

Environmental Disputes

Community Involvement
in Conflict Resolution

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1 Citizen Organizations and Environmental Conflict

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Using the natural environment and protecting it directly involves many societal groups. These groups are sometimes composed of concerned citizens, sometimes of government officials or industry representatives. Conflicts between the groups over the use of the environment and natural resources are now common occurrences and are growing in number and importance as the human population grows, technology changes, and as pressures to use the environment increase (Gladwin 1979). These conflicts are intensified as humans become more aware of the need to achieve changes to ensure protection of the environment for future generations.

Since the early 1970s, new approaches to managing environmental conflicts, particularly environmental negotiation and mediation, increasingly have been employed to help resolve some of these disputes. These processes are new to citizen groups, and are very different from the established strategies and tools with which most environmental and citizen organizations are comfortable. The techniques include collaboration among contending interest groups instead of adversarial relationships; they involve consensus decision-making rather than judgments by authorities. Consequently, dispute resolution processes require new, different skills and perspectives on the part of citizens.

Often the mediation and negotiation has been promoted by government, business, or interests sympathetic to government or business. This support by traditional adversaries can further heighten the suspicions of citizen organizations that these strategies and tools will help other interest groups more than they will help them. Historically, citizen organizations involved with government or business groups have seen their interests co-opted through familiar techniques: appeals to common values, requests that citizens put their trust in government or in business, and participation processes in which citizen interests have been overwhelmed by the expertise of *other* interest groups. This history contributes to citizen organizations' skepticism toward environmental dispute resolution processes.

Carpenter and Kennedy, two pioneers in these new approaches, have observed that "public disputes are commonly fought by people who are unfamiliar with negotiation and are compelled to negotiate" (1988, 225). Furthermore, "negotiation of public disputes is carried on with few accepted

guidelines and without established traditions" (242). Therefore, citizen organizations, as one of the major parties in these disputes, need information about environmental negotiations and mediation. They need to understand the structure and dynamics of these processes, how they might most effectively be involved in a dispute settlement process, and when participation may not be in their best interests.

This book describes some of the experiences of citizen groups that have participated in environmental dispute settlement processes. Our purpose is to begin responding to the concerns and questions of citizen organizations about the advantages and disadvantages of these new means of settling environmental and natural resource disputes and how they might use these processes to advance their interests. While this approach to environmental decision-making is still young and much remains to be learned about both its positive and negative impacts, these early experiences can provide useful insights to other citizens contemplating involvement in dispute resolution processes.

Chapter 1 is divided into two sections. The first section describes the defining characteristics of environmental and citizen organizations. It then identifies the key challenges to these groups that arise from new processes of dispute settlement. This section includes questions citizen organizations must answer in deciding whether or not to become involved in a dispute settlement process.

The second section provides information on the sources of environmental conflict. While the evidence of environmental conflict is quite clear, the interpretations of both specific individuals and groups concerning the extent of this conflict and what should be done about it are often very different. This section draws upon research on environmental values to illustrate the differing values and views that give rise to specific environmental disputes. It then provides a framework of three distinct perspectives that capture the different understandings of environmental conflict and what should be done about it.

Citizen Organizations and the Challenges of Environmental Dispute Settlement

Conflict is an integral element of the change processes that are the lifeblood of citizen organizations. These groups are not strangers to either internal or external conflict. They frequently find themselves adversaries of other organizations advocating different decisions and competing for some of the same resources.

The Nature of Environmental Citizen Organizations

Citizen organizations—those focused on the environment and natural resources—organize when people become dissatisfied with the decisions and

values of government, business, and other interest groups. These citizen organizations want something different from what these other powerful societal actors may want. To achieve their goals, citizen organizations face three major tasks. They must: (1) determine what they want; (2) obtain resources and create influence to achieve their goals; and (3) act to influence the decisions and actions of other organizations.

Each of these tasks is a major challenge. Each presents a conflict for the organization, and that organization must have the ability to settle the resulting disputes.

To determine what they want requires choices about a group's objectives. Members inevitably bring different preferences and priorities into an organization, and the resulting discussions and decisions involve conflict. The individual citizen organization cannot be all things to all people; to be effective, it must limit what it seeks to do.

