University of Cincinnati

Date: 3/31/2014

I, Kyle R Galindez , hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology.

It is entitled:

Defend Mother Earth! And Sign My Petition? Metaphors, Tactics, and Environmental Movement Organizations

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CINCINNATI, OHIO

DEFEND MOTHER EARTH! AND SIGN MY PETITION? METAPHORS, TACTICS, AND

ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology

by

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March 2014

Abstract

Social movement scholars studying environmental organizations find that an organization's goals, tactics, and other factors are partially determined by how the organization interprets the natural world and the place of humans within it. Other scholars note that the concept of nature is expressed through metaphor, which often has consequences for how we act toward the natural world. In this project, I suggest that differences in tactics within the environmental movement may be explained by how an organization makes use of nature metaphors. Drawing from framing theory, I conduct a qualitative discourse analysis of documents made available on the websites of two environmental movement organizations: Earth First! and the Sierra Club. These organizations were selected to reflect differences in tactics. Findings indicate that the use of nature metaphors influences how an organization defines environmental problems, but does not determine the organization's tactical decisions. These results indicate that ideas about nature are less influential in shaping the tactical decisions of environmental organizations and that other factors must be considered as well.

Acknowledgments

I would first like to thank the Department of Sociology at the University of Cincinnati for giving me the opportunity to continue my education and enrich my understanding of all things sociological. In particular, I am thankful to all the faculty who I TA'd for, including Sarah Mayorga-Gallo, Littisha Bates and Amy Cassedy; it was a pleasure working with you. I feel truly lucky to have grown as a scholar alongside the dedication and passion of the faculty and staff here at UC.

I want to thank my family for being there to support me whenever I have needed it and for always believing in me. I also want to thank all my friends and comrades at SoapBox Books & Zines - Trey, Griffin, Dana, Nancy, Jordan, Josh, Lisa and everyone else- for being an awesome bunch of people who I will never forget: *la lutte continue!* Special thanks also to Kelli, Hans, Jake, Greg, Ben, Deqah, Mark, Jen, and Shannon for making Cincinnati a great place to be. Wherever we all end up in life, I will always remember the time we shared here.

I would also like to thank all the other graduate students in the department who have always been so quick to give advice whenever I have needed it. Katie and Stef -thank you for all the help!

I would like to especially thank Adrian Parr for taking the time to be on my committee, helping me with this project, and for guiding me through the first course I taught. Her commitment to fighting for social and environmental justice truly inspires me.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to Annulla Linders for her wisdom, guidance, patience, and her agreement to chair my committee. Anna certainly encourages me to think critically, to aim higher, and to advance the frontiers of my sociological imagination. She has inspired me to continue my education, and wherever I may end up, I will always remember the lessons I learned here at UC.

The completion of this project was made possible by all the faculty, staff, friends, and family who have always supported me. Thank you so much!

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"The Moon chased the Sun out of the sky
Goodbye sunshine, the night is mine
Hey Moon, it's just you and me tonight"
- John Maus and Molly Nilsson, "Hey Moon"

I. What is Nature?

In 1628, English physiologist William Harvey published his *De Motu Cortis* ("On the Motion of the Heart and Blood"), which detailed for the first time the role of the heart in circulating blood throughout the body. The discovery, however, was initially not of much interest to the medical community, but was instead of interest to geologists (Mills 1982). Why?

The answer has to do with metaphor. A metaphor is simply a concept that stands in for something else. Some scholars believe that much of our thinking, in fact, is largely metaphorical, in that we tend to use simpler concepts in order to make sense of complex or abstract features of the world (Lakoff 1980). The concept of *nature* is often expressed through metaphor, and how we understand nature has changed significantly throughout history: different conceptualizations of nature have helped us to make sense of the natural world in different ways. During the Renaissance, for example, nature was conceptualized as a reflection of the human body. Thus, in grasping to understand how water returns to the top of mountains in order to replenish the rivers, Harvey's discovery gave geologists an answer: surely, the Earth must have a heart too.

Is it possible that an examination of nature metaphors today may help us to understand how we act toward the natural world? In this project, I address this question by conducting a discursive analysis of the environmental movement. Specifically, I look at documents made available by two environmental movement organizations, Earth First! and the Sierra Club, to find whether or not the use of metaphor may, if at all, help explain tactical differences between the two. [1] To conduct the analysis, I draw on the literature from social movements and framing

theory and connect it back to metaphors for nature.

As we enter a new age that must come to terms with a new set of environmental problems -climate change, water scarcity, overpopulation, and more- understanding the environmental movement, and the environmental problems it addresses, may be more important than ever. As environmental problems have changed in the past, so have environmental movements, and it is crucial that we look toward the future. Indeed, some believe that the impending ecological crisis may be so severe that "our politics must start from the point that after 2050 it may all be over" (Parr 2013: 147). Surely, we must get to work.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

I. Introduction: Movements and Ideas

The US environmental movement is both the largest and longest running social movement in US history (Brulle 2000). Consisting of thousands of local and national organizations, each with different historical origins, goals, tactics, organizational structures, and other features, it is also one of the most diverse. In fact, the movement is characterized by so much diversity that treating it as a monolithic movement in the first place is itself problematic (Yearley 2005; Cutgrove and Duff 2003). Importantly, environmental movement organizations also differ in terms of their ideas, or what they believe. What this difference is, however, is the source of much disagreement within the literature on the environmental movement. Historically, much of the scholarship on the beliefs of environmental organizations has tended to collapse the environmental movement into two broad, usually opposed, categories defined by a number of different issues (see Dryzek 1997; Devall and Sessions 1985; Bullard 1993; Gottieb 1993; Dowie 1995). Smith, for example, splits the US environmental movement into two camps: one whose ideas are shaped by romanticism, and another whose ideas are shaped by utilitarianism (2001).

The most frequently discussed feature splitting the environmental movement, however, is how environmental movement organizations describe the relationship between humans and nature: are we *a part of*, or *apart from*, nature? This split is captured more generally within the field of environmental sociology as the opposition between the Human Exemptionalist Paradigm (HEP), in which humans are considered to be fundamentally separated from and usually standing above nature, and the New Ecological Paradigm (NEP), which holds that "humans are one of many interdependent species in the global ecosystem and part of a large web of nature, that humans depend on a finite biophysical environment, and that humans cannot stand above ecological laws" (Gould and Lewis 2009: 5). Beginning with the work of William Catton and Riley Dunlap in the 1980's, the NEP emerged to challenge the HEP which had dominated sociology since Durkheim, who tended to dismiss the environment in his analysis of society (Barbosa 2009). While much of the research on the beliefs of environmental organizations has focused on a central, defining feature that splits the entire movement into two camps (Meyer 2008), other scholars have more recently drawn attention to the complexity and extensive diversity of the movement by examining what environmental organizations believe along several dimensions. Brulle, for example, identifies 11 unique discursive frames with which to categorize environmental organizations[2]. He looks at the ways that each discursive framework developed within a particular, historical context and how this historical context shaped the organization's beliefs regarding the relationship between humans and the natural world. The discursive frames he defines and describes are Animal Rights, Conservation, Deep Ecology, Ecofeminism, Ecospiritualsm, Environmental Health, Environmental Justice, Green/Anti-Globalizaion, Preservation, Reform Environmentalism, and Wildlife Management (Brulle 2009: 225). Environmental organizations such as the Sierra Club, founded in 1892, work within the discursive frame of *preservation*, which focuses on preserving wilderness areas of the natural

world, while Greenpeace, founded in the 1970's, belongs to the discursive frame of *reform environmentalism*, which emphasizes the role that humans can play in combating environmental destruction. Other scholars have developed concepts like environmental philosophy, which describes the ethical and moral principles shaping an organization's conception of the appropriate relationship between humans and nature, to describe the beliefs held by an environmental organization (Carmin and Balser 2002). In sum, there is much disagreement within the literature over how to describe the complexity and diversity of beliefs found within the environmental movement. Many scholars have searched for a fundamental division in beliefs with which to split the entire movement, though, more recently, others have emphasized the complexity of the beliefs held by particular environmental organizations.

But why should ideas matter at all? Importantly, the ideas held by a social movement organization are believed to influence and help shape other features of the organization: similar kinds of tactical decisions, strategies, and actions should follow from similar ideologies (Dalton 1994; Brulle 2000; Des Jardins 1997; Carmin and Balser 2002). Hence, many scholars have focused on environmental organizations' ideas because they assumed that the diversity of organizational behavior within the environmental movement could be, at least partially, explained by the ideas or ideological factors shaping the organization. In discussing his typology of discursive frames that define the US environmental movement, Brulle refers to the strategy of examining an environmental organization's ideas as *discourse analysis,* which can "contribute to the understanding of the practices of movement organizations, including their internal structures, strategies for social change, and resource-mobilization practices" (2000: 99). Hence, by looking at an organization's ideas, scholars have attempted to draw connections between what an environmental organization *believes* and, consequently, what it *does*. Other scholars, however, have been critical of this approach, believing that it may over-emphasize the extent to which

ideas shape other features of environmental organizations. Dreiling and Wolf (2001), for example, believe that social movement scholars have given too much attention to the ideological and discursive factors shaping an environmental organization, often to the exclusion of competing theoretical perspectives, such as *resource mobilization theory,* which tries to explain the behavior of social movement organizations by examining the material resources at their disposal and their ability to mobilize support (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Tilly 1978; Goodwin and Jasper 2003; Chesters and Welsh 2011). Hence, many scholars have begun to examine the behavior of environmental organizations in more detail by looking at other factors than ideas. In a study comparing the tactical and strategic decisions of Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, two different environmental organizations that share the same discursive framework, Carmin and Balser found that although both organizations shared the same discursive framework, their actions differed, leading the researchers to conclude that "environmental philosophy does not, by itself, account for the repertoire of action used by an organization" (2002: 385). They later suggest that while environmental philosophy is influential in shaping an environmental organization's tactical decisions, other ideological factors, such as the members' interpretations of political institutions, also must be considered, in addition to material factors. Thus, within the literature on the environmental movement, and social movements in general, there is some disagreement about both the extent to which ideas matter and how those ideas matter in shaping other organizational features, including goals, tactics, and interpretations of the larger social and political world. I will now turn to the ways that ideas are studied by social movement theorists.

