

GREEN TEAMS
The Right Timing for Useful Deeds

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For the:
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Man, at his best, like water,
Serves as he goes along:
Like water he seeks his own level,
The common level of life,
Loves living close to the earth,
Living clear down in his heart,
Loves kinship with his neighbors,
The pick of words that tell the truth,
The even tenor of the well-run state,
The fair profit of able dealing,
The right timing of useful deeds,
And for blocking no one's way
No one blames him.
Lao Tzu

Green Teams are a group of savvy advisors with special “tools” and the praxis of power (technical, spiritual and political). Their intentions are simple — to influence the theatre of green politics. Green Teams boost human capacities to deal with an uncertain and sometimes hostile world by:

- Widening citizen dreams, options and creativity,
- Providing targeted funding or expertise,
- Networking to other people, lobbyists, lawyers, communities in similar situations,
- Understanding the central importance of human organizations, and
- Helping to tease out on environmental and cultural consequences to home, neighborhood, workplace, watershed, river basin, bioregion, and globe of any proposed or on-going projects.

Lots of Independent Green Teams within Strands of Environmentalism

In the 1960s, a group of visionaries appropriated the ecological concept of interconnectedness, put it together with the semi-religious tenet that nature should be exalted, and added the political idea that nature (including humans as part and parcel of nature) is critically endangered. “Environmentalism” blossomed. When the *Whole Earth Catalog* first began, there was no mention of the environment. When I took helm, it was called “Land Use” and I slipped in the seven major environmental groups. But, by 1994 (the last edition), there were over 4,000 “green” groups in the US alone and no room in the “Sustainability” section for more than a hundred!

Sit back a second and think of the 1980s, and the blossoming of green teams: the ecotheology, ecofeminist and environmental justice movements, deep ecology, reform environmentalists (concerned with land/water/air and public health), private preservation land purchases, conservation biology, dozens of Third World peasant rebellions concerned with poverty-and-environment struggles, the family health and zero population growth movements as well as industrial ecology, sustainable banking, and more.

1986/87 were turning-point years. Chernobyl blew up. The Montreal Protocol on CFCs opened up a role for global rules that finally accepted that we do actually live on one Earth. Congress demanded environmental impact statements from the World Bank, jump starting its tediously slow reform. US Environmental Grant Makers organized to better allocate effective philanthropy. The People’s Alliance of Chico Mendez brought the rich industrial-nation activists together with the rubber workers and local tribes in Brazil to build a new vision of “sustainable rainforests.” The Sandoz fire galvanized Europe who would, from 1986 on, become the world leader and innovator in industrial ecology and socially responsive business. The European Community promoted ISO (International Standards Organization) rules for corporate environmental management plans. Harbingers of climate change like Hurricane Gilbert, the worst storm in the western Hemisphere in the twentieth century, swept the headlines. Crowning these two years of green events, the Brundlandt Report boosted the term “sustainability” from obscurity. Rapidly it became the coinage of everybody— a word that may rival other Big Ideas like democracy and freedom in the twenty-first century. Thinking about the generations to come was no longer weird. Thinking globally became essential. Environmentalism transmuted into something more encompassing.

While all this exciting eco-change zoomed along, the old current of “Manifest Destiny” adopted a new vocabulary and built new power — free trade and free markets, property rights as the core of democracy, global financial networks, trans-nationals, and confrontational conflicts. Despite some opposition (Seattle), there is now a feeling of a juggernaut, especially with the probable next six years of Bushism. The long, hard work by neo-conservative think-tanks (starting in the 1960s) has paid off. Kick butt. Praise God. Cut taxes. Privatize the safety net. Deify American lifestyle. Orchestrate power moves. Taunt contemplation. Greenbacks before a green world.

Green Teams

In these delightful times, Kenny asked me to think about “Green Teams” and what we all might do over the next few years or decades. Originally, Green Teams came from my personal experience. Some communities moved too slow, couldn’t easily envision how to move, and lacked quick financing or expertise to deal with unwanted impositions. “Slowness” or Hamleting-about could irreversibly hurt their opportunity to do something creative, supportive and effective for the Earth, its creatures, and peoples.

