt huts, there is all the reason to march on into the 21st century.

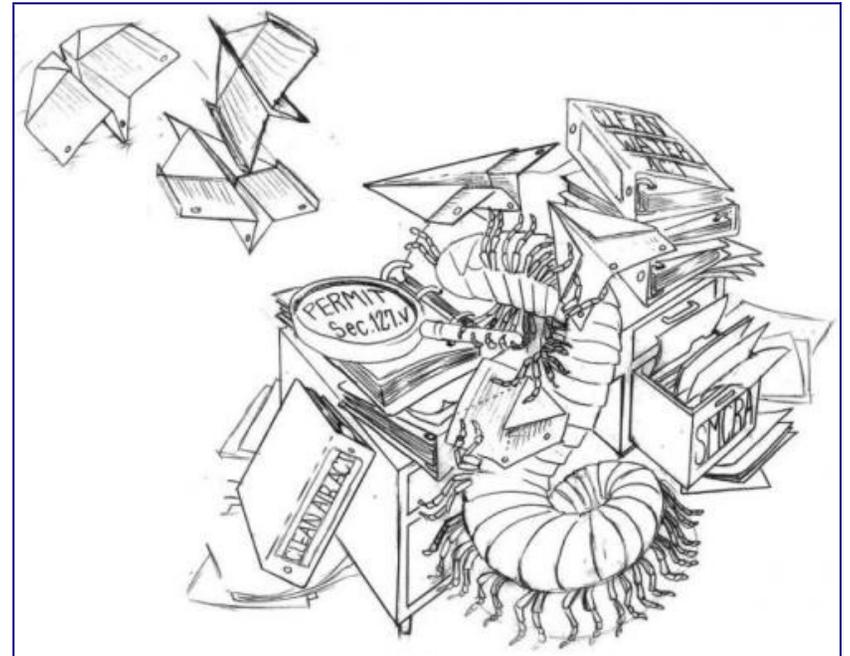
There is a need for environmental libertarians, however, to voice concern over technology – even beyond consumption woes. Technology is of course very beneficial, a product of creative labor and will absolutely assist sustainability. On the other hand though, seeing technological development applied to the entire planet (most extreme case – geo-engineering of the climate), the



States have divided landscapes not based on the science of resource management, geology or ecology but rather for political purposes. States have drawn fictional lines in the soil for the sole purpose of claiming landscapes as their property – hence their landscapes to exploit. In a stateless society there would still be boundaries, but they would not be political.

A truly libertarian society would rather analyze landscapes in terms of watersheds, ecosystems, capacity for food production, resources available for trade, cultural heritage and so on. Without political boundaries, but by natural boundaries, human civilization will be more aware of their natural surroundings, the resources available to them, and community relationship with the environment will be much more understood. In this society we would be liberated from centralized institutions that rob us of this experience and deny us the chance to mix our productive labor with what should be “our” land.

the state and war is dependent on fossil fuel extraction – no matter how cherished, sacred or endangered the landscape is that holds these resources. Any statist intervention on behalf of the environment will fail in comparison to the states lust for war. For libertarians, championing the environmental cause will help build the movement against the state.



State environmentalists are short sighted for a number of reasons, but perhaps the greatest is their reliance on bureaucracy. The bureaucracy is undying – it does not matter what liar is the executive. Empowering the state bureaucracy to manage our natural resources will only make matters worse as the state seeks health for one thing only: the state. The greatest hurdles for environmentalists to overcome are government hurdles – which is why “paper wrenching” has become such a vital tactic for the environmental movement. The permitting process for fossil harvesting, weak environmental legislation (which is interpreted by the whims of whoever holds office) and mountains of

bureaucratic paperwork rubber stamp big industry projects and serve only to benefit big industry. Paper wrenching has been an effective tactic because as community members learn the law, they can begin slowing this process. States wish to centralize power and economic activity, not empower communities and social movements. Direct action, empowered communities and legal action all serve to challenge state power – this bureaucracy should be torn asunder, not empowered.

Environmentalists should abandon state actions and adopt markets because social movements shape markets. In free(d) markets vast areas of wilderness would truly be protected because industry would not have the capability of such exploitation. Libertarians should support the environment because true conservation would prevent a state monopoly of currency and violence.

The Green Washing

One of the best ways to build an obedient society is through propaganda and opportunities for consumption. This is where green washing comes to bat. Simply put, green washing is a form of spin where “green” marketing is deceptively used to promote the perception that an organizations (including government) policies, products and goals are good for the environment. Though some organizations *are* doing good for the environment, all too often our institutions offer false solutions, remain consumption driven and are just a way of making special interests look good as they take our money.