II. Ideas in the Making: Framing Theory

Scholars examining the role that ideas play within social movement organizations often use *framing theory* to understand how movement participants construct, interpret and negotiate meaning. Framing theory was originally derived from the work of Goffman in *Frame Analysis*

(1972) and *Forms of Talk* (1981) (Johnston 2002: 63). At the most basic level, Benford and Snow

define frames as interpretative schemata that "function to organize experience and guide action"

(1986: 464). Applied to social movement organizations, framing gives movement participants

agency in shaping ideas and negotiating meanings. Importantly, framing involves more than

individuals; to demonstrate how framing is a social process, Benford and Snow later develop the

term *collective action frame.* They write, "Collective action frames are constructed in part as

movement adherents negotiate a shared understanding of some problematic condition or situation

they define as in need of change, making attributions regarding who or what is to blame,

articulate an alternative set of arrangements, and urge others to act in concert to affect change"

(Benford and Snow 2000: 615). Hence, collective action frames have many components. For

environmental movements, the components include ideas about nature, understandings about

environmental problems, and determinations about what or who is to blame for environmental

degradation. It is in the process of constructing collective action frames that movement

participants also decide upon a course of action. Brulle, for example, bases his typology on frame

theory in order to emphasize the connections between discursive frames and chosen courses of

action, as well as the sense of shared identity fostered by an environmental organization. He

writes, "Since a particular discourse legitimizes certain actions and delegitimizes others, the

strategy, tactics, and forms of resource mobilization of social movements are all related to the

worldview on which a social movement bases its identity" (2000: 78). Likewise, Benford and

Snow draw attention to the ways that collective action frames influence the behaviors of social

movement organizations: "Thus, collective action frames are action-oriented sets of beliefs and

meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement

organization" (2000: 614). Thus, framing theory is highly influential within the literature on

social movements and helps us to better understand an organization's behavior by looking at how

ideas and meaning are constructed. It is a *social process* that describes the ways that an

environmental organization negotiates both the organization's ideas and how the organization

ought to pursue chosen courses of action.

The process of constructing collection action frames involves three central tasks:

diagnostic framing, *prognostic framing*, and *motivational framing* (Benford and Snow 2000).

First, a social movement organization must identify the problem. For example, organizations like

the Sierra Club, working in the discursive frame of *preservation*, might define the problem in

terms of the loss of wilderness, while organizations like Greenpeace, belonging to the discursive

frame of *reform environmentalism*, might perceive the problem in terms of the relationship

between human health and ecological destruction. Benford and Snow refer to the process of

problem-identification as *diagnostic framing* (2000: 615). For environmental movement

organizations, the process of diagnostic framing is largely concerned with how the organization

defines environmental problems. The second step of the process, *prognostic framing*, deals with

how social movement organizations define solutions. Prognostic framing "involves the

articulation of a proposed solution to the problem, or at least a plan of attack, and the strategies

for carrying out the plan" (Benford and Snow 2000: 616). For environmental organizations, the

process of prognostic framing often leads to highly diverse courses of action. In a study of an

environmental justice dispute in Louisiana during the 1990's over where to put a toxic chemical

plant, for example, researchers found that local community movements initially clashed with

national environmental organizations like Greenpeace because of differences in how participants

wanted to pursue solutions (Roberts and Toffolin-Weiss 2001: 110). The controversy was

eventually resolved as Greenpeace agreed not to pursue any actions (such as marches, sit-ins, or

other confrontational tactics) deemed undesirable by members of the local community

movements. Some scholars have found that diagnostic framing and prognostic framing may be

closely related, i.e., how an organization defines a problem can strongly influence how it pursues

solutions (Gerhards & Rucht 1992). In other words, prognostic framing, or the proposed courses

of action, is often constrained by diagnostic framing (Benford and Snow 2000). Finally, the last

core component of collective action frames involves motivational framing, which "provides a

'call to arms' or rationale for engaging in ameliorative collective action, including the

construction of appropriate vocabularies of motive" (Benford and Snow 2000: 617). For

environmental organizations, motivational framing occurs when they seek to justify their actions.

Earth First!, which belongs to the discursive frame of *deep ecology*, may justify acts of eco-

sabotage against logging sites by invoking the need to protect every part of nature's web of life

through direct action, for example. Importantly, Benford and Snow also emphasize the ways that

constructing collective action frames is a social process that is impacted by larger, cultural forces

at work. They write:

> Taken together, research on core framing processes indicates that collective action frames
>
> are not static, reified entities but are continuously being constituted, contested,
>
> reproduced, transformed, and/or/replaced during the course of social movement activity.
>
> Hence, framing is a dynamic, ongoing process. But this process does not occur in a
>
> structural or cultural vacuum. Rather, framing processes are affected by a number of
>
> elements of the socio-cultural context in which they are embedded (2000: 628).

Thus, while framing gives considerable agency to movement participants involved in negotiating

ideas, it is also the case that framing processes can be constrained by larger, cultural forces. This

point may be especially important for how environmental movement organizations make use of

nature metaphors. Next, I will turn to the concept of nature itself, how it functions as metaphor,

and, later, why this may be important for studying environmental movement organizations.

III. The Idea of Nature: The Tradition of All Dead Metaphors...

What, exactly, is *nature*? For Western thinkers, the answer may be easy: nature is whatever is "out there," far away from human civilization. But for the Achuar tribe living in the Upper Amazon rain forests of Ecuador, such a question might not even make sense, as there is no separation between the natural world and the human world; in fact, the Achuar go as far as to ascribe gender roles to the natural world, with men associating with animals as "in-laws," and women associating with plants and horticulture (Tavakolian 2009: 259). Environmental sociologists describe cultural differences in interpreting nature through the concept of *naturework*, which "refers to how we constantly work to transform 'nature' into culture, filtering it through the screen of social meanings that we have learned" (Čapek 2009: 13). Thus, the concept of nature is socially constructed, and is subjected to human language, culture, history, and power relations (Braun and Wainright 2001; Meisner 1995). That the concept of nature is socially constructed may prove to be significant for environmental organizations, since it is then possible that different conceptualizations of nature may be present within the movement, and may then influence other features of the organization.

An important way that we understand the natural world is through the use of metaphor. Lakoff explains that a metaphor is a conceptual tool that allows us to understand one thing in terms of another (1980: 5). Harré *et. al.*, in their studies on environmental discourse, state that the "very concept of 'nature' itself can be looked on and critically evaluated as a metaphor" (1999: 94). Likewise, Meisner writes that "metaphors are central to how humans conceive of, feel for, speak about, and act towards Nature as a whole" (1995: 16). Thus, the concept of nature is highly abstract, and it is through the use of metaphor that we are able to make sense of it. It is important to note, additionally, that framing is different from metaphors for nature. Because

framing refers mostly to the process through which social movements negotiate ideas and construct meaning, I suggest that the use of nature metaphors may be found within the framing processes of environmental organizations; framing processes may or may not make use of metaphors. In particular, though, I believe that the use of nature metaphors may be found within diagnostic framing processes, since it is here that environmental organizations define the environmental problems they would like to remedy, and that this may in turn impact prognostic framing processes.

The use of nature metaphors has changed dramatically between time and place, and, as such, "may simultaneously carry cultural and historical messages" (Cuddington 2001: 464). While it would be impossible to create an exhaustive list of all metaphors used to conceptualize nature, many scholars have already looked at some. The number of possible metaphors, however, is essentially limitless, and only a handful will be discussed here. Nature has been conceptualized as an *economic* system (consider how biology divides the natural world into *producers* and *consumers*) that has influenced our scientific understanding of nature (Worster 1985). Ecofeminist scholars have examined the way that nature is often gendered, usually taking the role as mother or virgin in phrases like *mother mature*, or *penetrating the virgin frontier* (Kolodny 1975; Moeckli and Braun 2001). Additionally, nature has been compared to music, with each element *playing* a role to maintain *harmony* (Rothenberg 1990). One of the most influential metaphors, however, is the metaphor of *balance*, which says that nature maintains a delicate balance that can be disrupted by human activity (Egerton 1973; Zimmerman and Cuddington 2007). Importantly, though, Mills traces how the understanding of nature has transformed historically in the West: during the Middle Ages, nature was conceived as a book, containing divine secrets; during the Renaissance, nature became a reflection of the human body; finally, after the Enlightenment, nature became a machine, such as a clock or steam engine (Mills

1982). The ways we understand nature continue to change today. Deep ecology, for example, which views nature as a web of life and sees humans as a part of nature, rose in the 1980's alongside the development of computer networking. In sum, nature is expressed in terms of a metaphor, which, as a linguistic device, is not free from cultural and historical influences. To paraphrase Marx, the metaphors of the past weigh like nightmares on the living.

