

use this information regarding environmental ethics in their teaching.

Wenz makes a clear statement about where he stands on environmental ethics. For example, he says, "The government should also phase out water subsidies and buy only sustainably grown food for the military and for food assistance programs" (p. 266); "How crazy would you have to be to pay for this? Well, American taxpayers are paying to transform petroleum through corn into ethanol for cars" (p. 267); "But this is pure fantasy that soothes the conscience and dulls the mind. Here is where we must criticize globalization" (p. 273); "First, perhaps we should give up membership in the World Trade Organization" (p. 277); and "Yet I am optimistic that eventually we will recognize the harm we do to ourselves and the planet by subsidizing automotive instead of mass transit, just as we came to realize the dangers of smoking cigarettes" (p. 287). As you can see, Wenz does not straddle fences. If you are serious about your role as an environmental educator, you will find this book to be an exciting challenge to read and incorporate into your teaching. Maybe you will even consider the state of the planet to be serious enough to offer students your views about the best ways to approach sustainable ecosystems and treat the world's populations more fairly.

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**F**or more than 10 years, environmental managers and scholars have been advocating for ecosystem-based approaches to natural resource management that address resource issues from a holistic perspective and involve a range of stakeholders in collaborative (rather than confrontational management) decision-making processes. Ecosystem management incorporates technical and traditional knowledge about natural systems and values ecological, economic, and social concerns. Despite the popularity of ecosystem-based approaches, very few processes have been developed to facilitate problem-solving among multiple stakeholders who have diverse and often conflicting interests that are appropriate to the natural resource management context. In *Working Through Environmental Conflict*, Steven E. Daniels and Gregg B. Walker offer collaborative learning (CL) as a practical and flexible process for implementing ecosystem management.

The CL approach is based on theoretical principles from conflict management; adult, experiential, and organizational learning; and systems thinking. The CL process begins with resource managers and key stakeholders who construct a shared conceptual model of the complex systems that they are attempting to manage. In so doing, participants become aware of their interdependence and their need to work collaboratively to improve existing conditions. Once a conceptual model has been developed, participants share their concerns and engage in facilitated discussions to develop ideas for improving management of the situation. CL does not seek resolution of resource management issues; it only seeks improvements on the existing situation. As a result, action strate-

gies can be developed immediately. One does not have to wait until participants have reached consensus on management goals.

The CL approach is strong because it enables immediate action on complex and contentious resource management issues while respecting and incorporating technical and traditional knowledge, multiple worldviews, and many interests. Daniels and Walker also provide helpful recommendations for facilitating constructive dialogue and accommodating multiple learning styles. Although the initial assessment and training phases of the CL process appear to be rather involved, the situation mapping and deliberation stages (where recommendations for improvements are developed) can be accomplished in a single day-long workshop. Evaluation is also a critical component of CL because participants learn from the outcomes of their recommendations and adjust future decisions accordingly.

The authors acknowledge that they developed the CL approach on the basis of their experiences in the American West, where most resource management issues are played out on public lands, and one or two federal agencies have the ultimate authority for enforcing management decisions. The utility of CL has not been proven in ecosystems that have multiple private property owners, a common situation in the eastern United States. Also, as the authors stress, their approach is only a framework for addressing resource-management conflicts. As with almost any model for resource management, the success of this approach will ultimately depend on the process managers' and participants' skills and key stakeholders' willingness to forgo other strategies and engage in collaborative dialogue.

Daniels and Walker make a significant contribution to the field of ecosystem management by providing a practical and theoretically grounded approach to participatory decision making. Resource managers and environmental educators will find this book a helpful resource for identifying key

concepts and principles of conflict management, systems thinking, and collaborative learning that—if widely adopted—will surely be a great improvement on traditional public-participation strategies. Educators can also use this book to identify the knowledge, skills, and attitudes their students will need to participate effectively in collaborative approaches to ecosystem management in their communities.

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***Invisible Walls: Why We Ignore the Damage We Inflict on the Planet . . . and Ourselves***, by Peter Seidel. 2001. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books. 338 pages. Paperback. \$18.00. ISBN 1-57392-899-2.

