

WWS 594p
Understanding Environmental Campaigns: Strategies and Tactics
Wednesdays 7:00 – 10pm
Course Syllabus Spring 2008 Session II

Lecturer: Michael Northrop mnorthrop@rbf.org

Overview

This is a course about the strategies and tactics used in successful environmental campaigns, taught from a practitioner's perspective. Though this topic is neither well documented nor regularly taught, there is a tactical toolkit that can be learned. Most campaigners learn on the job. For those students interested in pursuing careers in policy making and advocacy, this course is designed to be one that can jumpstart professional development. In a fashion comparable to the case study method offered in business schools, the course examines campaigns, all from the past ten years, and seeks to discern lessons for best practice. No single campaign is the same, and strategies and tactics are always evolving, but there are core lessons about campaigns that can be drawn from all of the examples we will look at in class. The case topics examined in class are campaigns that protected Alaska's old-growth rainforests, conserved the Pine Barrens Watershed in Eastern Long Island, encouraged Home Depot's decision to buy only sustainably managed forest products, pushed Walmart to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of its operations and products; encouraged consumers to stop eating Swordfish until fish stocks could recover, and stopped "Regulatory Reform" in the U.S. Congress. Campaigners who led each of these David versus Goliath efforts will join us for class. We will examine each case, pull out lessons learned, and by the end of the course formulate a practical understanding of campaign strategies and tactics. Lessons from this class are applicable to any public interest campaign.

Structure

This course is being taught during Session II of the Spring semester on Wednesday evenings. Course readings, attendance, and active participation in seminar classes are a must. All students will be required to write a memo summarizing lessons from the seminar classes and readings. There is also a short paper option for anyone who would like to examine a campaign we do not discuss in class.

Lecturer

This course will be taught by Michael Northrop, who directs the sustainable development grantmaking program at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. The RBF is a private philanthropic foundation in New York City started by members of the Rockefeller family in 1940. Northrop has taught this course at Yale's Forestry and Environmental Studies School since 1999. Northrop bases the course on professional experience he and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund have gained analyzing and supporting environmental campaigns during the past decade.

Texts and Readings

The following books are required reading and will be available at the bookstore:

Bury The Chains, Adam Hochschild, Houghton Mifflin

Toxic Sludge is Good For You, John C. Stauber, Common Courage Press

Song of the Blue Ocean: Encounters Along the World's Coasts and Beneath the Sea, Carl Safina, Owl Books

No Logo, Naomi Klein

Additional readings will be distributed in class. Optional readings are marked below. Students are also expected to do their own web scan of each campaign and of related organizations before coming to class.

Schedule

March 26. Regulatory Reform.

When the 104th Congress arrived in Washington in January 1995 led by Newt Gingrich, it came with a strong anti-environmental agenda. One of its chief aims and earliest initiatives was rolling back environmental regulations. In response, several environmental organizations launched a spirited defensive campaign that ultimately prevailed. In class, we will examine how conservation interests, taking advantage of innovations in media and grassroots organizing, succeeded in blocking these roll backs. Clapp will also present a history of legislative campaigning in Washington, D.C.

Required Reading:

Bury The Chains, Adam Hochschild, Houghton Mifflin, 2005. If you haven't completed this by the first week of class, please finish it by the second week.

Guest Speaker:

Phil Clapp, President, National Environmental Trust

April 2. Conserving Alaska's Coastal Temperate Rainforest: The Alaska Rainforest Campaign.

In the wake of the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska's Prince William Sound, Exxon was asked to contribute \$1 billion to support conservation in the spill-affected area. A coalition of environmental groups working in Alaska and in Washington D.C., came together to advocate that this money be used to protect hundreds of thousands of acres of old growth temperate rainforest in Southeast Alaska. This coalition then seized other opportunities during the following decade to conserve millions of additional acres of forest land using a series of creative tactics. The coalition continues today to use a blend of state-based and

Washington D.C.-based political, media and grassroots strategies. In addition to conserving lands, this campaign also successfully closed two huge sawmills in Southeast Alaska, thus facilitating efforts to develop more sustainable local economies. In Alaska, success at achieving environmental goals has always depended on an unusual mix of Alaska and nationally-based advocacy, grassroots and capital city organizing, and local and national media, all working in a coordinated manner. During the past decade, these strategies were brought to bear in a particularly effective manner.