When I worked with Apache and Tohono O’odham friends and governments, they had a particularly hard time. Manifest Destiny worked efficiently and effectively — as long as it was quick and glossy. Confident and bossy consultants, government agents and judges pushed time-lines that riled Indian senses of patience and process; and moved decision making so far down the line so fast that reversals were near impossible. I thought that a kind of Green SWAT team — a combo of expertise and cultural buffoonery — might increase chances of success.

Since then, in part from working with Hans and Frank of the Panta Rhea Foundation and thinking of “Blue (Water Resource) Teams,” the Green Team concept has diversified and broadened (see “strategies” below). In fact, there is substantial overlap between my water-specific Blue Team report and this essay. (Water is, after all, life.) A few phone calls with Kenny and his recent email further opened the subject. Needless to say, there is overlap.

Honor the Basics: The Shortest History

With the publication of *Silent Spring*, in 1962, the conservation and the public health movements fused. They became the “environmental movement” with its central tenet: we are all connected, webbed, interdependent. This eternal, unequivocal truth remains the foundation.

From interconnectedness emerged, of course, whole systems thinking as all the connected parts feed forward, back, around, under and inside out. Donella Meadows and Stewart Brand popularized Whole Systems.

The “political” problem became how to design and re-design the ways humans organized themselves in order to minimize harm to the planet, families, and future generations. This “re-design” attitude cut across many, perhaps obsolete, political persuasions. Was saving forests a “conservative” act? Was destroying rainforest a neo-liberal act? Are GMOs a problem for both creationists and atheist vegans? Wherever one landed, the “new” idea was the re-design of human organizations, ethics, behavior, and celebrations. The long list of modern design helpers starts with Ghandi and has given birth to many American “re-designers.” Martin Luther King

(spiritual non-violence), Amory Lovins (green industry), Donella Meadows, Andrew Weil (integrative medicine) and Paul Hawken (natural capitalism) come to mind.

The move of the “environmental” to the “sustainability” movement came by connecting place-based actions to places-based actions, meeting globalization with globalization. Japanese fishermen with Minimata disease could inform Objibwa Indians on the Great lakes and a networked environmental health movement could find more support. Yanamamo in Brazil could connect to human rights groups in Washington and find support and power to oppose World Bank funded projects. The stories are myriad. Every scale — workplace, home, neighborhood, region, nation, continent — became nested layers. “Think and act, locally and globally” emerged as the new survival strategy.

Even a green mythopoetic awareness has slowly grown. Earthday is immense and populist, despite the barriers of organized religions, urban isolation from nature, and ingrained cultural habits. New embryonic taboos and celebrations keep popping up.

Perhaps the most amazing fact about the spread of “environmentalism” is that it never militarized. While all the other “isms” of the last half of the 20th century militarized (fascism, communism, authoritarian socialism, tribalism, neo-liberal capitalism), the environmental movement changed citizen’s lives without violence against them. There were many martyrs (Karen Silkwood, Chico Mendez) but no “green movement” actively pursued the death of another human being. Just the opposite. When Julia Butterfly climbed Luna or Greenpeace navigated its boat into the A-bomb testing zone, they put their own lives up for grabs. They did not attack any other human or living creature.

So, after forty years, Green Teams honor these basics: interconnectedness, whole systems and compassionate design, globallocal networks, future generations, an emergent mythopoetics, and non-violence. Any more?

What do we want? What do we know? What will we accept?

Green Teams, on a practical level, ask three questions: What do we want (dream or love) in any particular situation? What do we know about how humans organize themselves now to deal with the harms to themselves and the Earth? And, what will we accept as the future organization?

What do we want? The dream.

“What do we want?” seems simple, but isn’t. Most citizens think immediately in terms of strategy, compromise and “realistic solutions.” Others are New Age vague. One great aspect of Bioneers has been to open up citizen imagination and help reveal true passions, even if the dream is impossible. What happens, in this opening process, is that the goals may shift.

For instance, instead of fighting to save a specific salmon stream, the citizen group may understand the need to regulate fish farming and require “wild” vs. “farmed” salmon labeling. Instead of fighting one law, a Washington group may decide to go after all perverse subsidies (the “Green Scissors” movement) as a way to address a more fundamental difficulty with

Congressional bills. Or, instead of stopping an outfall pipe, the goal may become a zero-discharge total-recycling system to create a green belt around a town. Sometimes, one hopes rarely, when the impossibility of manifesting any part of a dream becomes apparent, a damage-control strategy can replace it.

