

Whilst this publication is not obviously directed at environmental educators, the implications are clear. In recent times, environmental educators have become aware that environmental education is not just about environmental issues but also social and economic issues. This book is at the crossroads of these issues for children. To address the rights of the child is also a step forward for environmental education.

The guidelines in this publication make it very clear how children's rights should be acted upon for the well being and total development of children in this and future generations. The detailed resources, bibliography and index make this a user friendly publication and essential reading for those involved in the governance of children's rights. 📖

### Sue Elliott

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Mark Manuel, Barrie McElroy and Roger Smith 1999, *Environmental Issues*, Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 0 521 42623 5, 201pp.

Designed to encourage students to consider a variety of natural environmental issues from an Australian and global viewpoint, this textbook is part of the 'Our Future Our World' series from Cambridge which includes the titles 'Coastal Conflicts', 'Tourism' and 'Hazards'. For those teachers who are familiar with the series this book is similarly structured with the use of key questions as a focus for student learning. Primarily written as a textbook for Geography students, the questions follow a sequence which identifies the issue, who is involved, where it is occurring, the conflicts involved, how the issue developed, responses to the issue and how the issue could be resolved.

The book is well presented with a good mixture of clear visual material (coloured maps, photographs, graphs and diagrams) and informative text. This is combined with a variety of suggested learning activities for students to complete. These activities require students to process and analyse the information presented in a variety of ways, as well as research the issue further by suggesting websites for the students to investigate.

Some of the topics of a particular interest to teachers of environmental studies would include an overview of atmospheric issues (the enhanced greenhouse effect and the reliance on fossil fuels, photochemical smog, the smoke pall from the fires in South-East Asia in 1997), soil degradation and water resource/management issues. There is also an interesting chapter at the beginning of the book which defines the environment and examines how we value it (which may be of value to teachers of Outdoor and Environmental Education). The book would have limited value to teachers of the new Environmental Studies course because of the humanities approach to the topics. It could however be useful

to take some of the case studies and examples used and develop them further by building in the relevant scientific detail and background. 📖

### Paul Donaldson

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Jim Sinatra & Phin Murphy 1999, *Listen to the People, Listen to the Land*, Melbourne University Press. RRP \$29.95, ISBN: 0-522-84861-3, 201pp.

The publication *Listen to the People, Listen to the Land* offers a rare and genuine glimpse of the spiritual and emotional significance of the environment. While it can be easy to dismiss some accounts of love, wonder and awe at nature as spiritual guff, this book describes the relationship of people with the land in a raw and real way, using people's own accounts of their experiences. As such it offers environmental educators precious insights for exploring and developing an appropriate environmental ethic.

Debate may rage at the fore-front of thinking about Environmental Education on a number of fronts between advocates of a liberal approach to education for the environment and those advocating a socially critical approach, however they do agree on at least one point. They share an ecocentric view that insists that nature has intrinsic value (Fien 1993, p. 64). From this view it follows that the protection of the world's ecosystems should be unconditional and should be assured independent of their utility to people.

Such a view is easily ridiculed, and thus presents a major challenge to Environmental Educators. Professor John Passmore describes as 'mythical rubbish' 'the cry ... for a new morality, a new religion, which would lead us to believe that it is intrinsically wrong to destroy a species, cut down a tree, clear a wilderness' (cited in Charlesworth 1990). Many other writers assert that nature only has value due to the resources and perhaps aesthetic pleasure it offers people. Such a utilitarian position is not uncommon, and such arguments are useful in fighting for environmental causes, but is not generally regarded as an adequate point around which to build an environmental ethic. So it falls to the Environmental Educator to encourage the adoption of a value that the wider population may regard as peculiar and mockable.

It is very difficult to build an objective argument for the acceptance of nature as having intrinsic value. Certainly, one may be built upon a religious view of nature, but such arguments suit only a limited audience and are neither universally applicable nor convincing. Our language of morality, including terms like duty, right, obligation and justice, has been traditionally restricted to describing relations between people. This has made it difficult to speak of nature as having rights that must be respected. Value is made even more difficult to ascribe to nature due to the dominance of the