To help us make sense of the messy world of metaphor, however, Harré *et al.* isolate five different conceptualizations from which many nature metaphors can be derived. First, nature can be either an "open" or "closed" system. They write, "One could argue that the greatest conceptual change in human views of environmental matters came about with the transition from Earth as a practically inexhaustible resource to a conception of its strict finitude" (1999: 103). This gives rise to metaphors that describe the natural world in economic terms, for example, considering how many "resources" are available. Additionally, metaphors like the "web of life" imply a closed system, with sunlight as the primary input. Second, the natural world can be either "powerful" or "vulnerable" (Harré et al. 1999). For example, in John Bellamy Foster's *The Vulnerable Planet: A Short Economic History of the Planet*, he writes, "The destruction of the planet, in the sense of making it unusable for human purposes, has grown to such an extent that it now threatens the continuation of much of nature, as well as the survival and development of society itself" (Foster 1999: 11). This can be contrasted to the Gaia hypothesis, which compares the Earth to a single, powerful, self-regulating organism, of which humans are only a minor nuisance (Lovelock 1987). Third, metaphors for nature can be either anthropocentric or nonanthropocentric (Harré et al. 1999). Some scholars have been especially critical of anthropocentric conceptualizations of nature, since they place the needs of humans above the natural world. This is because metaphors that describe nature as a home, spaceship, attic, or something similar, imply the centrality of humanity within the natural world (*ibid*: 106). Fourth,

the environment can be seen as "purpose-made for human needs" or "indifferent or hostile" to

human needs (*ibid*). Metaphors springing from this duality are expressed when we consider, for

example, that nature can be "domesticated" for human needs, as is the case with taming a wild

frontier for agriculture. In contrast, nature could also be "hostile" to human needs, like the harsh

conditions of a frozen tundra. Finally, many metaphors used to describe nature are expressed in

terms of the opposition between the human world and the natural world (*ibid*). For example,

when the Sierra Club claims that we are "stewards" of nature, they are fundamentally separating

humans from nature. The same can be said for metaphors in which the Earth is "exploited" by

humans for resources, which also invokes an economic metaphor. In sum, the number of

metaphors to describe the natural world are essentially limitless, though many can be traced back

to these five oppositions. These five ways of organizing nature metaphors will aid this study, as I

describe below. But first, I will discuss the ways that metaphor could potentially influence the

behavior of environmental organizations and why scholars may have overlooked its influence.

IV. Defend Mother Earth! …and sign my petition? Why Metaphor may Shape Tactics

As discussed earlier, scholars disagree about the extent to which ideas influence the

behavior of environmental organizations. Additionally, it is not clear how much correspondence

there is between diagnostic and prognostic framing. While many studies have looked to explain

differences in behavior by examining differences of ideas, whether as discursive frames or

environmental philosophy, others have found that ideas may not be as influential as initially

expected. Harré *et al.*, however, show that, historically speaking, metaphors seem to have

significant influence on social action, broadly conceived: "Not only did they guide everyday

behavior, but they were systematized and formalized as theories and guiding principles for

dealing with nature" (*ibid*). For example, Renaissance thinkers conceived of nature as a

reflection of the human body, which "engendered auxiliary metaphors for healing, improvement,

and control" (*ibid*: 94). This can be contrasted to the machine metaphor: "Perhaps the most important difference between the machine metaphor and those it displaced is that where both the divine book and the human body were givens, whose essential nature could not be altered, machines can be invented, refined and manipulated in order to transcend existing limitations" (*ibid*: 94). In comparing the human body metaphor with the machine metaphor, it is clear that different metaphors for nature influenced the ways that we acted towards nature, and as these metaphors have changed over time, so have our actions toward nature. Harré *et al.* summarize: "...the different metaphors each afford different perceptions from which, in turn, different actions might result" (*ibid*: 108) As discussed previously, then, it is possible that metaphors can be found within diagnostic framing processes, and that these may influence tactical decisions.

First, Lakoff points out that "metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action" (1980: 5). Our use of metaphor is so habitual that we are often not aware of how particular metaphors may shape the ways that we perceive reality. Likewise, Zimmerman and Cuddington write that "metaphorical language has a fundamental influence on our thought processes" (2007: 464). Thus, environmental organizations are likely making use of nature metaphors that may in turn impact action. Second, metaphors could influence the behavior of environmental organizations because metaphors tend to "highlight certain perspectives and features, while blocking out others, especially those that are incompatible with the chosen metaphor" (Meisner 1995: 12). Indeed, privileging one metaphor over another during diagnostic framing processes, when the key problems are identified, could have a strong influence over prognostic framing processes, when movement participants negotiate a course of action, which may in turn impact tactics. In particular, because metaphors single out certain aspects or features, they may have a constraining influence as movement participants identify environmental problems and their sources. Likewise, Harré *et al.* also draw attention to the ways that metaphor

may constrain: "As a tool for explaining the unknown, the metaphor suffers from limitations, particularly its property of selectivity: highlighting some aspects of the world and excluding others" (1999: 100). Finally, metaphors for nature used today often carry significant historical and cultural residues. For example, even though the "balance of nature" metaphor might be one of the oldest, "this metaphor continues to play a role in modern ecology and in political movements such as environmentalism" (Zimmerman and Cuddington 2007: 394). Hence, some metaphors may be very old, and this cultural influence may extend very far into the past. The metaphors that environmental organizations are using may thus carry significant cultural and historical residues that may have a constraining influence on how environmental problems are defined. In sum, the presence of nature metaphors within environmental movement discourse is likely to influence diagnostic framing process for three reasons: 1) metaphors are pervasive and impact action; 2) they necessarily exclude certain aspects while highlighting others; and 3) they carry cultural and historical significance that may constrain how environmental problems are defined.

To find out how, if at all, metaphors for nature employed by environmental organizations influence tactical decisions, I will examine the diagnostic framing processes of environmental movement organizations. I will thus ask three primary questions: 1) Does the use of nature metaphors vary within an organization? 2) Does the use of nature metaphors vary between organizations? and 3) Does the use of nature metaphors appear to influence tactical decisions? If the use of nature metaphors is found to influence the tactical decisions of environmental organizations, this suggests that there is some correspondence between diagnostic framing processes and tactical decisions, which are negotiated by participants within prognostic framing processes, within the environmental movement. If no connection is found, it is likely that prognostic framing processes are shaped by other factors than diagnostic framing processes

alone. Next, I will describe the methods used to pursue my research question.

Chapter 3: Methodology

I. Methodology Introduction: Framing, Discourse, Nature

Using frame theory, I examined the diagnostic framing processes of environmental movement organizations to uncover the ways in which they make use of nature metaphors and whether or not this appears to influence the organization's tactical decisions. I suggest that the use of nature metaphors within diagnostic framing processes may influence the tactics of environmental movement organizations for three reasons: 1) it is well-established that the use of metaphor is pervasive and heavily influences the actions of individuals 2) metaphors tend to highlight certain features of the world, while excluding others, which may constrain prognostic framing processes, and 3) metaphors often carry historical and cultural weight that movement participants, which may also have a constraining influence on prognostic framing processes. Specifically, in analyzing the diagnostic framing processes of environmental organizations, I posed three questions: 1) Do metaphors vary within the organization? 2) Do metaphors vary between organizations? and 3) What, if any, is the relationship between metaphors and tactics?

To pursue my research question, I conducted a qualitative discourse analysis of the websites of two different environmental movement organizations. Discourse can be defined as any text that is socially produced (Potter and Hepburn 2008; Johnston 2002). A qualitative approach that focuses on analyzing discourse is preferable for this research because I am interested in how environmental movement organizations construct meaning, specifically, in the ways that they make use of nature metaphors and how this may influence their tactical decisions. Berg writes that "qualitative techniques allow researchers to share in the understandings and perceptions of others and to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives"

(2008: 8). Additionally, a qualitative analysis of discourse allows me to examine the framing processes of the environmental organizations studied. Johnston points out, importantly, that the framing processes of social movement organizations are often captured in discourse and "become available to the researcher mostly through written texts or spoken language" (2002: 66). Also, the examination of the discourse of social movement organizations as a method to learn about framing processes is utilized by many other scholars in the field (see, for example Brulle 2000). Hence, in order to find how the use of metaphor may influence the behavior of environmental movement organizations, I believe that a qualitative analysis of discourse is the most appropriate procedure.

II. Earth First! vs. the Sierra Club: More Radical than Thou?

I decided to examine the discourse of two different environmental movement organizations: Earth First! and the Sierra Club. I chose these organizations because they represent both *radical* and *moderate* organizations. Many scholars have noted a split between radical movements and more moderate ones (Fried 1998; Gottlieb 1993; Scarce 1990). Fitzgerald and Rodgers provide useful criteria for categorizing a social movement organization as either "radical" or "moderate" (2000). Generally, radical social movement organizations (RSMOs) differ from moderate social movement organizations in several ways, including in terms of internal structure, ideology, tactics, and other factors. What interests me most, however, is why environmental organizations engage in different kinds of tactics, and whether or not this difference can be explained at least in part by how environmental organizations make use of nature metaphors. Fitzgerald and Rodgers point out that radical organizations tend to engage in tactics that are illegal, highly creative, or focused outside the mainstream political system (2002: 585). This puts Earth First! in sharp contrast to the Sierra Club, which explicitly pursues its goals only through lawful means (The Sierra Club 2014). Hence, by selecting both a radical and a

moderate environmental organization, I aim to capture a wide difference in tactical decisions. This allows me to compare the two and better look to see how metaphor may or may not influence behavior.

The first organization I looked at was Earth First! This organization was founded in 1980 by members of Greenpeace, who had become unsatisfied with the organization's recent activity; they believed that Greenpeace, since its founding in the 1970's, had sold out to the establishment and abandoned its core principles (Brulle 2000). The group consciously distanced itself from Greenpeace, quickly earning a reputation as the more "radical" organization, unafraid to employ more confrontational tactics such as nonviolent civil disobedience and property destruction (Ingalsbee 1996). In fact, Earth First! has long been known to engage in more radical, or direct, tactics (Brulle 2000; Wapner 2003; Scarce 1990). Hence, in contrast to Greenpeace's reformist tactics, Earth First! members do not believe that activism aimed at the political system is likely to lead to the kind of changes they seek and therefore typically devise strategies with targets other than the state. In terms of ideas toward nature, Brulle identifies Earth First! as working with the discursive frame of *deep ecology*, which emerged in the 1980's to challenge anthropocentric views of the natural world; for Earth First!, humans are intricately a part of nature (2000). Earth First! is still active today and regularly holds gatherings and conferences, publishes a quarterly newspaper, and continues to engage in confrontational tactics.