From Wall Street to Capitol Hill everyone is involved in green washing. Financiers, advertisers and regulators offer their answer to the energy and environmental crisis in the form of “green capitalism.” The big government push for electric cars, for just one example, pushes fuel economy and emissions while ignoring that these cars will be plugged into the grid and fueled from coal. Of course all consumer goods are powered by the fossil fuel

the long-term implications of the use of our natural resources, while paying attention to societal demands and well-being in a globalized market. Natural scientists, social scientists, politicians, the private sector and the public must start working together to restore the biosphere, protect bio-diversity and promote sustainability. We must be honest about the limitations of our natural ecosystems and implement policies that best fit the needs, health and demands of an informed society. In doing so, resource managers can help the long-term health of the biosphere. ACM is one mechanism that, if used openly and responsibly, can merge competing interests together, democratically, to better the planet.

Perhaps the most important attribute of ACM is the insistent inclusiveness and diversity of ideas. This allows practitioners to move forward with the best plans possible. This diversity, however, has very large implications for traditional leadership. ACM can be used as an argument to promote the redistribution of power, to champion ideas that benefit people, the true market form and the environment.

Collaborative engagement gives all citizens a larger voice in the decision-making process as it rejects the top down approach to resource utility.

Beyond Political Boundaries

ACM and in failing. Success in the process leads to a number of desirable outcomes. The most important, arguably, is the emergence of pragmatic community leadership. In regards to natural resource management, this is important because it merges differing opinions together to promote sustainable resource use. This, in turn, promotes environmental stewardship and practices beneficial to natural resource management. The new sense of stewardship will positively benefit the development of a community while reducing impacts to the environment. On the other hand, failure to reach collaboration on natural resource management practices will result in prolonged harmful effects to the environment and halt sustainable community development.

Those practicing natural resource management in the 21st century have their work cut out for them. Human civilization is approaching a point in Earth's history where all of humanity will be forced to deal with anthropogenic impacts to the biosphere. We now live in a time where we can physically see and experience the impact of our ecological footprint. There is a true human dominance of all global systems. This dominance is now effecting a range of topics from human health to the politics we address. As we further encroach on natural systems, the transmission of new diseases to humans from animals and insects is growing rapidly. A hotbed political issue in the United States right now is immigration reform. Studies suggest that a number of Mexican farmers may start moving north due to the effects of climate change to their crop yields. There are many more examples of the connection between human impacts to the biosphere and current affairs. The question is, how should human civilization address these issues?

The implications of these challenges require the science of resource management to rapidly change in the face of great uncertainty for the future. This uncertainty has been created by global environmental change, neo-liberal economic policy and the globalization of the world economy. We must start questioning

industry – i-pods, gaming systems, computers, television sets, and you name it are used to “manufacture desire” instead of relationship building, learning and adventure. Only radical free markets, grass-roots organizing and social democratic movements can progress us forward – government and industry are just trying to sell something.

Libertarians should be raising concerns about this activity and they should certainly stop calling for government support of these industries. Libertarians should also be raising moral concerns over our consumption based, ecologically destructive social system as well. As human beings, why are we subject to this? The wealth and greatness of life does not come from spending money we labored for on material possessions – our lives are not richer because we hold the latest electronic gadget in our hands. What makes life worth living are our personal relationships with other human beings, the arts, our scientific progress, a decent society, our communities, a healthy environment and many other things/experiences that can not be priced.

Government supports, idolizes and seeks to uphold our consumption driven industrial economic system. From monetary policy to crony capitalism, state intervention in the market works to engender as much economic activity as possible. The state champions economic growth no matter the cost and encourages consumerism and debt over labor and savings. Our consumer culture is senseless as artificial needs and desires are manufactured for our consumption. Any tactic taken by environmentalists that would empower centralized institutions will not be a solution, rather, it will greatly exacerbate the problem.

Instead of seeking false solutions, libertarians and environmentalists should seek radical free markets as only the true market form can create solidarity economies – where small producers can work together to scale up production and compete in an open market. Beyond green washed solutions, markets will

allow equitable, sustainable economic systems and trade.

Marketing life is another way of destroying it. Our consumer society robs human beings of our freedom, independence, liberty, labor and integrity as sentient beings. We should be liberating ourselves from this behavior.