The “dreaming” role of a Green Team can be the most important moment in a conflict as it sets out the best results possible, expresses the deep heart, and avoids confusions between the participants. Obviously, the earlier it can take place and with as many of the players as possible, the better the chances of attaining the dream.

The Great Dream? The Conservation Economy.

Here is perhaps the Great Dream — an economics respectful of the Earth. It is currently called “sustainability” and has been greenwashed, watered-down and distorted — a good indication that “sustainability” is a dangerous and powerful idea. I prefer Paul Hawken’s “restorative economy” because it includes past sins. I will use “conservation economy” because Ecotrust, more than any other group, has tried to make it work. They deserve the practical credit.

E.F. Schumacher, Paul Hawken, Herman Daley, Next Step and others have laid the groundwork for the conservation economy. Ecotrust’s theoretician and heroine of the “conservation economy” is Jane Jacobs. Here is the dream:

1. Minimal materials and elements extracted from the Earth’s oceans and crusts; employed so that they are metabolically harmless to our bodies and nondisruptive to ecological cycles.
2. No new synthetic molecules added to the planet’s cycles unless the planet can render them harmless before they harm humans and other creatures.
3. No human actions that reduce photosynthesis, soil fertility, species diversity nor destroy ecological governing structures such as watersheds, the ozone layer, and aquifers.
4. Fair and enviro-friendly consumption and trade (commerce) of the planet’s material resources.
5. Redesigned human organizations (industrial, familial, government, tribal, religious) to achieve these goals and restore previous damage.
6. A culture that celebrates a sustainable world.

Ecotrust

Ecotrust is a bit over a decade old, an organization dedicated to organizing a conservation economy. Because “conservation-based development” can hardly be called a sexy slogan, Ecotrust prefers to call its project “The Salmon Nation.” The ensign neatly combines human, ecological (“natural”) and financial capital and management into the bioregion’s totemic fish.

Ecotrust has a staff of 35 and has entered four economic arenas (forestry, fisheries, food and farms, and various native American enterprises). It has mapped a “sustainable food region” and set goals to reduce imports. Ecotrust has a central project of promoting wild salmon (vs. farmed salmon) as the best tool for its conservation economy: to have wild salmon is to have intact watersheds and to sustain local fishermen. Even as allowed catches have fallen, farmed fish have grabbed market share, and fishermen have lost their sole means of support, Ecotrust has done stunning work re-organizing the fisheries economy.

Ecotrust has started a “Natural Capital Fund” whose \$20 million endowment invests only in conservation-economy businesses and institutions. Ecotrust’s dream is that the “interest” on both its financial capital and natural capital (fish, logs, soil) can become the foundation of a sustainable economics. It has restored a building in downtown Portland with “green-screened” retail shops, private, non-profit and government offices as well as facilities to celebrate the Salmon Nation.

Ecotrust has strong links to an alternative banking system featuring Shorebank Pacific (a bank that “greenlines” its loans and receives EcoDeposits). Shorebank loans now equal 39% of its portfolio (\$22 million) and EcoDeposits equal 52% of its income (\$57 million and 2,000 investors). Ecotrust also works with Shorebank Enterprise, a green venture capital firm with \$12 million invested in 159 small businesses.

Since Ecotrust began as a bioregional group centered on temperate rainforest, it includes parts of Canada. It umbrellas Ecotrust Canada with a staff of 20 and \$3 million USD for work in sustainable fisheries, logging, farming and native American economic development. I happened to be in the Kitlope with Ecotrust when the BC government returned to the Haisla people control of a huge riverine system with five species of salmon, an intact ancient forest system, and one of the few inland populations of seal. In other words, Ecotrust writ large is a bi-national, bioregional shadow government and economic development agency. Recently, it has begun to spread south to include the other salmonid rivers (which go all the way to Baja).

Ecotrust is a Green Team that consults, educates and “convenes” supported by lots of philanthropic capital. Its consulting services include GIS mapping services, bioregional news, education and a host of websites. Spencer Beebe, its founder and President, emphasizes the need to develop local leadership as the heart of this on-going project. Ecotrust has a Citizenship program to make sure that new leadership emerges.