The second organization I chose, the Sierra Club, traces its origins to nearly a hundred years before Earth First! Founded in 1892 by John Muir, the Sierra Club, like Earth First!, was established to distinguish itself from the dominant environmental organizations of the time (Brulle 2000). During the late nineteenth century, environmental concerns were mostly directed at *conservation* and were translated into efforts to use resources more rationally to meet human needs (*ibid*). Upset about the loss of wilderness brought on by the dwindling frontier, the Sierra

Club began efforts to *preserve* what was left of the American wilderness and continues this effort today. In contrast to Earth First!, however, the Sierra Club has traditionally relied on tactics that are not contentious or confrontational. Instead, it pressures the political system, targets the fossil fuel industry through legal and political campaigns, and spreads awareness of environmental issues to the public. As mentioned previously, the Sierra Club's emphasis on engaging in only legal tactics puts them in stark contrast to Earth First! As such, I selected these organizations to allow for variation in tactics and find whether or not the use of nature metaphors appears to influence tactics.

III. Documents, Websites, and Content Analysis

In order to examine the discourse of each organization, I conducted a content analysis of each organization's website. Qualitative researchers frequently look to websites as sources for content analyses (McMillan 2000). Additionally, it is well-established that contemporary social movement organizations have established an online presence, and the environmental movement is no exception (van de Donk *et al.* 2004). As stated before, this procedure is advantageous because texts and documents typically reveal the framing processes of social movement organizations (Johnston 2002). Specifically, I am looking at documents, which have long served as tools for researchers to use in analysis (Prior 2006; Linders 2008). Additionally, because I am looking at the *collective* framing processes of each organization, it is useful to examine documents, rather than conduct individual interviews, because the construction of documents by organizations is usually a collective process (Prior 2006: 26). By examining the documents produced by each organization on its website, I thus aim to capture the collective framing processes of the organization, rather than only the ways that individual members make use of nature metaphors, which may not represent the organization.

To conduct my analysis of Earth First!, I examined documents on the website,

www.earthfirstjournal.org, which generally serves as the organization's main website for presenting itself to the public. The website is regularly updated with news pertaining to Earth First! members and campaigns, it serves as their main fundraising center, and it also contains information about the journal they publish, as well as offering ways for newcomers to get involved (see Fig. 1 in Appendix). At first glance, the website appears very user-friendly and oriented towards the public. For example, there are numerous drop-down menus that direct users toward specific points of interest, and the website's aesthetics are also highly developed. Because the website contains many different pages and sections, I decided to look for the ways that they conceive of nature in a downloadable, 8-page document titled "EF! Primer English/Spanish" that was easily found under a section titled "Action Resources" (see Figure 2 in Appendix). This method of document selection is referred to as "targeted sampling" (Linders 2008). This kind of sampling is useful for my research in particular because a large number of documents were made available by Earth First!'s website and it would not be feasible to examine them all, so, after searching through the website, I believed that this document would most likely reveal the ways in which Earth First! makes use of nature metaphors, since it serves as the organization's public face for presenting the organization's core beliefs, including how it defines environmental problems. Likewise, by examining this document, I was easily able to draw comparisons with a similar document on the Sierra Club's website (see Figure 4 in Appendix). The Sierra Club's website also contained many different sections that directed users to whatever may interest them about the organization, including ways to get involved, current campaigns, how to become a member, and also how to donate to the organization. One page on the Sierra Club's website, titled "Inside the Sierra Club," contained an "About Us" section that included a "Mission Statement" and also a downloadable document titled "Sierra Club Purposes and Goals" (see Figure 5 in Appendix). I thus chose to analyze this document, since it presented the core beliefs of the Sierra

Club to the public, including metaphors for nature and how the organization defines

environmental problems. It is important to note, however, that this document was much more

difficult to find than the one used to analyze Earth First!

Because I am conducting primarily a discourse analysis, my units of analysis are the

words, sentences, and concepts present in the documents that are made available by both

organizations on their websites (Berg 2008: 310). As stated before, I chose these documents

because they represented each organization's core beliefs as presented to the public, including

how they define environmental problems. In looking for nature metaphors, I made use of the

conceptual scheme developed by Harré *et al.* that identifies five different categories from which

many nature metaphors spring. By using this deductive approach, I hoped to achieve consistent

comparison between organizations and thus greater validity in my findings (Berg 2008: 308). I

did not, however, limit my analysis to only those metaphors. Thus, in answering my research

question, I examined the discourse made available by documents on each organization's website

and interpret the data in a consistent way.

In sum, I am interested in whether or not the use of metaphor by environmental

movement organizations within diagnostic framing processes influences tactical decisions, or

prognostic framing processes. I chose to examine two organizations, Earth First!, a radical

organization, and the Sierra Club, a moderate organization. By selecting on the basis of

radicalness, I aimed to capture a wide difference in tactical decisions, thus allowing for greater

variability between the two. In analyzing the discourse as found in documents made available by

the organizations' websites, I used a conceptual scheme provided by Harré *et al.* for categorizing

nature metaphors, thus allowing for greater consistency in interpreting the data, but also drew

from other literature on metaphor as well. Following this section, I will provide a discussion of

my findings.

Chapter 4: Findings

I. Nature: Have it Your Way? Metaphors and Earth First!

I will begin this section by first discussing the metaphors found in the document produced by Earth First!, then discussing the metaphors used by the Sierra Club, and finally I will compare and contrast them in the following section. Before beginning the analysis of how Earth First! makes use of nature metaphors, some discussion of the document itself is necessary. Titled "Earth First! No Compromise in Defense of Mother Earth," the document is eight pages long and is written in both English and Spanish (see Fig. 3 in Appendix). The document contains four different sections: the first section, which is ostensibly an introduction; the second section, titled "Direct Action gets the Goods," in which Earth First! describes their tactics; a third section, titled "Get it Together: Forming an EF! Group," which explains how to form your own Earth First! group; and a final section, which asks readers to subscribe to Earth Firsts!'s journal and attend regional conferences. Overall, it seems the document is intended to be the public face of the organization and serve as an entry point for interested newcomers.

In analyzing the discourse present in the document, it is immediately clear that Earth First! makes use of a number of different metaphors when defining environmental problems. For example, the heading to the document reads, "Earth First! No Compromise in Defense of Mother Earth" (Earth First! 2014). In this line, nature takes on a combination of two metaphors. Not only is nature expressed as a gendered metaphor, conceptualized as *woman*, but it is also conceptualized as a *vulnerable* woman that needs defending at all costs.[3] Nature is again conceptualized as woman in another part of the document, under the heading, "Get it Together: Forming an EF! Group," which reads:

Earth First!ers become intimately familiar with the ecology of the area they inhabit and defend. They apply 'direct pressure' to stop the bleeding, with a potent combination of education, organizing and creative action. Nothing is more empowering than standing defiant against the destruction of our Mother Earth with other like-hearted people (*ibid*).

In this passage, nature is again conceptualized as *woman* and conceptualized as *vulnerable.* Additionally, another metaphor appears. The passage conceptualizes nature as a *body* that is immediately threatened and in need of quick healing. The *nature-as-body* metaphor directly stems from Renaissance thought that conceptualized the natural world as a literal reflection of the human body; nature is ultimately unchanging but could take on human qualities like health or sickness (Mills 1982). The use of metaphor does not, however, stop with these.

The *nature-as-body* metaphor can be contrasted to the *nature-as-machine* metaphor, which came into use after the Enlightenment, and emphasized that nature could be manipulated by humans to reach beyond the limitations of the natural world. Earth First! also alludes to the *nature-as-machine* metaphor: "We need to preserve it all, to recreate lost habitats and reintroduce extirpated predators. We need to stop and reverse the poisoning of our air, water and soil, as well as the modification of life's genetic code" (Earth First! 2014). Thus, humans should be concerned with more than simply healing what is sick: we should also manipulate the natural world to achieve what it is incapable of doing for itself (by reintroducing species, or recreating lost habitat). It is significant that Earth First! makes use of metaphors from different historical periods: they do not appear to be constrained by these metaphors, but instead make use of different metaphors to serve different purposes, regardless of the historical significance of the metaphor.

In addition to the metaphors discussed previously, Earth First! makes use of even more.

In another section, the document states, "On a more spiritual level, Earth First!ers understand that we can never be the healthy humans that we were meant to be in a world without wilderness, clean air and the howling of wolves under the moon" (*ibid*). In this case, nature is conceptualized as something that serves the interests of human in needs, like a *tool*; nature then benefits human health and well-being. Later, another metaphor emerges in a passage which reads, "Meanwhile, scientists have confirmed what indigenous cultures have taught for thousands of years: all forms of life are vitally connected" (*ibid*). In this line, Earth First! makes use of the *web of life* metaphor to conceptualize relations in the natural world. Regarding the place of humans within nature, they write:

> Guided by a philosophy of deep ecology, Earth First! does not accept a human-centered worldview of 'nature for people's sake.' Instead, we believe that life exists for its own sake, that industrial civilization and its philosophy are anti-Earth, anti-woman and anti-liberty (*ibid*).

It is well-established that Earth First! grew alongside the development of *deep ecology* in the 1980's, which holds that humans are a part of, rather than apart from, nature (Brulle 2000). This passage is important to note for two reasons. First, it shows that, in conceptualizing nature, Earth First! consciously tries to distance itself from the ideologies of mainstream organizations that may draw boundaries between humans and nature, such as the Sierra Club, which could help explain why they pursue radical tactics aimed outside the political system and directed towards nature instead. This distancing is expected of radical social movement organizations (Fitzgerald and Rodgers 2000). It is also important to point out some potential conflict within the document: in one passage, nature serves to benefit human health and well-being, while in another metaphor,

nature has intrinsic value. Thus, Earth First! is able to make use of different metaphors to highlight different things, even if they may conflict, suggesting that metaphors may have less of a constraining influence.

While there are clearly numerous metaphors present within the discourse of Earth First!, nature is conceptualized most frequently as something that is *vulnerable*. In fact, the document opens with the following passage:

> The very future of life on Earth is in danger. Human activities -from hunting to habitat destruction- have already driven countless species to extinction, and the process is only accelerating. The destruction of the Earth and its sustainable indigenous cultures has led to tragedy in every corner of the globe (Earth First! 2014)

Similar sentiments are echoed throughout the document, in phrases like, "It is time to free our shackled rivers and restore the land" (*ibid*). Clearly, for Earth First!, nature is vulnerable, extremely threatened, and humans are largely to blame.