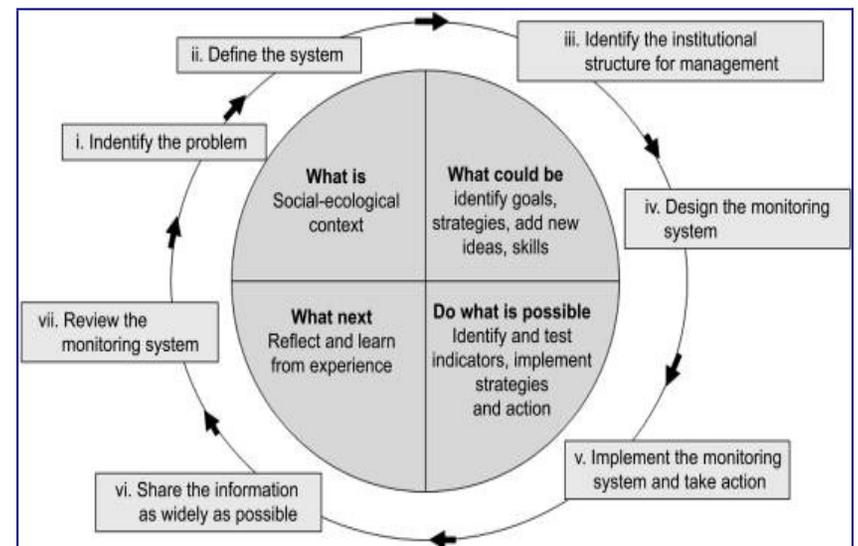
Human Dimensions, Place Connections and Actions of Place

The libertarian case for environmentalism may also be championed by examining sense of place and place attachments. Being connected to land, or any part of nature, can be very powerful. Perhaps Wendell Berry described it best in his story, “Mat Felters World” about an aging farmer and his land. Berry writes:

As we watch Mat lean against the tree, we sense how like the tree he has become. They are kindred spirits, the two of them, equal enough in age and coming, finally, to the same spot. By the life he has led, standing erect in the light, Mat too, has stood “outside the woods.” Just as the walnut has relinquished its nuts, so Mat has given freely of himself, nourishing the land and giving rise to new life. Like the tree, Mat has sunk deep and lasting roots.

The statement, “Mat has sunk deep and lasting roots,” speaks volumes about the attachment people have to place. Sense of place can resemble a host of things: memories with family and friends, coming of age, solace, comfort, etc. The concept of a human being having lasting roots and an area of land representing those roots reflects deep human bonds and connections to the Earth. In many cases, respect for the land one lives on adds to the importance of place attachments. Often times people equate their land with their legacy. In some cases, people live on land that has been owned by their families for generations, tying the people to

levels. As practitioners follow the model, each level is designed to alleviate conflict and promote compromise among opposing sides of a conflict. The model is as follows: ACM first distinguishes what the conflict is about, followed by why the conflict exists, this then implores individuals to develop options for a plan of action, finally, ACM establishes an action plan to potentially end the conflict. Determining what the conflict is about allows each party to voice their perspectives and concerns about the conflict. This allows all members of the ACM process to state their positions while allowing interests, motives and feelings to be heard by the entire group. The groundwork for collaboration is laid by discussing why the conflict exists. First, this process calls for focusing on the problem at hand while considering all underlying interests. This allows the participants to then examine and understand the emotional link to all involved, thus humanizing arguments. While examining different points of view, stakeholders may begin to find common ground. The model then shifts to a more progressive approach to resolve the conflict at hand.



There are many consequences involved in both succeeding at

But what would such a system look like? It is impossible to know for sure how such a system would be managed as the market/social form is spontaneous, but there are a few arguments that can be made about what would come. Human dimensions are growing ever more important to the resource management process as power redistribution from resource agencies to the communities they serve is *already* a growing trend. Human dimension considerations also provide a forum for honest communication among professionals, stakeholders and community members who will be affected by management policies. These approaches work to promote collaboration between agencies and people, thus promoting democratic decision-making. Engaging the citizenry while calling for public discourse and reasoned debate brings consensus and legitimacy to management decisions. The public process also has the power to either expose or avoid agency capture, insuring people's needs are being reflected, not the interests of our institutions or industry.

The transition may also be fueled by adaptive collaboration. Adaptive collaborative management (ACM) is a model of conflict resolution developed to resolve complex problems requiring collective action. Going beyond personal points of view, this management style implores science, politics and underlying interests to come together to confront conflict. ACM tries to develop resolutions to benefit all points of view. Though there are some very real challenges to achieving these resolutions, it has become increasingly clear that the challenges facing us in the 21st century will require collective action. These challenges will require differing ideologies to make difficult compromises to ensure our sustainability. ACM is an effective instrument in bringing competing interests together to make these difficult decisions. Adaptive collaboration is a more democratic approach to natural resource conflict resolution, as opposed to the traditional top down, bureaucratic approach

ACM can best be described by a simple model, composed of four

their land through a unique historical and cultural tradition. Furthermore, economic benefits, pride and a moral or spiritual relationship with land is experienced by many people.