Citizen organizations cannot be maintained without resources. They often must acquire these resources in competition with other associations that need the same contributions, members, media attention, volunteered time, and leadership skills. Sometimes acquiring these resources involves conflict. When the group converts these resources to effective influence, structures are created and leaders are selected—which also at times involves conflict. Again, the organization must possess the ability to settle these disputes sufficiently so that it can function.

The final activity in the citizen organization's triad of major tasks is influencing the decisions and behavior of other organizations that have the ability to meet citizens' needs. To exercise influence requires a coherent plan (usually referred to as a "strategy") and specific actions (usually referred to as "tactics") for carrying out the strategy. Employing these tactics in hopes of influencing others requires decisions, discipline, evaluation, and adaptability; conflict is a partner to such activity. Furthermore, the actions of citizen groups in exercising influence encourage similar actions by competing organizations, leading to interorganizational conflict. It is this conflict that is the chief focus of our environmental dispute settlement analysis.

Citizen organizations are most often the least powerful party among the multiple parties seeking to influence a specific environmental policy or management decision. These organizations function with fewer dollars and staff resources than do other interest groups. They rely on volunteer contributions, rights accorded by laws and regulations, public sympathy, and the traditions of a pluralistic and democratic political culture. They do not have the specialized resources of government and business, nor do they command the same access and influence with the media, legislators, and other constituents that generally support established institutions, leaders, and policies.

Citizen organizations are effective and survive by engaging in conflict to gain the attention, resources, and influence they need to meet their goals. They acquire these critical resources by distinguishing themselves from other groups. As they do so, they are dependent on the differences in values and

attitudes found in society among citizens and leaders. These different values and attitudes will be discussed later in this chapter.

The Challenges of Environmental Dispute Settlement Processes

Citizen and environmental organizations face difficult choices in deciding whether or not to participate in environmental dispute settlement processes and how to proceed if they decide to do so. Environmental and citizen activists are often more familiar with adversarial strategies of change in which pressure, coercion, and unilateral decisions are key features than they are with dispute settlement efforts. In fact, as Carpenter and Kennedy note, "It is the nature of public disputes that some of the participants have never before been involved in formal negotiation, and some are unlikely to be negotiators again after the principal issue is settled" (1988, 233). These differences in experience and skills can be threatening because they carry the risk that important environmental goals will be ignored and citizens' needs will not be met. Also, these new approaches can be seen as lowering the visibility of citizen organizations and reducing their ability to attract the resources that are critical to their survival and effectiveness. Carpenter and Kennedy have observed, "Citizen groups contending with powerful government agencies or large corporations often must take the hardest possible line—total victory—to keep the support of their members and maintain their momentum" (1988, 2). Strategies stressing collaborative problem-solving, negotiation, and consensus decision-making confront many citizen organizations with unfamiliar options and requirements for information and skills they may not possess.

Douglas Amy, who since the 1970s has studied environmental negotiation and mediation from the perspective of environmental organizations, offers this advice:

. . . This process should be approached carefully and skeptically. Environmental mediation should not be accepted at face value and should not be entered into quickly. Potential participants must be careful to see through the myths of mediation—the illusion that it is a simple and easy process, that all participants around the table are equal, that the process is inherently fair, that compromise is always reasonable, and so on. . . . Given the many pitfalls of this process and the absence of significant procedural safeguards, only the intelligence and vigilance of the participants can insure that it is a mutually beneficial process. (1987, 197–98)

To exercise this intelligence and vigilance requires that citizen organizations pay careful attention to their key tasks and to other critical choices confronting them. One set of choices focuses outside the organization and concerns the strategy to be used by it in seeking to influence different societal decisions and plans. A second set of decisions focuses internally on how to develop and use social change tools or tactics in relation to factors like the organization's leadership, structure, member commitment, and commu-

nication processes and, additionally, to its values and goals. Both sets of choices, while having a specific focus, must nonetheless take into consideration the total circumstances of the organization.

Making such strategy choices requires that attention be paid to alternative actions that could also be pursued to achieve the changes desired by the citizen group. Gail Bingham, an experienced mediator and evaluator of environmental mediation, makes this comment about the choice among alternative strategies:

Although voluntary, environmental dispute resolution processes are often characterized as alternative to litigation—with the presumption that litigation is bad—they are better viewed as additional tools that might or might not be more effective or more efficient in particular circumstances. Litigation and other traditional decision-making processes remain important options. (1986)

These judgments of whether or not to be involved in environmental negotiation and mediation require relating these tools and their proposed use to the organization's basic understanding of conflict and how change occurs. Also, attention must be given to identifying alternative strategies for a specific situation in light of the other parties involved and the organization's objectives and resources. Perhaps litigation or direct action would be more effective in a given situation.