Hence, the use of metaphor varies within the discourse of Earth First! Many metaphors can be found, but most significantly, they conceptualize nature as ultimately vulnerable. Importantly, they do not always use metaphor in explicit ways. As discussed earlier, I anticipated this because the use of metaphor in our language is not always immediately obvious. Additionally, although they make use of different nature metaphors, they are able to invoke different metaphors to serve different purposes, or, to highlight certain features of nature while excluding others. By conceptualizing nature as a tool that can serve to benefit human health and well-being, for example, it ignores the possibility that nature sometimes does just the opposite: consider the devastating tragedy wrought by a hurricane, agricultural loss due to a plague of

locusts, or the harsh conditions of a frozen tundra. Finally, it is also the case that Earth First!

makes use of some metaphors from the past, such as the *nature-as-body* metaphor from the

Renaissance, when they are defining environmental problems. Hence, the cultural and historical

residues of nature metaphors also seem to impact diagnostic framing processes. However, they

are also able to make use of metaphors from other historical periods, suggesting that these

metaphors may not be very constraining: they can invoke different metaphors for different

reasons. Overall, then, within the discourse of Earth First!, it seems that the use of nature

metaphors matters for how the organization defines environmental problems. Later, I will discuss

whether or not the metaphors present within Earth First! discourse appear to influence the

organization's behavior and tactical decisions in significant ways. First, I will discuss the ways in

which the Sierra Club makes use of nature metaphors.

II. More Metaphors, More Problems? Metaphors and the Sierra Club

The document I used to examine the discourse of the Sierra Club, entitled "Sierra Club

Purposes and Goals," is, at first glance, very different in appearance from Earth Firsts!'s (see

Figure 6 in Appendix). The first section of the document is a reproduction of the "Mission

Statement" as seen on the main website, and is listed under a section titled "From the Current

Articles of Incorporation & Bylaws, June 20, 1981." Next, a sub-heading reads, "updated July

2006." Following the "Mission Statement" is a section titled, "Beliefs about Environment and

Society – Developed by Planning Committee and printed in Sierra Club Goals Pamphlet, 1985-

1989, with Board Knowledge, but not formally adopted by it." The document itself is divided

into sections in chronological order, the first section labeled 1981 and the last labeled 2006-2010.

Hence, there are several different sections in which the Sierra Club defines environmental

problems, each from different time periods, making the analysis somewhat more complex than

for Earth First! However, because the document's authors decided to include these sections, I

decided to analyze all of them in order to find the ways that that the Sierra Club makes use of nature metaphors.

Like Earth First!, the Sierra Club makes use of a number of different metaphors throughout the document. The first section contains the "Mission Statement," which, as the only part of the document that was reproduced on the main website, appears to be the most important, due to its location. It reads,

> The purposes of the Sierra Club are to explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives" (The Sierra Club 2014).

In this passage, nature is conceptualized as *vulnerable* and in need of protection from humans. Conceptualizing nature as vulnerable appears very frequently throughout the document, in phrases like, "Species are being annihilated and wilderness is being destroyed at an alarming and accelerating rate," or, "In short, we envision a world saved from the threat of unalterable planetary disaster" (*ibid*).

A second metaphor that appeared very frequently throughout the document was the *balance of nature* metaphor, in which nature is seen to have a delicate balance that can be disrupted by humans (Zimmerman and Cuddington 2007). For example, one section on the first page states, "Thus, we must control human population numbers and seek a balance that serves all life forms," while the next sentence reads, "Complex and diversified ecosystems provide stability for the Earth's life support processes" (Sierra Club 2014). Later, the document states,

"Development and human activities can simplify ecosystems, undermine their dynamic stability, and threaten these processes" (*ibid*). Although the *balance-of-nature* metaphor is one of the oldest metaphors that has been used to conceptualize nature, it continues to impact how the Sierra Club defines environmental problems. Like Earth First!, the Sierra Club also invokes metaphors from different historical periods. One line reads that the Sierra Club envisions a world "where a healthy biosphere and a nontoxic environment are inalienable rights," which invokes the *nature-as-body* metaphor, in which the natural world is unchanging, but can be healthy or sick (*ibid*). Thus, the Sierra Club is able to draw from metaphors from different historical periods, which allows them to draw attention to different sorts of problems, rather than constrain them.

While these two metaphors appeared quite frequently, the Sierra Club made use of several other metaphors throughout the document. They paid particular attention to the ways in which humans are using the Earth's resources. For example, the document contains phrases like, "We must share the Earth's finite resources with other living things and respect all life-enabling processes" (*ibid*). Another passage reads,

> Thus, resources should be renewed indefinitely wherever possible, and resource depletion limited. Resources should be used as long as possible and shared, avoiding waste and needless consumption. We must act knowledgeably and take precautions to avoid initiating irreversible trends. Good stewardship implies a shared moral and social responsibility to take positive action on behalf of conservation (*ibid*).

The Sierra Club's concern with depleting the Earth's finite resources invokes the metaphor of nature as a *closed* and finite, rather than *open* and infinite, system: nature is not conceptualized

as endless abundance, but is in danger of depletion (Harré et al. 1999). More metaphors can be found, however, throughout the document.

Other passages show that the Sierra Club conceptualizes nature as *useful* for human needs, in phrases like, "The enjoyment of the natural environment and the Earth's wild places is a fundamental purpose of the Club, and an end in itself," and is "the spring where we go to renew our spirit" (*ibid*). While there is perhaps some contradiction in claiming that nature serves human enjoyment, and yet is an end in itself, it is clear that the Sierra Club emphasizes throughout the document that nature is overall beneficial to humans. This can be, however, contrasted to another line, which reads, "The needs of all creatures must be respected, their destinies viewed as separate from human desires, their existence not simply for human benefit." In this line, nature is not valuable because it serve human needs, but has its own intrinsic value. This sentiment is echoed later in the document, which states,

> We are deep in nature every day. We're up to our ears in it. It is under our feet, it is in our lungs, it runs through our veins. We are not visitors here. We weren't set down to enjoy the view. We were born here and we're part of it -like any fish, rock or blade of grass. (*ibid*).

In emphasizing that humans are a part of nature, rather than separate from it, the Sierra Club seems to draw from the ideas of *deep ecology*. However, other sections of the document point in somewhat different directions. The Sierra Club frequently invokes the concept of "good stewardship" to describe how humans ought to relate to nature. For example, the document states, "Humans must exercise stewardship of the Earth's resources to assure enough for other creatures and for the future" (*ibid*). Another line reads, "Good stewardship implies a shared

moral and social responsibility to take positive action on behalf of conservation," and later, the document states, "A poisoned stream can get worse, stay the same, or get better. It depends largely on what we choose to do" (*ibid*). So, it seems that humans are fundamentally a part of nature, but also bear the responsibility for protecting and restoring it. This is summed up nicely in one section that reads, "Humans have evolved as an interdependent part of nature. Humankind has a powerful place in the environment, which may range from steward to destroyer" (*ibid*). Later in the document, though, the Sierra Club states, "For nearly 100 years, Sierra Club members have shared a vision of humanity living in harmony with the Earth" (*ibid*). Again, the Sierra Club strives to achieve balance with nature, with humans a part of nature, but perhaps in a privileged position, as a good steward; stating that nature needs defended or served by humans implies some kind of separation, whether above or below, although we can certainly be a part of nature while suggesting we behave responsibly. In general, how the Sierra Club conceives of the relationship between humans and the natural world in the document is not entirely clear. Interestingly, in one part of the document, the Sierra Club claims, "Nature, vastly complex and infinitely subtle, is our perfect metaphor" (*ibid*). What this metaphor is, however, is not entirely clear, though by contrasting complex to subtle, they perhaps suggest that the concept of nature can encompass many things. In sum, the metaphors present within the discourse of the Sierra Club certainly vary, as nature is clearly conceptualized in several different ways throughout the document.

Most importantly, though, the Sierra Club appears to stress that nature is *vulnerable*, *finite* and *out of balance*. Additionally, the Sierra Club views humans as a part of nature, though we should acknowledge our responsibility toward nature and try to be good stewards by striving toward balance and harmony between the natural and human worlds. Thus, it seems that the Sierra Club, much like Earth First!, is able to use different metaphors in order to draw attention

to different sorts of problems.

The use of nature metaphors within the discourse of the Sierra Club appears to influence diagnostic framing processes. First, as I anticipated, the use of metaphor is pervasive in the document. This shows that the Sierra Club is able to make use of many different metaphors as they define environmental problems. Second, the use of metaphor throughout the document permits the Sierra Club to highlight certain features of the world while excluding others. As was the case for Earth First!, conceptualizing of nature as primarily beneficial to human needs excludes less desirable situations in which nature could be threatening to human survival. Finally, the Sierra Club also makes use of metaphors that carry cultural and history residues. For example, conceptualizing the natural world as *out of balance* invokes one of the oldest and longest-lasting metaphors to influence how humans think about nature. The use of historical metaphor, however, does not appear to constrain how they define environmental problems, since they are able to make use of other historical metaphors as well. By invoking several different metaphors, the Sierra Club is able to draw attention to different kinds of environmental problems. Next, I will compare the use of metaphors between Earth First! and the Sierra Club to find whether or not the use of metaphor appears to influence tactics.

III. Earth First! vs. the Sierra Club: Comparing the Use of Metaphor

First, in answering my second research question, it is clear that the use of metaphor between the Sierra Club and Earth First! does vary. However, there is also much overlap. First, both organizations conceptualize nature as *vulnerable* and highly threatened by human activities. This permits both organizations to at least justify their existence: each organization claims to be defending nature from the destructive threat of humanity. Second, both organizations conceptualize nature as beneficial to human needs, whether in terms of physical or spiritual well-being. At the same time, they both stress that nature has intrinsic value. Finally, both

organizations invoke metaphors from different historical periods, but not in ways that appear to be very constraining. Instead, they are able to draw from different metaphors to highlight certain kinds of environmental problems. This shows that metaphors for nature from different historical periods are influential in shaping how environmental organizations define environmental problems. Overall, it is clear that both Earth First! and the Sierra Club make use of similar metaphors within diagnostic framing processes.