No other project like Ecotrust exists, in part because the renewable “commodities” of fish, logs, and soils are so rich in the Salmon Nation that a conservation-based economy appears more feasible. But, can we dream of a Buffalo Nation in the Great Plains? An Alligator Nation in Florida? A Rainbow Nation in the arid southwest (a land more commonly known for cotton, cattle, copper, snowbirds, wetbacks, imported water, and war-machine economics)? Is the temperate humid coastal northwest unique? Or, can we dream of a custom-designed approach to a conservation economy in other regions? And who will dream it for each region?

What do we know? The strategies.

Ecotrust is about designing a future. But, citizens sometimes cannot afford or find the time to build “shadow governance.” The dream reminds activists why they are involved. The strategic desire intends to make dreams a reality. It is tough-minded, sometimes shorter-term, and can be ideological (ideals plus power).

Here is what little I know of strategies for a conservation economy. They range from one shot to forever actions. The outline has helped me see the role of any particular struggle in the bigger picture of what was going on, what human organization best fits the situation, and who a Green Team should include. The “field guide” to contested arenas includes:

Stop!
Stop with an Alternative!
Alter, Modify or Re-design an On-going project!
Design a Future!
Offset!
Nurture the culture!
STOP!

The least messy intervention simply wants to stop an obviously harmful event from happening. Stop-strategies are an odd form of “precautionary principle.” Preventing something harmful from happening makes it less costly to deal with in the future. If stopped, there is little need to pay restoration, medical, legal or clean-up bills. The Green Stop Teams must be front-line warriors and choose their tools carefully (see below). Sometimes, if one wins, there is a need to be sure the proposal will not emerge again soon.

Follow-up makes a repeat more difficult. We have all been involved in stop-projects. There have been numerous wins such as the Peripheral Canal or the recent stop of water export from the Albion/Gualala. In the next five years, stop-strategies may be central stage. ANWAR is typical. Stopping bills to gut the Endangered Species Act, stopping naval testing with high sonar impacts on whales, stopping all kinds of waivers such as the waiver for ag biz that allows it to continue using methyl bromide (a highly toxic persistent pollutant), and stopping subsidies for coalbed methane extraction are just a few. The Green STOP Teams here will include expert investigators needed to create doubt, Washington/local networks, perhaps legal bulldogs, media savvy, and fast targeted financing.

STOP WITH THE NEED FOR AN ALTERNATIVE!

This is a messier intervention that can take a longer commitment of time and resources. Follow-up can last for five years or, in cases of air and water clean-up or toxin related diseases, many more. The “win” means both stopping a harmful project (preventing harm) AND attracting support to a better alternative. While the stop-strategy is a more brutal win (or lose), a good alternative can engender warm and fuzzy, if imperfect, win-win feelings.

A Green Team is very important in finding and presenting alternatives to the proposed project. The teams can also help to deliver the message that the alternative is preferable. The invention

and knowledge of new social-fix “tools” or techno-tools can be crucial (see below). In corporate life, the alternatives may have to be gently introduced in “scenarios;” in government through NEPA and similar state laws; in labor under the umbrella of environmental health and safety.

Participation early in the process is crucial. Many alternatives have been rejected for showing up too late in the process. From my experience, these controversies require a strong and permanent regional grassroots group. “Shame” politics and the media can be crucial: Why didn’t you guys think of the better alternative?

ALTER OR MODIFY AN ON-GOING PROJECT!

The Green Team and its clients may want to stop one piece of an on-going project but they understand that this overall project has a long existence, usually well over fifty years. Almost all river and air basin disputes fall into this category. In many nations, the on-going project includes women’s reproductive health, household income, and family planning. On-going projects all require generations of activists, large grassroots groups to balance out bureaucracies and wolfish consulting firms, usually complicated legal issues, and eternal vigilance. They always conclude with partial victories and the need to train new leadership for the next round.