Judgments concerning whether or not to participate in environmental dispute settlement processes cannot be made without attention to the other parties that need to be involved in ending the dispute. Are all the other important parties willing to be involved? Will they be seriously committed to the negotiation process and willing and able to bargain in good faith? In some instances, there are other groups with which the organization would have to be in coalition for the negotiation to occur. Sometimes, this coalition-building is workable and can save the organization's resources, while other times it is not possible without sacrificing core objectives.

Turning to internal and more tactical considerations brings another set of concerns and issues into the determination of whether or not to be involved in environmental negotiation, and if this decision is yes, how to be involved. These considerations are important, because, as Gerald Cormick, an experienced environmental mediator, has observed:

This is a hard, tough process, full of pitfalls and dangers. It takes work, organizations, clear thinking and stamina. Groups that don't have a clear idea of the process, of what they want and how much they can actually get, are in for a disappointment. Those that are together and know how to stay that way have the best chance to succeed. (1977, 10)

To become involved and to be effective in environmental negotiation and mediation require that an organization's leadership and membership understand these processes, support their use, and are skilled or willing to

become skilled in using these tools. Members' time and energy and organizational communication processes must be such that they can regularly receive information on the negotiations from their representatives and provide them with reactions and directions as to what the organization will and will not accept.

The organization's immediate objectives in the environmental conflict at issue must allow for some give and take and compromise. Sometimes, objectives are based on principle and are not negotiable. If the issues potentially to be negotiated are not of high importance to the organization, then involvement might be a highly questionable use of the group's resources and could be ineffective because of insufficient commitment by leaders and members.

The organization's resources and power must be examined in relation to a possible environmental negotiation. Does it have the power to make an impact and do other parties perceive this power? Is the organization willing to use its power on these issues and in this negotiation? Is there adequate time, money, and information to become involved? Is the organization willing to use these resources in this forum as opposed to applying them to other potential issues and/or strategies for bringing about change to meet stated objectives?

Environmental and citizen organizations must constantly build their membership base, increase the level of donations and other support, and develop their leadership. How will involvement in environmental negotiation and/or mediation affect these vital needs? Sometimes, the answer to this question is that these needs will be negatively affected when examined from the perspective of other issues that the organization could be pursuing. In those instances, different strategies should be adopted.

Citizen organizations either implicitly or explicitly select a strategy as they undertake actions in pursuit of their goals. This choice of strategy requires that assumptions be made about how environmental conflict might be used to bring about change. It is essential that an organization understand different perspectives on environmental conflict and change and adopt the one that best reflects its values and goals. To make sound judgments on whether or not to be involved in environmental negotiation and mediation requires relating these tools and their proposed use to the organization's basic understanding of conflict and how change occurs, and to its goals.

The Sources of Environmental Conflicts

Environmental conflicts are rooted in different values of natural resources and environmental quality. Some individuals perceive an intrinsic value in things that are wild and natural while others do not. Some see a societal obligation to protect species and preserve habitat while others do not. Some place priority on maintaining biological diversity and environmental integ-

rity for future generations while others place priority on harnessing nature's resources to service the needs of today's society.

Environmental conflicts are also incited by different stakes in the outcome of environmental and natural resource management decisions. The threatened loss of a resource with particular significance to a group—whether it is a wilderness area, a local park, or a neighborhood's serenity—causes people to organize and protest; so does the immediate monetary threat of a delayed development and lost investments should a governmental decision run contrary to the economic interests of particular groups or individuals.

Similarly, the uncertainty surrounding various environmental actions, and the different assessments of the risks associated with these actions, cause conflicts. How many people will contract cancer as a result of a new power plant or industrial facility? Is this risk one that is "acceptable"? All groups assess such risks differently, reach different conclusions about appropriate decisions, and therefore find themselves in conflict.

Before moving on to chapter 2 and a discussion of the structure and dynamics of environmental dispute settlement processes, and chapters 3 and 4 for a look at issues that citizen groups must consider in participating in these processes, it is important to step back and explore the causes of environmental conflict and hence the reasons why these conflicts will inevitably persist long into the future. It is vital as well to understand the implications of different values and perspectives on conflict for a group or individual's perceptions of dispute settlement processes. What bearing will these perceptions have on how, or whether, a group will be involved in efforts to resolve a specific dispute?