While the discourse of both organizations often includes the same metaphors, there are different metaphors at work also.[4] For example, the Sierra Club conceives of nature as a *finite*, closed system and was far more concerned with conserving resources than Earth First! In contrast, Earth First! does not emphasize the conservation of resources as a goal. This is likely an indication of the *conservation* movement's lasting impacts on the Sierra Club, which stressed the importance of preserving resources for future generations. Second, how humans relate to the natural world seems to differ somewhat: Earth First! members present themselves as defenders who are part of the natural world, while the Sierra Club envisions itself as good stewards standing apart from nature; there is, however, some tension here, as seen in the documents. In general, though, this is consistent with existing literature on both organizations (Brulle 2009). Third, only Earth First! made use of gendered metaphors to conceptualize nature. Phrases like "Mother Earth" were completely absent from the discourse of the Sierra Club. Finally, the Sierra Club, more so than Earth First!, emphasized that the natural world is *out of balance*. It seems that Earth First! presents itself as concerned with restoring the natural world as an end in itself, rather than achieving harmony between nature and humans. In fact, the last line of the first page of the Earth First! primer reads, "Simply put, the Earth must come first" (Earth First! 2014). In sum, Earth First! and the Sierra Club make use of similar metaphors when defining environmental problems, but often make use of different metaphors as well. Hence, the use of metaphors for

nature varies within and between organizations, although they are often invoking the same or similar metaphors as well. In the next section, I will address whether or not the use of metaphor can be linked to tactical decisions.

Chapter 5: Discussion

I. Treesitting or Treehugging? Self-Presentation of Tactics

Before discussing whether or not the use of metaphor appears to influence the tactical decisions of Earth First! and the Sierra Club, it is necessary to highlight the ways in which each organization defines solutions to environmental problems in each document. As discussed previously, I chose Earth First! because it is a radical organization and the Sierra Club because it is a moderate organization and paid particular attention to differences in tactics. I anticipated that this would allow me to compare the organizations to find whether or not the use of metaphor appears to influence tactics.

Earth First! makes it clear that it is different from the mainstream environmental movement and that its members believe in pursuing more radical tactics to achieve their goals. The document states,

> When the law won't fix the problem, we put our bodies on the line to stop the destruction. Earth Firsts!'s direct-action approach draws attention to the crises facing the natural world, and it saves lives. (*ibid*).

In fact, several pages of the document are devoted to describing tactical approaches for defending the natural world. They suggest several different tactical avenues, including treesitting, blockading, and even occupying the homes of corporate leaders. Earth First! has also

become well-known for its practice of "monkeywrenching," which they describe in the

document as,

> Ecotage, ecodefense, billboard bandits, desurveying, road reclamation, tree spiking,
>
> arse'n around... All of these terms describe the unlawful sabotage of industrial
>
> extraction and development equipment, as a means of striking at the Earth's destroyers
>
> where they commit their crimes and hitting them where they feel it most -their
>
> profit margins (*ibid*).

Clearly, Earth First! believes that the solutions to environmental problems can only be achieved

by going beyond the recourses offered by the mainstream legal and political systems. This would

be expected of a radical social movement organization (Fitzgerald and Rodgers 2002). While

they place great emphasis on direct action, they also suggest that Earth First! participants engage

in creative acts to generate media coverage, as well as fundraise to pay for organizational costs.

In sum, the document clearly shows that Earth First! engages in radical tactics. This can be

contrasted to the Sierra Club's reliance on more moderate tactics.

First, the Sierra Club explicitly states in their "Mission Statement" that they will "use all

lawful means to carry out these objectives" (Sierra Club 2014). Later, in the document, they

expand on what kinds of lawful means they will use to solve environmental problems:

> We offer proven ability to influence public policy and empower individuals to confront
>
> local, national, and global problems. From town halls to our nation's capital to global
>
> institutions, Sierra Club activists are scoring enormous victories for the environment
>
> through personal action, education, litigation, lobbying, and participation in the political

process (*ibid*).

This puts them in sharp contrast to Earth First! Later, the document states additional ways that the Sierra Club tries to solve environmental problems. For example, rather than aim to hurt corporate profits, as was the case with the activities of Earth First!, the Sierra Club document states they will "develop new forms of political leverage," including efforts to "mobilize market incentives to induce corporate environmental change" (*ibid*). Clearly, the Sierra Club believes that it can work within mainstream legal and political avenues, especially the state, in order to achieve its goals. The document also suggests that Sierra Club members build coalitions with other organizations, work to create media visibility, and organize at the grass-roots level to take action on environmental issues. Clearly, the Sierra Club engages in only moderate tactics, as opposed to radical tactics, to solve environmental problems.

In sum, it is clear that Earth First! and the Sierra Club engage in different kinds of tactics in order to solve environmental problems. By claiming to employ tactics that involve property destruction, obstruction or blockading, as well as more creative, non-legal tactics, Earth First! participants pursue far more radical tactics than do participants in the Sierra Club. In contrast, the Sierra Club document explicitly states that they will remain within the limits of the law. Instead of engaging in radical tactics, they will pursue a more moderate agenda that includes lobbying, pressuring the political system, or educating the public. In the following section, I will discuss whether or not differences in how each organization conceptualizes nature are sufficient to explain, at least partially, differences in tactics.

II. *What's Nature Got to Do With it? The Influence of Metaphor on Tactics*

The tactical differences between Earth First! and the Sierra Club are thus both related to how they conceive of the mainstream political system as presented in each document. Earth

First! states that it must go beyond the law to achieve its goals, while the Sierra Club states that it stays within the bounds of the law. Hence, Earth First! pursues more radical tactics, often heading straight to the source of ecological degradation, while the Sierra Club pursues more moderate tactics, focusing on activities like lobbying or pressuring corporations to adopt environmentally-friendly practices. While Earth First! and the Sierra Club pursue different kinds of tactics in order to solve environmental problems, it is not clear that this difference can be explained by the use of metaphor.

First, the use of nature metaphors does not appear to influence how each organization conceives of the political system, and, in turn, does not appear to influence the tactical decisions of each organization. For example, Earth First! believes it must pursue extra-legal tactics in order to solve environmental problems, but this does not appear to relate strongly to how the organization conceptualizes nature, no matter which metaphor is considered. Even though Earth First!, as contrasted with the Sierra Club, may conceptualize of nature as *Mother Earth*, perhaps suggesting intimacy or family, it is not enough to explain why they pursue radical tactics; simply being closer to nature does not necessarily imply that one should pursue radical tactics. Additionally, one could just as easily defend *Mother Earth* by voting for environmentally-friendly politicians, signing a petition, or lobbying Congress. These are certainly less intimate acts than chaining oneself to a tree, but, as more moderate tactics, could also follow from conceptualizing nature as *Mother Earth*. While it is true that Earth First! draws from the ideas of *deep ecology*, which says that humans are part of the natural world, it is clear that more factors than only ideas toward nature must be considered in trying to explain their tactical decisions. Likewise, the Sierra Club may have emphasized the need to conserve resources, as well as invoked the *balance-of-nature* metaphor more than Earth First!, but this does not have any bearing on whether or not one places faith in the political system in order to protect the

environment. Indeed, Earth First! is quite explicit about why they pursue radical tactics:

demonstrations and civil disobedience "are what won women the vote, emancipated slaves and

retracted the US-military industrial machine from Vietnam" (Earth First! 2014). It seems, then,

that Earth First! draws some inspiration from past movements. Clearly, the role of metaphor in

shaping the tactical decisions of environmental organizations is ambiguous at best. The choice of

tactics likely depends on multiple factors. Ideas toward nature are certainly an important

component in determining tactics, but not the only one.

As discussed previously, the use of nature metaphors appears to influence diagnostic

framing processes, or how environmental organizations define environmental problems, but

likely does not determine tactical decisions. Indeed, whether or not one conceptualizes nature as

vulnerable determines whether or not one decides to protect the environment in the first place.

Likewise, conceptualizing nature as a *body* that is *sick*, or a *machine* that can be *manipulated*,

suggests that we can do something. But these metaphors do not necessarily determine what that

something is, or how we should go about doing it, at least in regard to whether or not one

pursues radical or moderate tactics. While it is possible that Earth First!'s ideas toward the

political system may not be entirely divorced from their ideas toward nature, it is clear that

multiple factors are at work in influencing tactical decisions. Overall, then, in determining

whether or not an environmental organization pursues radical or moderate tactics, it is not the

case that metaphors for nature have a very significant impact.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

I. Does Nature matter?

In this project, I set out to find out whether or not the use of nature metaphors influenced

the tactical decisions of environmental movement organizations. Specifically, I wanted to know

whether or not the differences between Earth First!, a radical organization, and the Sierra Club, a moderate organization, could be explained, at least partially, in differences between how the organizations make use of nature metaphors. To answer this question, I conducted a qualitative discourse analysis of documents made available on each organization's website, looking to find how they conceptualized nature. Findings indicated that the use of nature metaphors appears to influence how an environmental organization defines problems, but not solutions. Hence, whether or not an environmental movement organization engages in radical tactics is not a direct result of how it makes use of nature metaphors. While ideas toward nature certainly matter, they do not solely determine tactics. As seen in the documents produced by each organization, it is more likely that radical tactics are pursued due to understandings about the political system, or other organizational factors.