Required Readings:

The Art of Building A Coalition Campaign, Tom Wathen, National Environmental Trust, 1999

Deforestation in Alaska's Coastal Temperate Rainforest, Causes and Solutions, Rick Steiner, University of Alaska, Oct 1998.

Suggested Additional Reading:

The Ancient Forest, an article by Catherine Caufield, *New Yorker Magazine*.

Guest Speaker:

Steve Kallick, Executive Director of the Boreal Conservation Campaign, former Executive Director of the Alaska Rainforest Campaign

April 9. Protecting Long Island's Drinking Water: Conserving The Long Island Pine Barrens.

The Long Island Pine Barrens is a 100,000 acre tract of dwarf pine forest sitting atop Long Island's most important aquifer. It was successfully protected through the efforts of a small non-profit organization called the Long Island Pine Barrens Society. Despite the opposition of local business interests, elected officials, and Long Island's major daily, *Newsday*, the organization's executive director, Richard Amper, successfully made conserving the Pine Barrens a priority concern for a majority of Long Island residents through the relentless use of his own advertising and media skills. Along the way, he helped design an innovative transfer-of-development-rights-bank that protected landowner interests. This is a local story, not widely known, but one that is informative about a highly effective way of doing non-profit advocacy. One issue that arises from this week's examination of the Long Island Pine Barrens case concerns the appropriate set of skills needed by any organization that seeks to garner public interest and support.

Required Readings:

Toxic Sludge is Good For You, John C. Stauber, Common Courage Press.

How a Small Group of Environmentalists Beat Big Buck Builders and Saved the Pine Barrens, Richard Amper, (unpublished draft manuscript).

Selected News Clippings.

Guest Speaker:

Richard Amper, Executive Director, The Long Island Pine Barrens Society

**April 16. Building Consumer Demand for Sustainable Fish Products:
Give Swordfish A Break Campaign & The Consumer Choice Campaign.**

Marine resources are out of sight and therefore largely out of mind for the general public. The collapse of marine fisheries worldwide does not stir much public interest. A small but active marine advocacy community has made a difference but is not nearly as developed as the forest advocacy community. During the past few years, new efforts have been launched to build consumer demand for sustainably managed fish products. The *Give Swordfish a Break Campaign*, launched by SeaWeb in 1998, has been a successful model for other species-specific marine protection campaigns designed to influence fishery management practices. Following up on the success in the Swordfish Campaign, SeaWeb began its Consumer Choice Campaign to encourage broadscale consumer demand for sustainable fish products. Both efforts seek to harness consumer demand to reform fishery management practices.

Required Readings:

Chapter 2, *Song of the Blue Ocean: Encounters Along the World's Coasts and Beneath the Sea*, Carl Safina, Owl Books.

Suggested Additional Reading:

The Eye of the Albatross: Visions of Hope and Survival, Carl Safina, Owl Books.

Guest Speaker:

Vikki Spruill, Executive Director, The Ocean Conservancy

April 23. Building Consumer Demand for Sustainably Managed Forest Products: The Home Depot Campaign.

For several decades, forest advocates have focused their campaigns on Congress and other legislative and regulatory bodies in their efforts to conserve forests. In recent years, some of the most successful forest conservation organizations turned their sights to the marketplace and consumers, especially large corporate consumers, to encourage them to use their purchasing power in the market place to change management practices in the forest. These so called "markets campaigns" have been enormously successful. As a result, large companies such as Home Depot are now helping forest advocates protect millions of acres of forest lands. In August of 1999, Home Depot announced it would no longer buy

forest products from endangered forest regions and that it would preference wood products from sustainably managed forests. This announcement and Home Depot's subsequent actions are driving significant reform by industrial forest companies in the U.S. and elsewhere. During this class week, we will explore the decision by Home Depot to change its wood purchasing policies as well as the tactics forest conservation organizations used to drive this decision. Michael Marx, who led the Home Depot campaign as head of the Coastal Rainforest Campaign (subsequently known as Forest Ethics), later created the Business Ethics Network. Marx has been engaged in several other markets campaigns, most recently one targeting Walmart, which he will also discuss in class.

Required Readings:

No Logo, Naomi Klein

Guest Speaker: Michael Marx, Executive Director, Business Ethics Network

April 30. Summing Up.

At this last class, summary memos will be due on the lessons you have learned from class lectures, discussions, and readings. We will spend the first part of class talking about your memos and your ideas and questions. In the second part of class we will design a campaign based on what we've learned.