Many on-going projects are places-based and multi-national. Any vision of a conservation-economy for the Colorado River, the Great Lakes and Rio Grande River regions; migratory bird conservation and recovery; acid rain and air-borne POPs reductions; and governing the world’s supply of wood products must become globalocal. On-going projects include trade rules, labor mobility, refugee movements, invasive species, and the use and abuse of genetically modified organisms.

DESIGN A FUTURE.

The politics of “future design” focuses on a re-visioning of the physical and biological structures of place, and changing working rules.

Future designs concentrate, almost all the time, on restoration, reconstruction, and rehabilitation of watersheds, decaying or over-burdened urban infrastructure, and financial, economic and cultural networks. Ecotrust has been our best design example because it is so multi-leveled, working on infrastructure (its Portland building), Ecostructure (watersheds for maximum salmon), financial (Shorebank), and cultural (Native American and Citizenship) dimensions. Its future design as a “shadow government” for a conservation economy is most ambitious. For the Salmon Nation, Green Teams are essentially advisory.

Rarely, one gets the opportunity to design or plan one crucial piece of infrastructure from the start. In Bolinas’ California, the defeat of a high-tech sewage treatment plant that would sit on the San Andreas Fault allowed the town government to design a zero-discharge sewage-sanctuary that became the central piece in the towns’ green belt. In the southwest, *all* new subdivisions could be green future design targets to conserve water and exploit sunlight.

In any case, the Green Team focuses on the essential governing infrastructure and ecostructure for future generations. Recent examples of “new” green designs include the Everglades rehab

projects, dam removals, the Battery City Park green sky-scraper, and new policies of hospitals to do-no-harm. In New York City, future water treatment plants have been replaced by an ecostructural solution (see below).

The Green Teams for future design come from every imaginable job description and walk of life. This is the power of the conservation economy

“Future design” Green Teams are quite a different sort than the “Stop!” squad. They must be very pro-active and, if intervention occurs early enough, there is usually room to be very creative. They must not have “one tool” in the toolkit but be honest and see which infrastructure or policy works best for the community’s long-term dream. Once in place, the project goes back to locals and restoration firms to complete.

In theory, funds should be available for Green Team follow-up. Green Teams usually need to continue to “monitor” (as designs change during construction) and to keep locals in touch with the “outside experts.” I have seen too many excellent projects disappear in the doing. In short, the Green Team helps locals “test” out designs by “adaptive management.”

The other approach to designing a future is: change the working rules of how humans operate. This is a focus both on place-based laws, ordinances and regulations as well as state, federal and global laws that can change human behavior. The Green Team looks for incentives (bottle deposits) and disincentives (fines for polluting). Many times, ending “perverse incentives” (subsidies for pesticide-based cotton or oil exploration) can be most effective.

The Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act all imposed federal rules with disincentives that changed how humans organize themselves and their goals. The invention of private sector “water trust” law in Oregon that parallel “land trusts” is changing the Pacific Northwest. The use of the public trust doctrine in Mono Lake and Hawaii changed watershed governance.

The Green Team and a local or places-based consortium seek the best “test case” to change the rules.

OFFSET!

We all understand that some “developments” will destroy parts of a watershed or physically harm citizens. Many, many have already occurred. The only path to “success” is to offset the harm by protecting some other area or process or, in the case of health harms from pollutants, working for financial compensation and support groups. Offsets can be scams. A most unsuccessful example has been the trucking of salmon fry around dams on the Columbia River. A controversial “offset” is the wetlands compensation acts of the Army Corps. On the other hand, a great “offset” has been the purchase of old railroad yards in the LA basin to act as flood control areas and parks. Asbestos and tobacco compensation are poor offsets compared to good health.

Like the “Stop!” projects, these interventions can be quick (less than a year or three). A Green Team can help bargain hard and, with expertise, obtain the best offset.

NURTURE A NEW CULTURE!

The conservation economy is based on a new ethics and the revival of specific old ethics. It is, to a large extent, a spiritual labor of Earth healing, including all families of humans and other species. One hopes that in a few generations, certain laws like recycling will be unnecessary because most everyone just does it. This is the moment a “law” becomes a “taboo.” It moves from outside governance to self-governance. Similarly, tourism to national hot spots like Yellowstone or Yosemite may become more like pilgrimage, a new “secular” excursion to celebrate nature. Mt. Fuji may be the future.