For citizen organizations to make intelligent choices in relation to processes aimed at ending disputes, it is essential that they understand these different dimensions of environmental conflict. Why do environmental conflicts exist and persist? How do other groups in society look upon environmental conflicts? How do other groups—groups that the citizen group will likely find itself across a table from in a dispute settlement process—perceive the appropriateness of collaboration and negotiation in settling disputes? Where do different citizen associations fit in this scheme and how should they respond to opportunities to participate in a dispute settlement process?

The remainder of this chapter will probe these questions and provide the larger societal context of environmental conflict and dispute settlement.

Differing Views of Environmental Problems

Understanding public perceptions of the environment and environmental problems is a key ingredient in an organization's efforts to influence environmental decisions. These perceptions are the basis of an individual's commitments to an organization and its goals and they are major influences on the behaviors of both members and leaders.

Widespread public concerns with environmental problems emerged in the late 1960s. Since then, researchers have been continually assessing public opinion regarding a variety of environmental and natural resource issues. While public concern declined somewhat through the decade of the 1970s, and many wondered if it would further decline and possibly disappear in the 1980s, researchers found that "by the early 1980s it was common for public opinion analysts to describe environmental quality as an 'enduring concern of the American public'" (Dunlap 1983, 59-60).

Data gathered by public opinion analysts indicate that while moderately declining during the 1970s, public support for environmental protection again began to rise in the early 1980s, not long after President Ronald Reagan took office (Dunlap 1983). This increase in public support was a result of perceptions that environmental problems were becoming more serious, that the government should reduce these problems, and that in the Reagan years at least, government was not providing the desired level of environmental protection. As Riley Dunlap, a public opinion researcher, concludes:

Public support for environmental protection has not only survived Reagan, but has apparently been strengthened by the challenge posed by his administration. While its electoral importance remains ambiguous, the public consensus behind environmental protection nonetheless constitutes a significant political resource for lobbying and, more generally, influencing public officials. (1983, 36)

The same public opinion data show that individuals are generally more concerned about basic economic conditions than they are about environmental quality. This greater emphasis on the economy is often seen in voting behavior. However, Dunlap speculates that "environmental problems will probably become more potent political issues as they become increasingly viewed as threatening to public health" (1983, 36).

A large number and variety of environmental conflicts have accompanied this heightened public concern because of major differences in environmental values and attitudes among various groups in the society. These differences, along with the above described commitment to the importance of environmental problems and the maintenance of environmental quality, result in widespread environmental conflict. To better appreciate the sources of this conflict, it is necessary to examine current research on differences in environmental values among individuals.

Lester Milbrath's research (1984) lends insight into some of the sources of this conflict. He systematically surveyed both citizens and representatives of leadership groups from across the country. He found clear evidence that conflicting belief systems concerning environmental problems help distinguish these groups. His research identifies three key beliefs that separate these fundamentally different perspectives toward the environment.

One of these key beliefs is the degree to which the world environment is perceived as a problem. Some respondents indicated the world environ-

ment is a very important problem, while others perceived it to be a problem of lesser importance when compared with issues like economics, peace, and drugs. A second key belief that distinguished fundamentally different perspectives toward the environment concerned what kind of change is most needed to solve our environmental problems. Some respondents saw the necessity for greater scientific and technological development, while others indicated the need for basic change in the nature of society. The third distinguishing belief discovered by Milbrath was whether or not there are limits to growth; some respondents indicated that such limits exist, while others believe they do not.

When evaluating his findings for these three ideas, along with numerous other values and attitudes, Milbrath concluded that two fundamentally different perspectives are now present in our society. One is held by "people who believe the environmental problem is small, that it can be solved by technical fixes, and that there are no limits to growth . . ." (Milbrath 1984, 44). According to this research, between 18 and 19 percent of the U.S. public hold this view. We refer to it as view A. The other perspective is maintained by people "who believe that the environmental problem is large, that it can be solved only by basic change in society, and that there are limits to growth . . ." (Milbrath 1984, 44). Based on the 1980 survey, 18 percent of the U.S. public held this perspective. We refer to it as view B. Milbrath's findings also show that the balance of people who are the majority hold a mix of elements from these two fundamental perspectives toward the environment and do not fully agree with either one of these basically conflicting perspectives. He concludes that this data "demonstrates the reality of sharp divisions over these fundamental beliefs in modern society" and "these sharp divisions on fundamentals imply continued conflict for some time to come" (1984, 61).