Where, then, does this leave the concept of nature? Do the ways in which nature is conceptualized matter at all, for the either the success or failure of the environmental movement? Indeed, whether or not we even perceive there to be an ecological crisis at all, and whether or not there should even be an environmental movement to address it, is partially a result of how we conceptualize nature. But simply changing the ways that we think about nature will not necessarily change the ways that we act. As discussed previously, social movements scholars point out that it is often easier to define problems than solutions, and that solutions do not always follow from how the problems are defined. But what if the problem were much deeper? What if we need to look beyond how nature is conceptualized and consider that the environmental movement should *drop the idea of nature altogether*, as some scholars suggest? (Morton 2007; Parr 2013; Žižek 1991: 34). As the urgency of climate change and the ecological crisis begin to shape our lives, asking *what nature is,* if anything, may thus take on new significance. But more importantly, we will need to confront the age-old Leninist dilemma that all social movements

face: *what is to be done?* Surely, such questions will at least need to be considered.

II. Implications, Limitations, and Future Research

The findings of this research are important for several reasons. First, because the use of nature metaphors by environmental organizations does not necessarily lead to more or less radical tactics, researchers must consider the ways in which other factors are influential in determining the behavior and activities of environmental organizations. This may include other kinds of ideas, such as how the organization perceives the state, or other organizational factors, such as the ability to mobilize resources. Thus, it is incorrect to attach political strategy to conceptualizations of nature. In trying to understand the environmental movement, some scholars perhaps overestimate the extent to which ideas toward nature matter, especially with regard to the significance of historical metaphors (see, for example, Brulle 2009). This research, then, confirms the findings of other studies by suggesting that ideas toward nature may not necessarily determine the tactical decisions of environmental organizations (see, for example, Carmin and Balser 2002; Dreiling and Wolf 2001). It may be convenient to look at the diversity of the environmental movement and assume that differences in how organizations think about the environment may explain the diversity. But such an analysis excludes too many other factors, especially material factors.

Second, this research contributes to our knowledge of social movements in general by the finding that tactical decisions, including prognostic framing processes in which tactical decisions are negotiated, are not necessarily determined by diagnostic framing processes. Indeed, how an environmental organization decides to pursue its agenda for change may not be related at all to how it defines environmental problems, i.e., there is not a high degree of correspondence between diagnostic and prognostic framing processes. This is important because, in trying to understand how environmental organizations decide what to do, researchers should not

immediately look at what they believe, but should instead consider other factors, as mentioned previously. Last, this research may have implications for those participating in environmental movements themselves. As environmental problems continue to change, environmental organizations may want to consider that changing their ideas is less important than changing what they do. Likewise, it could also be the case that founding new organizations on the premise that new ideas will lead to substantial or new change is not so clear. It would be interesting to consider, for example, what it would mean for ideas to flow from actions, rather than the other way around. In sum, the research contributes to our understanding of the environmental movement by calling into question the extent to which environmental ideas influence the actions of environmental organizations; it contributes to our understanding of social movements by finding that diagnostic framing processes do not necessarily determine prognostic framing processes; and last, it may provide some advice to the environmental movement and how it grapples with the relationship between its ideas and its actions.

The research was, though, limited in a few ways. First, the analysis of metaphor may benefit by expanding the sample to include more than two organizations. While these organizations were selected on the basis of radicalness, they certainly do not represent all radical or moderate environmental organizations. Additionally, the selection of documents, which were relatively short in length, could have been expanded as well. Secondly, it was also not entirely clear how these documents were produced. While they were intended to be part of the public face of each organization, there was no explanation of how they were produced. It may have been beneficial to include some interviews of members of each organization, for example, in order to gain a deeper understanding. Finally, I found it particularly difficult to navigate the literature on metaphor in general; it is a very large concept that spans many different disciplines, including neuroscience, comparative literature, history, psychoanalysis and many more. Thus, I believe this

study may have benefited from an inter-disciplinary approach that allowed more theoretical perspectives to participate.

These findings also suggest some directions for future research. First, researchers could conduct a more comprehensive study of the contemporary environmental movement to find which metaphors may be at play in shaping the movement's ideas. While the classification scheme developed by Brulle (2009) does look at some ideas regarding nature, a more thorough reading, including a look at the use of nature metaphors, may impact our understanding of the environmental movement. For example, this research only looked at how the use of nature metaphors may or may not shape tactics. Is it possible that the use of nature metaphors may influence other factors? Second, researchers looking to explain the shifting tactics of the environmental movement may consider looking at other factors than the ideas that organizations hold, especially with regard to its ideas of nature, as some scholars have done (see, for example, Carmin and Balser 2002; Dreiling and Wolf 2001). For example, the Sierra Club recently lifted its ban on civil disobedience for the first time in 120 years for one protest (Democracy Now! 2013). What would cause a moderate organization to suddenly engage in more radical tactics? As the findings of this research suggest, it is likely not the case that their ideas toward nature changed. Finally, it is possible that looking at the use of metaphor in other kinds of social movements may help to understand how movements define problems, and this project could serve as a general guide. For example, how might conceptualizations of *inequality,* another abstract concept, impact movements fighting for economic justice? Clearly, as social movements continue to change our world, there are plenty of opportunities for more research.

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Notes

1. I am particularly interested in the contrast between environmental organizations because of personal experience with both 501(c)3 and radical organizing. I spent a year as a campaign organizer for an environmental non-profit. Additionally, I once attended an Earth First! "rendezvous" last year, hidden deep in the woods. They truly are vastly different words...

2. While Brulle (2000; 20009) does look at other factors, including the history and funding of organizations, there does seem to be an emphasis on the influence of environmental ideas, as expressed in discursive frameworks.

3. It is somewhat interesting to note that Earth First! takes a feminist position, but then attaches "vulnerable" to "mother."

4. The fact that both organizations can draw from all sorts of different metaphors, even from different historical periods, is perhaps indicative of today's fragmented, postmodern condition. Forms of environmentalism may only be identities.

Appendix

[Figure 1: www.earthfirstjournal.org front page 3.23.14]
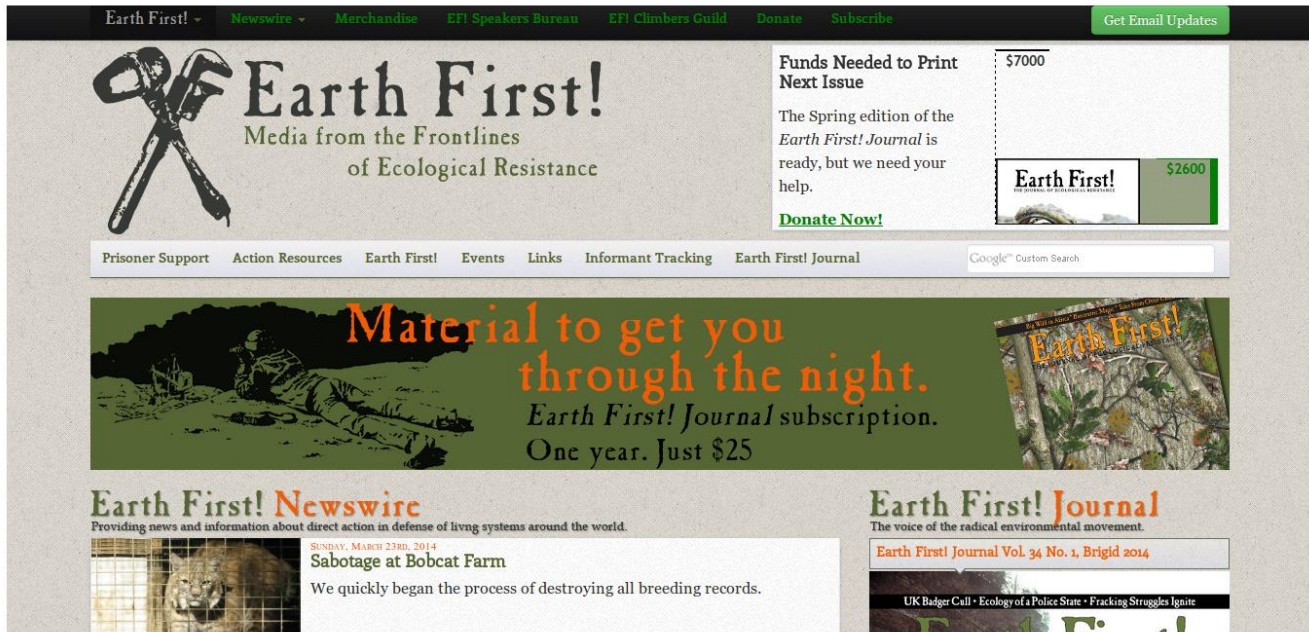
[Figure 2: Location of Earth First! document 3.23.14]
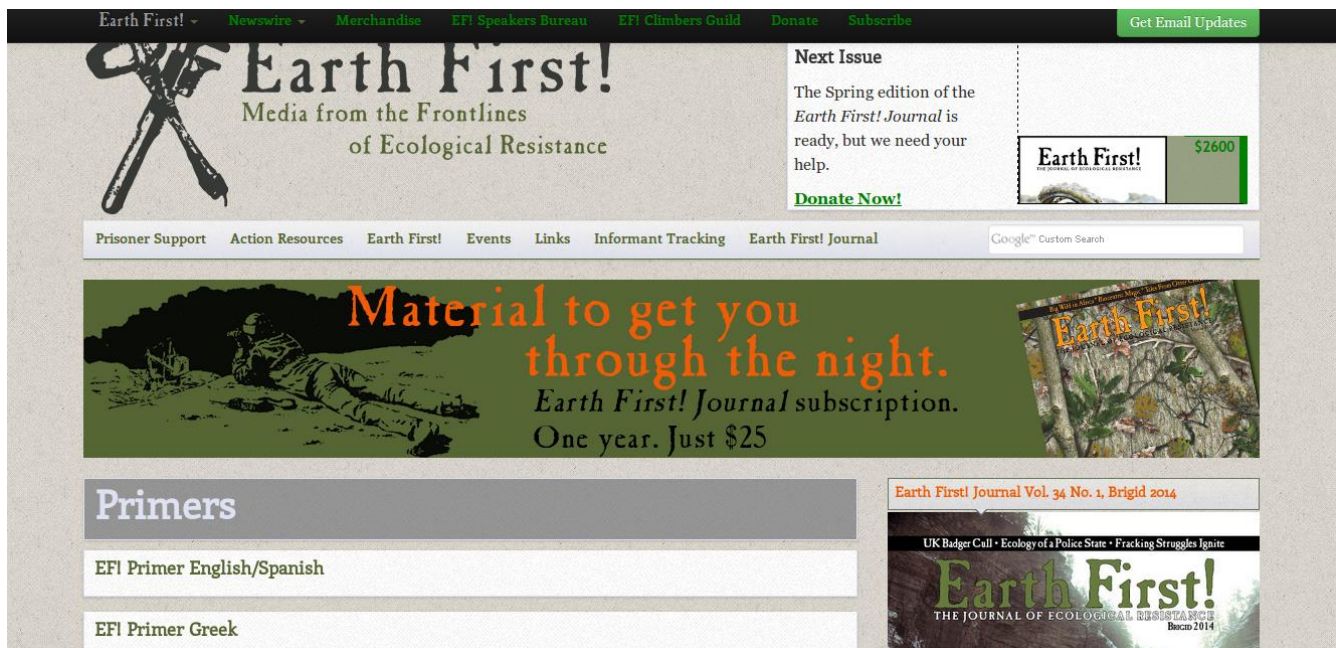
[Fig. 3: First page of "Earth First! No Compromise in Defense of Mother Earth" 3.23.14]