If this transformation will take place, it will not be by magic alone. There are many musicians, writers, poets, videographers, judges, dancers, small entrepreneurs, singers, preachers, filmmakers, school teachers, corporate leaders, journalists, et al who participate, to one degree or another, in these spiritual labors. Indeed, still another event of the 1986/87 environmental burst, was the first meeting of all the major organized religions in Assisi to discuss the pain and suffering on and of the planet and the human need to re-focus their spiritual efforts.

The spiritual transformation is deep but not easy. Science and the environmental movement have generated lots of confusion. In many hearts, for instance, abortion is connected to when the embryo gains a soul; “choice” is not spiritually trivial to families who believe in souls and reincarnation. Similarly, the consumption of genetically modified foods runs contrary to many food taboos which caution against mixing frogs with tomatoes.

Green Teams could be formed for areas where green concern and religious exuberance overlap. Tabling at Grateful Dead Concerts, Evangelists for the Endangered Species Act, Rabbis for the Redwoods, and National Religious Partnership for the Environment are tiny, tiny beginnings.

What do we know? The strategic questions.

With enough funding, a group wants to try all strategic paths because, in politics, it is impossible to predict which leverage point will be most effective. The group may also want to test as many “tools” (both social and techno-fixes) as possible to be most effective.

In order to “cover the bases,” a Green Team citizen’s “manual” starts with a series of strategic inquiries about the project:

1. Can skepticism or counter-truth be created? Question authority.
2. Can we find the cash flow leverage points? Costs may be more persuasive.
3. Can we find the crucial decision points — electoral or bureaucratic? If there are none, can we invent new ones by such actions as recall votes, petitions or personal lobbying (Do we know someone?)? Can we switch the level of decision-making to another, more favorable, level of government? To another agency?
4. Is a legal strategy profitable? Can we “invent” a new decision point (a suit and a judge) that will help?
5. Is there a potential for new precedents? In other words, is the conflict embedded in unique circumstances or can it set a new precedent? The larger context may bring in addition funding and networking.

6. Will a human or humans with charisma and/or a celebratory animal totem rally support? Attract the media? How do we celebrate our work?

Note: Green Team information does not change decision-making. Votes, cash and judges (sometimes the coupling of non-violent protests and media) are more powerful. Facts are useful to public servants when they have to make a case for their decision. They like to justify it with facts. But, the decision is, more often than not, based on other considerations (e.g., my constituency wants this, the law says that, my supporters have offered campaign dollars). When we ask “What do we know?” we also ask “What kind of information does the decision maker need?” We ask: What information is powerful and has strategic advantage? is more valuable than data?

What do we know? Tools.

Obviously, there are too many kinds of unjust situations to lay out a universal toolkit of social or techno-fixes. The Blue Teams report gives actual tools (aquifer protection, conservation, in-stream flows) because of its narrower scope. Green Teams (and the Bioneers) is very big. It can find techno- and social tools in any of the following strands of the conservation economy:

- Health and longevity (environmental health and ecological medicine)
- The greening of industry: the production chain (harvest, transport, manufacture, assembly, distribution)
- The greening of industry: the post-consumptive “reverse” chain (recycling, repairing, buy-backs)
- The spiritual labor of Earth healing (consuming less, volunteering more, restoration, inventing or reviving celebration)
- The global/local commons and common property resources (water, minerals, energy, farming, logging, fishing, restoration)
- Money and no-harm monetary and financial organization (investment, banking, insurance)
- Family planning, women’s reproductive health, and population management
- Environmentalism, the “best” science, and risk assessment
- Environmentalism and “most appropriate” technology
- Delivering the message (media, infotech, and informal networks)

Here are some tools to think on:

An Early Warning System is a tool with two prongs. First, the longer term EWS need. The “green” movement in the 1960s and 1970s hardly noticed the rise of globalization. In hindsight, it would have been easier to help the design or limit globalization, then fight a rear guard action.

Second, an EWS can be crucial in national, regional or local arenas. The “Stop” strategy seems most important over the next few years on the national level as Congress and present administration subvert rule after rule and law after law. The most fragile laws are the National Environmental Policy Act (the most democratic law in the US), the ESA, the Clean and Air Water Acts. This is the original sense of a Green SWAT Team whose precautionary quarterbacks would address the six strategic questions.