Milbrath further discovered that most business leaders and a majority of public officials, labor leaders, and media gatekeepers hold view A. Environmental leaders are for the most part strong adherents of view B, but the research data showed a substantial minority of the other leadership groups also hold this view.

The average age of people holding view B is much younger than those holding view A. As Milbrath states, "Since people tend to retain beliefs developed in their formative years, we can expect further increases in the proportion of people who accept view A."*

*At the same time as this research was being conducted in the United States, the same surveys were done in England and Germany. The results in these countries also show the existence of the two strongly conflicting perspectives that we described above. Interestingly, in England, 24 percent of the public are adherents of view B, and in Germany, 29 percent hold this view. With regard to view A, only 9 percent of the English public falls into this category; in Germany, it is only 5 percent.

Environmental conflict is widely present in the United States and is based on a continuing high level of public concern for the quality of the environment and fundamental value differences among groups and their leaders. It is not surprising that Milbrath's research concludes that these value differences will continue into the future, and hence so will the resulting conflict.

Three Perspectives on Environmental Conflict and Negotiation

Given the well-documented differences in perception of environmental problems, it is to be expected that different understandings of environmental conflict are also present. Describing and contrasting these views are necessary prerequisites to describing different evaluations of the usefulness and dangers of environmental negotiation and mediation. There is no single evaluation of these tools of environmental decision-making.

These various views of environmental conflict have been organized into three categories in the literature on social conflict. These three categories are known by different names, depending on whether one links these views to political ideologies or to sociological theories as the sources of information to describe and interpret these perspectives. As described here, however, the three contrasting understandings of environmental conflict are referred to by a number to avoid relying on short titles that can easily miscommunicate their meanings. Table 1.1 summarizes these three perspectives on environmental conflict and negotiations.

According to the first view, there is an underlying societal consensus that both the environment and economic development are important and compatible. This consensus is reflected in societal values and laws and, more importantly, in the attitudes and practices of leaders. Given the complexity of our economic and environmental systems, and given human nature, there are often misunderstandings between different groups about the relationship between the environment and the economy. Furthermore, given the ever-changing nature of both society and the environment, there is the need for an ongoing and slow readjustment between society and the environment. This adaptation to change must be reflected in either revised or new policies and management practices. As these adaptive changes are made, different groups and individuals will learn about them at different rates.

At any time, groups could experience differences and disputes that need to be referred to the basic societal agreements (embodied in laws, policies, and internal norms) about the environment and economic production. Education and expert information are very important in helping people adapt to change and to apply the basic societal consensus to specific and practical problems over which there may be disagreement.

On rare occasions, there are individuals and organizations that break the basic societal consensus and closely related laws and norms about the environment (e.g., by dumping toxic wastes in unauthorized places). These people are in conflict with the basic societal agreements, and their deviant

TABLE 1.1
Three Perspectives on Environmental Conflict and Negotiations

	<i>Perspective 1</i>	<i>Perspective 2</i>	<i>Perspective 3</i>
View of environmental conflict	<p>Basic consensus that the environment and economic development are important and compatible.</p> <p>Specific disputes grow out of ongoing need for adaptation, misunderstandings, and deviant behavior.</p>	<p>Both conflicts and consensus exist among disparate interest groups.</p> <p>Political pluralism exists to promote and accommodate differences.</p>	<p>Conflict is deep and pervasive in society, involving different economic groups and matters of principle.</p> <p>Established authorities deemphasize and "cool out" conflict.</p> <p>Contending groups emphasize and escalate conflict.</p>
Preferred response to conflict	<p>Educate leaders.</p> <p>Problem-solving assisted by specialized courts.</p>	<p>Legislation as supplemented by regulation and judication.</p> <p>Negotiation.</p>	<p>Use of power to force compliance.</p> <p>Use whatever will win and enhance power.</p>
View of environmental negotiations	<p>Supplementary tool.</p> <p>Collaboration to identify the common interests.</p>	<p>Extension and refinement of long-established practice.</p> <p>Differences exist on how it should be institutionalized.</p>	<p>Use as last resort.</p> <p>Sometimes use for delay and/or co-optation.</p>

behavior must be stopped through the action of established and legitimate authorities.

