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**Review: Deep Environmental Politics: The Role of Radical Environmentalism in Crafting American Environmental Policy**

By Phillip F. Cramer

Reviewed by [Dale A. Stirling](#)  
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Cramer, Phillip F. *Deep Environmental Politics: The Role of Radical Environmentalism in Crafting American Environmental Policy*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1998. 239p. Tables. Index. Cloth: US\$24.95. ISBN: 0-275-96051-X.

Spiked trees. Crossing the bow of whale hunting boats. Hanging banners from high-rise office buildings. These are the media-based images that much of the public perceives as fact when radical environmentalism makes a move. However, there is more to the radical environmentalism movement than these images suggest. Fortunately, Phillip Cramer has written an in-depth and well-conceived overview of deep ecology, radical environmentalism, and its impact on the crafting of environmental law and regulation.

The book is organized into three parts. Part one, "Background on Deep Ecology," examines the tenets, roots, rhetoric, and tactics of deep ecology. Appropriately, Cramer begins the book by quoting Norwegian ecophilosopher Arne Naess who coined the phrase "deep ecology," and Naess' and George Sessions' *Deep Ecology's Basic Principles* which was published in 1984. He then describes eight tenets of deep ecology. Cramer's discussion of deep ecology's roots covers ground trod by many environmental historians over the past two decades--the inclusion of Thoreau, Emerson, Muir, Pinchot and others is appropriate but quite familiar. Perhaps the most interesting part of Part One is the chapter on deep ecology's rhetoric and tactics. Cramer bases much of the chapter on the writings found in *Earth First Journal*. One might wish for more primary sources, but the journal *is* the voice of the movement and Cramer incorporates the information with judicious care.

Part two, "Deep Ecology and Politics," examines the relationship between deep ecology and politics by focusing on environmental law and regulation. Phillips pays particular attention to the process of congressional testimony. He uses the recent 104<sup>th</sup> Congress and Vice President Gore as an example of this relationship. A good general overview of important environmental legislation is included in Part Two,

including the Clean Air Act, Wilderness Act, National Environmental Protection Act, Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act. Interestingly, the author statistically analyzed congressional testimony offered between July 1993 and June 1996 for keywords that characterized environmentally related testimony. He found that little changed in the overall outlook of those testifying before Congress. On the other hand, a trend for supporting high-tech solutions and centralized control to solve environmental issues became apparent. In writing about deep ecology and the legal system, Cramer uses well-known court cases and a review of 52 law articles commenting on deep ecology issues to illustrate his point that "deep ecology, on the whole, has yet to penetrate the legal system (p.173)."

Part three, "Deep Ecology and the Media," examines how the various media have covered deep ecology over time. Cramer notes both negative and positive coverage of deep ecology and uses the recent Unabomber case as an example. He also includes commentary on the different media used to highlight deep ecology—scientific magazines, popular newsmagazines, and national newspapers. To quantify the relationship between deep ecology and the media, the author conducted a statistical analysis of some 400 articles and transcripts appearing in the Nexis database that contained the "deep ecology" phrase or its equivalent. He found great differences in regional coverage and concludes "there is a discernable trend toward greater negativity in reporting, with a majority of all articles on the subject hurting, rather than helping, the deep ecological movement (p. 215)." Cramer also includes a selected bibliography that works as a basic reading list on this most interesting topic of late twentieth century environmental politics.

This book provides a well-balanced overview of the development of deep ecology and radical environmentalism. It could be useful required reading in many environmental history courses. The one oversight by Cramer was not including use of the Internet by deep ecology, radical environmentalism, environmental policy makers, and the media. Perhaps he will take this important source of information into account should he revisit this topic in the future.

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