A Skepticism Machine: media coordination with an on-demand Green Team to challenge many of the projects, subsidies and actions by business and government. A place mainstream media can go for “talking heads” and “dueling experts.” Also, a source for news now lost.

Think Tank: Michael Lerner (of Commonweal) has expressed a need for *think tanks*, parallel to the neo-con think tanks that framed the present times and, in some sense, similar to the Wuppertal Institute in Germany. They could address issues like perverse subsidies and the conservation economy, the importance of ecological medicine to Medicare/Medicaid programs, how to move unionized labor to accept political finance reform, or how to prevent “riders” on extraneous Congressional bills. They might also choose which legal fights would do the most to set a “conservation economy” precedent.

Bioneers could be a place for grander longer-term workshops on the conservation economy, nurturing bioregional think tanks for the Buffalo nation, Salmon nation, etc. A hard-nosed Green Team with help from green Dutch and German planners could guide them to keep the conservation economics very real.

A program for electoral leadership. Following my own experience as an elected official and Ecotrust’s Citizenship program, a “toolkit” or “school” on power and strategies would help bring on a new generation of local and regional leaders in business, government, and labor.

An on-line “*Rolodex*” of acceptable consulting firms, lawyers, media contacts, bioengineers, public health specialists, speakers and preachers, is a massive tool that needs discussion. It should be cross-referenced by “topic.” For instance, the Gaia Institute in NYC fought proposed water treatment plants and worked for the “new tool” which was purchasing easements in the Big Apple’s watersheds. Ecostructure replaced infrastructure. The watershed soils provided cheaper treatment services. Without a “rolodex,” few people would be able to profit from their experience. The Rolodex becomes one source for Green Team members and speeds response. A further elaboration would be a globalocal index that connects groups with similar conflicts (Taiwan plastics in Texas) more quickly.

Alternative Building Code. Though attempted many times, there is still no *Alternative Building Code* book for local governments and developers to change building codes and work toward a conservation economy. A Green Team might write a rival Building Code with model ordinances that includes regional environmental benefits and hazards (earthquakes, solar radiation, tornadoes, ample rain) and insurance companies that would lower rates, if code was adopted. If this Green Team could find local leadership to push the new standards, it would cause a stir.

What will we accept?

What we will accept depends on the “we.” Citizen commitment ranges from outlaw (spiking trees) to non-violent protest (chaining oneself to a tree or bulldozer) to more mainstream actions (electing sympathetic officials, contributing to NGOs, suing) to creating long-term political shadow governments like Ecotrust.

Except platitudes like “round up the activists and experts in a timely manner and find the right moment to inject financial support,” the number and kinds of actions are too diverse to

generalize. Nevertheless, there is a checklist of questions that can make for more effective action:

Who should be part of the Green Team decision-making? Can we afford “nightmare coalitions” of groups who we disagree with on other issues?

What information must be shared and what cards are best kept close to the chest? (Conference calls are superior to email dialog.)

What actions can we compromise on and under what circumstances? Even if members disagree on the list, can they work together or as separate players in the political theatre?

Part of the strategy is for each individual to decide what he/she will accept. Then, the group, perhaps with Green Team help, can map out a strategy of political theatre. Everyone stays together until various points. Some drop out after the lawsuit is lost; others stay on for non-violent protest. There is no judgment here. A fun party, every so often, helps — no citizens should ever feel left out. In fact, it is good to have a spectrum with some group or individuals assuming the “mainstream” role and others the “diplomatic” as opposed to the “radical” roles. If the teamwork is a coordinated strategy, it should be more or less quiet. In the poker game of politics, you do not want the opposition to know when you will bow out.

Now Let’s Start Talking

Bioneers will clarify what roles beyond media, public education, and celebration, it might want to nurture (its role is huge enough). It is experimenting with farm-and-foods, targeted grants and the unreasonable women campaign. This green Teams paper has been an organizational feeler. Are Green Teams best left to emerge with each dilemma? Would a more deliberate and conscious strategy to build Green Teams — from “in the trenches” activists to think tanks to conservation economy governors — help influence more equity, economic efficiency and ecological integrity?