As leaders and citizens receive education and updated information about the environment, their values and behaviors affecting the environment will change. Expert knowledge of the environment and environmental problems is the necessary resource for effective education along with the long-established, traditional values of the culture. These traditional values reflect the proven wisdom that slowly changes based on new experience, particularly as guided by expert knowledge and the judgment of societal leaders.

From this perspective on environmental conflict, problem-solving by well-educated leaders assisted by specialized experts is the most prevalent and preferred mode of solving environmental and natural resource problems. Sometimes, other tools will be needed. When expert information is still sketchy, scientists with different views will need to utilize science courts,

so the most rational course of action in the face of uncertainty can be determined. In other situations where leaders differ and there is a dispute, problem-solving should be supplemented by negotiation and mediation to clear up the misunderstanding and to provide up-to-date information as a basis for consensus.

Douglas Amy maintains that this view is often presented by the supporters of environmental mediation and that it "assumes that environmental disputes are largely caused by misunderstandings and miscommunications rather than by basic conflicts of interests, and that therefore many of these conflicts are unnecessary" (1987, 165). He recognizes that "this view persists . . . because it corresponds to positions being espoused by some significant actors in environmental politics" (1987, 167). He has observed that a number of business leaders, government officials, and environmental leaders who take essentially this view also maintain that "conflicts of interest between developers and environmentalists have been greatly exaggerated." He attributes the theme of common concerns between business and environmentalists to what he describes as "the less adversarial and more conservative environmental groups like the National Wildlife Federation and the Conservation Foundation" (1987, 168).

From this perspective, disputes are an unfortunate side effect of ongoing evolutionary changes and the adaptations of institutions, leaders, and members to these changes. This dynamic gives rise to the need for problem-solving, information and education, and the once-in-a-while use of negotiation and mediation to settle a prolonged dispute.

According to the second view, there are in society both ongoing conflicts as well as underlying consensus about the natural environment. The ongoing conflicts arise from the different interests of societal groups. The groups that come from industry and government, and environmentalists, have different goals and responsibilities as well as different values; often these characteristics are in conflict.

In a political democracy, there are structures and processes that allow the expression and protection of these differences. These processes also promote decision-making when differences need to be resolved. All these structures and processes have been developed to accommodate conflicts among groups and individuals who want different things or who view what is meaningful or important in different ways.

From this second perspective, environmental laws and regulations are essential as reflections of the agreements among groups with differing interests. These agreements are also explicit rules of behavior for individuals and groups who are not in agreement nor expected to be in agreement about how the environment is to be used and protected.

The preferred means of settling disputes, including ones involving the environment, that are an inevitable part of ongoing interest group conflict is legislative decision-making by democratically elected representatives.

Within this process of decision-making, interest group advocacy provides the perspectives, goals, and values of the contending groups as they express their differences. Executive branch regulation utilizing expert information is an extension of legislative formation and implementation of laws.

An essential but secondary means of dispute settlement is provided for by judicial decision-making. The work of the courts rests not only on specific statutes, but also on the country's Constitution and Bill of Rights. These documents articulate agreed-upon values and beliefs of the society, including belief in a political pluralism that provides for the expression of differences in interests.

Negotiation occurs informally in the course of the operation of the legislative and judicial branches of government and, to a lesser extent, in the executive branch. As this occurs, a wide variety of nongovernmental groups and organizations are active parties in these negotiations, which are fundamental to the expression of different interests and working out of decisions in the face of differences. Many laws are the outcome of negotiations, as are the settlements of many lawsuits. Other important societal agreements, often embodied in contracts, result from negotiations.

Environmental negotiation and mediation are merely a recent extension and refinement of the long-established practice of informal negotiation among differing interest groups and individuals. These new tools of environmental conflict management and environmental decision-making are understood as supplemental in legislative, regulatory, and judicial processes. Douglas Amy maintains that "many environmentalists and industry executives would see this model as being much more accurate than the previous one" (1987, 173). Here the "previous one" refers to the first perspective described above, and the attribution of accuracy is a statement of Amy's values and choices of perspective on environmental conflicts.