**P**eter Seidel, an environmental architect and planner, provides an overview of the United States' and the world's environmental-quality status and "shows why we are not going where we should be" (p. 9). In 12 of the chapters, he convincingly shows the reader why he thinks the environment is in trouble. In the three chapters of part IV, he provides practical suggestions for guiding Americans in the direction of the common good. He clearly sees a serious threat to the United States and the entire global population if we do not change direction and do something to overcome the hard-to-see barriers that block our actions.

Seidel cites five barriers between humans and responsible, sensible action: (a) the results of human evolutionary development in ourselves; (b) concepts of individuals' reality and of their place in it; (c) individuals' beliefs; (d) the makeup of social structures; and (e) ethical systems that do not foster harmony (p. 25). One of Seidel's purposes in writing *Invisible Walls* was to stimulate awareness and interest in the state of the world's ecosystems, but he also calls for immediate action.

*Invisible Walls* is organized in four parts: "Our Ancient Brain," "Our Modern Society," "Our Organizations," and "Solutions." In all 15 chapters, Seidel carefully outlines the problems and solutions as he sees them. He liberally quotes from a variety of authorities on the human condition (including Kenneth Boulding, Ortega y Gasset, Thomas Berry, Albert Einstein, Erich Fromm, Jonas Salk, and Ervin Laszlo), and does not hesitate to offer his opinions on an array of environmental issues. Because Seidel is not from the field of education, he can potentially expose many environmental educators to a different set of thoughts and readings. After finishing this book, readers will know many of his beliefs, attitudes, and values as they relate to current ways of dealing with environmental issues. One of his main points with which most teachers will agree is that "presenting evidence and developing techniques [to improve the quality of the environment] is futile if they are not used" (p. 24). He urges readers to become aware of their blind spots and take action to overcome them.

As Seidel develops his arguments about why it is difficult to make rapid headway in improving the environment, some readers may become discouraged. Referring to this possibility, he points to the human brain's inherited limitations. "Our inborn emphasis on what is close by leaves us with little interest in the future" (p. 44). He notes, for example, that the United States received its first warnings about the consequences of human contributions to global temperature change in 1896 (p. 46). He also cites the brain's difficulty in thinking ecologically and in linking concepts such as air pollution and urban sprawl. Seidel describes a familiar belief that many environmental educators hold: "Urbanization and prosperity have dulled our awareness of and feeling for the soil" (p. 49). He alerts readers to many other human failings, such as a lack of imagination, difficulty in comprehending complexity, lack of empathy, overrated power of reason, inability to recognize contradictions, trouble balancing risks, over-

confidence, selfishness, jealousy, rationalization, self-deception, ability to ignore unpleasant facts, religious beliefs, slogans and jargon, pursuit of status, and poor communication. All of these accusations ring true to some degree because most readers can easily think of examples in their own and in others' lives in which these human traits exist.

The big question related to American's beliefs about human nature is: Are most people like this, or is there a significant number of people who see their limitations and can overcome these barriers? As Seidel develops evidence for these human barriers to responsible action, he spares few sacred cows. For example, he accuses corporations of damaging communities when he says, "Most of the time, the need to maximize profit determines what is done" (p. 234). He does not think that most politicians are much better; he writes, "We could resolve this problem [a tension between the drive for a higher standard of living for all and environmental limits] fairly, though with great difficulty, but those who can do something about it choose [to] do nothing" (p. 175).

This book has the potential to become an extremely useful guide for curriculum development in environmental education (EE). The reason for the word "potential" is that Seidel gives no clear guidance to teachers regarding how to improve instructional programs. He does state, "Schools are neither able to cope with the social problems they face nor willing to provide the education young people need to function in today's environment" (p. 101). This kind of pessimistic statement and others like it might depress some readers. One ray of hope is that many teachers—because of the noble service they provide to society and their built-in optimism—may be able to fight through their discouragement and find ways to use Seidel's ideas for EE. However, Seidel also makes some questionable statements that require supportive research. For example, "A belief is seldom a conclusion reached after an honest intellectual search" (p. 140); and, although "respect for 'rights,' as we