Respect of the land is a demand of place attachment, furthermore, sustainable land use practices, along with community involvement in the land use process, is of growing importance. Land use utilizes both the public and private realms of our institutions, forging new visions of our landscapes. If allowed, connections to place will evolve to benefit individuals, communities and the natural world. In a free market setting, absent of coercive force, respect for land and the people attached to it will maximize benefits to the environment and people. In an ever-changing world, these human dimensions are growing increasingly important to policy, conflict resolution and the achievement of a more just and sustainable world.

It is important for libertarians to acknowledge just how deep these connections are. Cultural heritage is directly tied to land – just look at Appalachia, or Cascadia – in the valleys of these majestic mountain ranges there is a very deep cultural heritage that transcends political boundaries – it follows their natural heritage. Across the Appalachian coal-fields and the hard forests of the Cascades people have condemned the fact that this cultural heritage is being destroyed, whether by surface mining or the timber industry (or whatever else ails you). People are entirely justified in their dissent, as they see themselves, their labor and their natural heritage turned into tools of production and commodities – instead of independent human beings in their natural surroundings.

Thinking of these connections, it would be prudent to address a large backlash against the environmental movement, or rather more direct environmental “extremism.” I have written before about the government crackdown on green groups in the age of the surveillance state and in other posts I have championed the

direct actions of folks protesting the construction of Keystone XL, hydraulic fracturing, coal surface mining, rate hikes and a number of other environmental issues. These views have come under some scrutiny by other libertarians but this is where I feel the libertarian left takes the higher ground.

Certainly any libertarian would believe that any individual is morally justified in physically resisting the invasion of ones private property or an attack on his or her loved ones. This is a fundamental tenet of liberty, to protect ones property and to resist violence – to only use force when provoked. The libertarian right often argues that this is justified only for private property and that no “commons” would be able to exist in a libertarian society because common property defies human nature. Place connections and shared cultural and natural heritage, however, strike down these claims. Individualism and collectivism are both inherit to human nature and can (and will) exist peacefully together in a liberated society.

So, when a *place* that is loved, a piece of the commons, no matter what landscape is being invaded (mountain, forest, desert, river, sea-shore...) by strip miners, loggers, gas pads, dams, roads and pipelines – and when legal recourse does what it does best: protect vested interests – then it would be morally justified to dissent. It is morally justified to use ones own body to prevent construction, to practice civil disobedience and to use “illegal” tactics to preserve land. Courts will continue to fail – direct action is needed to protest the criminal actions of the corporation state. Direct action makes state and industrial invasion of private property, of the wilderness (or anywhere), that much more expensive for anyone involved, that much more difficult and ever more scrutinized before another project can be plainly rubber stamped. This is why these actions are so important and why folks like Tim DeChristopher do them.

If one decides not to disobey, to always abide the law, that

decision is in and of itself is a moral decision. There are great consequences to that decision. As Berry and Abbey note – disobedience to civil law may just well be obedience to a much higher, moral, law.

Social Movements & the Transition

The environmental movement is a vast, worldwide movement involved in numerous battles. Issues as large and global in scale as climate change, national projects such as the Keystone XL Pipeline, and local issues such as road construction (and much more) are all being organized against. With so many battles going on, anyone who is concerned will be able to jump into the war to advocate for, and protect, what they care for most – by whatever means deemed acceptable on an individual basis. Personally, as I live in Appalachia, I am involved in social movements trying to halt strip mining, species decline, clear cutting and river damming.

Social movements and grass-roots organizing, coupled with free markets are radically important because the very nature/structure of large institutions bring out the worst in people – whether they are government or private institutions. They are all-powerful and the collusion of state with the fossil industry is incredibly dangerous to people who value their cultural and natural heritage. If individuals have a problem with what is happening where they live they are allowed the right of civil action and disobedience.

But what of free markets? Contrary to popular belief among state environmentalists, if markets were free(d) the fossil industry would not be given free rein to pollute. To the contrary, in a radical free market setting, transition economies would develop and a more ecosystem service/adaptive collaboration approach to resource management would emerge (simply because industry is far to expensive to operate without giant subsidies). Only in the absence of our centralized institutions will this be possible.