Adherents to this second perspective on environmental and other social conflicts nonetheless do debate as to when and in what ways environmental negotiation and mediation should be used. For example, should such negotiations be under the supervision of the courts, as opposed to the current practice of "freestanding" or ad hoc negotiations? Should environmental policy consensus processes be used in developing legislation?

The third view of environmental conflict maintains that social conflict, including environmental conflict, is deep and pervasive in the society. According to this view, it is only the coercive power of government in league with the economic power of specific individuals and organizations that hold society together in the face of these basic differences. These interests exploit the natural environment as they proceed to create wealth and benefit from it. Industrialization and its attendant scientifically based technology exploit natural resources and pollute the natural environment.

Schools and other societal institutions such as the media and the church provide experiences and ideas that persuade citizens to accept such envi-

ronmental exploitation as being in their own interest and as ultimately benefiting them. These institutions seek to promote the perspective that utilitarian use of the environment is justified (for example, God created humans to use the environment in this way) and, further, it is necessary for providing jobs and the economic standard of living to which workers have grown accustomed. The present pattern of environmental use—according to this view—does not seriously damage the environment because business is planning for the future as well as seeking to use the environment in ways that respect other needs for the environment.

Processes by which citizens participate in government (public hearings, for instance) are designed to elicit support for the decisions and plans that those in power are promoting. From this perspective on environmental conflict, citizen participation is highly desirable as long as those in power retain control of goals, values, and decisions.

One element of this view is that some individuals and citizen groups seek to show that the policies and practices are not in the interest of those in the society who lack political and economic power nor in the interest of achieving a future that is environmentally sustainable. They maintain that the environment is harmfully exploited and will continue to be as long as the interests in power retain control. Sometimes, it is further argued that modern industrialization inevitably exploits the environment, and that a new philosophy and technology of social production, as well as new goals and expectations, are needed to insure long-run viability for the relationship between society and the natural environment.

From this perspective, environmental values and practices are matters of principle and all efforts should be pursued to insure the maintenance and/or advancement of these ideals. At times, these principles are embodied in established authorities and at other times they are represented by challenging citizens who do not accept prevailing policies and practices as being in their interest. Douglas Amy points out that "there is a real difference between seeing environmental disputes as conflicts of interest or as conflicts of principle" (1987, 175). He notes that many environmentalists view them as conflicts of principles and observes: "This is especially true of the more activist organizations, such as Greenpeace, Earth First! and Friends of the Earth . . ." (1987, 175).

In this third perspective, mediation and negotiation are tools of delay or co-optation or of cutting possible losses that could occur by utilizing other means of continuing or settling the dispute. The objective here is twofold. First, to use strategies and tactics that will insure that one's own perspective prevails while maintaining and enhancing one's power. Second, and at the same time, to defeat or suppress challenging perspectives while reducing the power of the group that is advocating these challenges.

These perspectives embody three very different understandings of environmental conflict. The importance of environmental conflict ranges from

a minor and temporary perturbation of basic societal agreements to a major and permanent element of pervasive and fundamental societal conflict. All three views are prepared to recognize the existence of environmental negotiation and mediation, but they evaluate these tools of dispute settlement quite differently. The first and third perspectives, for different reasons, relegate environmental negotiation and mediation to a very small role in environmental decision-making. In contrast, the second perspective gives negotiation a more major, yet still debated, role relative to other more established means of settling disputes.

In seeking to understand and relate to the new process of environmental dispute settlement, it is important that citizen and environmental organizations determine their own view of environmental conflict. Doing so will help guide them in using these new tools of conflict resolution. It will also clarify their analysis of other organizations' orientations toward these new means of conflict resolution.

Conclusion

Widely differing views of environmental problems by U.S. citizens and leaders are the reality that citizen organizations face and use as they seek to achieve new adaptations between our society and the natural environment. The different and conflicting understandings of environmental conflict, change, and negotiations form a basis for the strategy choices made by citizen organizations. These choices are also influenced by internal organizational considerations. Such strategy choices determine whether or not a citizen organization decides to initiate or participate in an environmental negotiation and, if it participates, what it tries to achieve.

To better understand citizen organization behavior in relation to environmental negotiations, knowledge is needed of this means of dispute settlement and the wider field of environmental conflict management. The next chapter provides an overview of this relatively new set of processes for environmental decision-making. It provides examples from our research on citizen group involvement in environmental dispute settlement to illustrate the structure and dynamics of these new processes for resolving disputes.

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