Earth First!
No Compromise in Defense of Mother Earth

The very future of life on Earth is in danger. Human activities—from hunting to habitat destruction—have already driven countless species to extinction, and the process is only accelerating. The destruction of the Earth and its sustainable indigenous cultures has led to tragedy in every corner of the globe.

Meanwhile, scientists have confirmed what indigenous cultures have taught for thousands of years: all forms of life are vitally connected. Removing even a single strand from the web of life produces a widening ripple of catastrophe. On a more spiritual level, Earth Firstlers understand that we can never be the healthy humans that we were meant to be in a world without wilderness, clean air and the howling of wolves under the moon.

It is not enough to ask politicians and corporations to destroy less wilderness. We need to preserve it *all*, to recreate lost habitats and reintroduce extirpated predators. We need to stop and *reverse* the poisoning of our air, water and soil, as well as the modification of life's genetic code. It is not enough to oppose the construction of new dams and developments. It is time to free our shackled rivers and restore the land.

Earth First! formed in 1979, in response to an increasingly corporate, compromising and ineffective environmental community. It is not an organization, but a movement. There are no "members" of EF!, only Earth First!ers. We believe in using all of the tools in the toolbox, from grassroots and legal organizing to civil disobedience and monkeywrenching. When the law won't fix the problem, we put our bodies on the line to stop the destruction. Earth First!'s direct-action approach draws attention to the crises facing the natural world, and it saves lives.

Guided by a philosophy of deep ecology, Earth First! does not accept a human-centered worldview of "nature for people's sake." Instead, we believe that life exists for its own sake, that industrial civilization and its philosophy are anti-Earth, anti-woman and anti-liberty. Our structure is non-hierarchical, and we reject highly paid "professional staff" and formal leadership.

To put it simply, the Earth must come first.

No Ceder en la Defensa de La Madre Tierra

El mismo futuro de la vida en la Tierra está en peligro. Las actividades humanas—desde la caza hasta la destrucción del hábitat—ya han extinguido especies innumerables, y el proceso solo se va acelerando. La destrucción de la Tierra y sus culturas indígenas sostenibles ha producido tragedia en cada rincón del mundo.

Mientras tanto, los científicos han confirmado lo que han enseñado las culturas indígenas por miles de años: todas formas de la vida están imprescindiblemente conectados. Quitar hasta un filamento de la tela de vida produce un rizo de catástrofe que se va ensanchando. En un nivel mas espiritual, los Earth First!istas entienden que nunca podemos ser los humanos sanos que debemos ser en un mundo sin la naturaleza silvestre, el aire limpio y los aullidos de los lobos bajo la luna.

No es suficiente pedir a los políticos y las corporaciones que destruyen menos de la naturaleza. Tenemos que preservarla *todo*, reconstruir el hábitat perdido y reintroducir a los depredadores eradicados. Hay que detener y dar marcha atrás al envenenamiento de nuestro aire, agua y tierra, y tambien la modificación del código genético. No es suficiente oponerse a la construcción de presas y desarollos nuevos. Es hora de liberar nuestros rios y restaurar a la Tierra.

Earth First! ("¡La Tierra Primero!") fue formado en 1979 como respuesta a una comunidad medioambiental cada vez más corporativa, inútil y cediendo. No es una organización, sino un movimiento. No hay "miembros" de Earth First!, solo Earth First!istas. Creemos que se debe usar todas las herramientas en la mano, desde la organización local o legal hasta la desobedencia civil o el sabotaje. Cuando la ley no arreglará el problema, ponemos nuestros cuerpos en el riesgo para impedir a la destrucción.

Guiado por una filosofia de "ecología profunda," Earth First! no acepta una opinión del mundo antropocéntrico, que enseña que la naturaleza solo existe para los humanos. Al contrario, creemos que la vida existe por la vida, y que la civilización industrial y su filosofia se oponen a la Tierra, la mujer y la libertad. Nuestra estructura es en contra la jerarquía, y rechazamos al "personal profesional" de alta paga y a los lideres formales.

Poniendolo sencillamente, la Tierra tiene que venir primero.

[Fig. 4: www.sierraclub.org front page 3.23.14]

[Fig. 5: Location of "Sierra Club Purposes and Goals" 3.23.14]
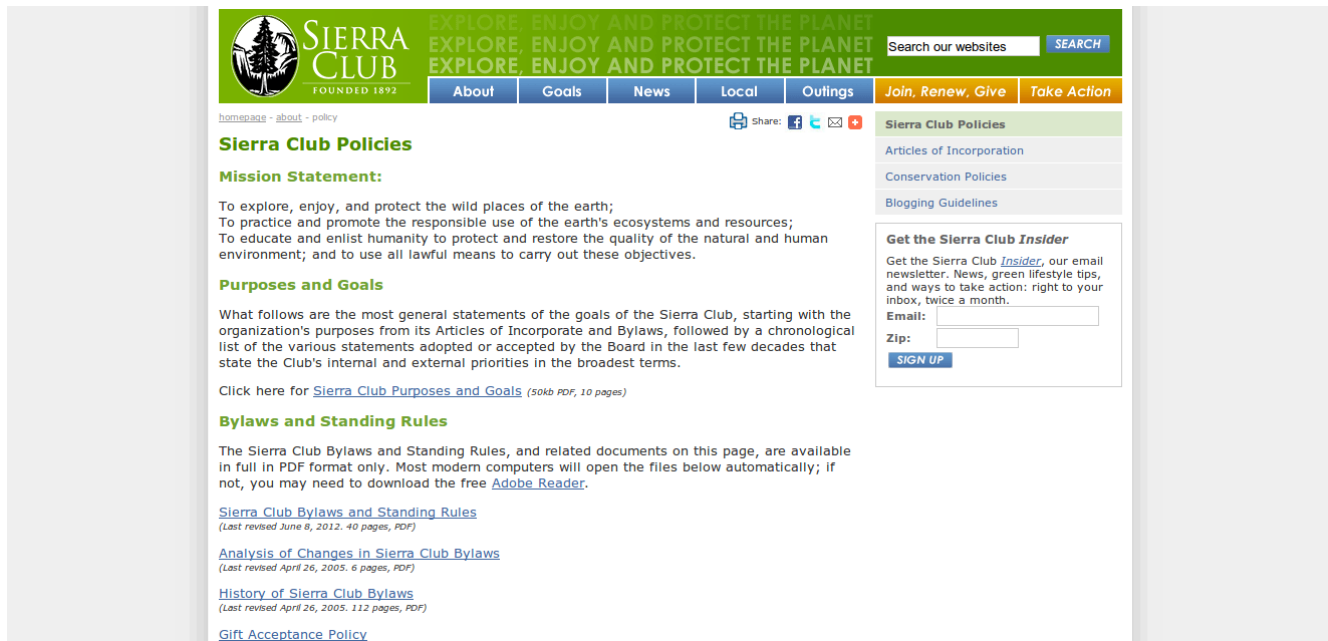
[Fig. 6: First Page of "Sierra Club Purposes and Goals" 3.23.14]

From the Current Articles of Incorporation & Bylaws, June 20, 1981

updated July 13, 2006

The purposes of the Sierra Club are to explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives.

Beliefs about Environment and Society – Developed by Planning Committee and printed in Sierra Club Goals Pamphlet, 1985-1989, with Board knowledge, but not formally adopted by it

Humans have evolved as an interdependent part of nature. Humankind has a powerful place in the environment, which may range from steward to destroyer. We must share the Earth's finite resources with other living things and respect all life-enabling processes. Thus, we must control human population numbers and seek a balance that serves all life forms.

Complex and diversified ecosystems provide stability for the Earth's life support processes. Development and other human activities can simplify ecosystems, undermine their dynamic stability, and threaten these processes. Wildness itself has a value serving all species, with too few remaining. We have more to fear from too little wildness than from too much.

Genetic diversity is the product of evolution acting on wildness, and is important because it is biological capital for future evolution. We must preserve genetic diversity in wild tracts and gene pools. No species should be hastened into extinction by human intervention.

The needs of all creatures must be respected, their destinies viewed as separate from human desires, their existence not simply for human benefit. All species have a right to perpetuation of the habitat necessary and required for survival. All creatures should have freedom from needless predation, persecution, and cruel or unduly confining captivity. We must seek moral restraints on human power to affect the well-being of so many species.

Humans must exercise stewardship of the Earth's resources to assure enough for other creatures and for the future. Thus, resources should be renewed indefinitely wherever possible, and resource depletion limited. Resources should be used as long as possible and shared, avoiding waste and needless consumption. We must act knowledgeably and take precautions to avoid initiating irreversible trends. Good stewardship implies a shared moral and social responsibility to take positive action on behalf of conservation.

1