



## Chapter 24: Politics, Environment, and Sustainability

APES 2013

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## Role of the Government

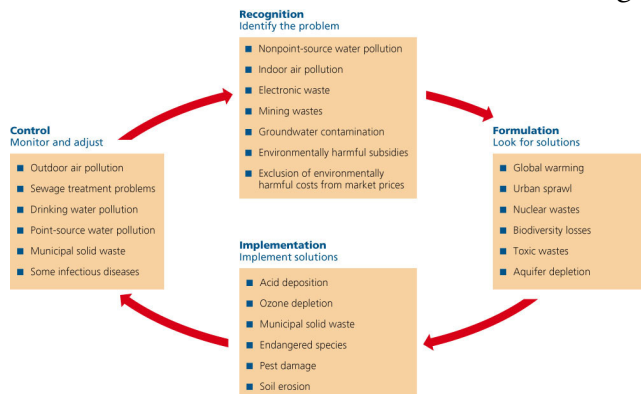
- ❖ Help to strike a balance between government control and free enterprise
- ❖ Governmental Control
  - ❖ Fuel-cost pricing - subsidies and taxes to include environmental costs
  - ❖ Market failures - subsidies and taxes to level the playing field when the market is not operating freely due to unfair advantages to some players
  - ❖ Tragedy of the commons - only power that can preserve common or open access areas (air, groundwater...)

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## Development of Public Policy

❖ Policy life cycle

Fig. 24-2



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# Special Interest Groups

- ❖ Profit-making organizations (corporations)
- ❖ Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)
  - ❖ Usually not for profit (labor organizations, environmental groups)
- ❖ Focus on:
  - ❖ Getting subsidies or tax breaks for their groups
  - ❖ Getting favorable legislation passed
  - ❖ Blocking or weakening unfavorable legislation

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# Principles of Environmental Policy

- ❖ Humanity principle - understanding of nature and how our actions affect nature is limited
- ❖ Reversibility principle - avoid taking actions that cannot be reversed if the decision turns out to be wrong (ex. nuclear power)
- ❖ Precautionary principle - take precautionary measures to reduce harm to human health or the environment even if the cause-and-effect relationships are not fully established
- ❖ Net energy principle - focus on efficient, high energy yielding technologies
- ❖ Prevention principle - make decisions that prevent a problem from occurring or becoming worse
- ❖ Polluter-pays principle - develop tools (like taxes) to ensure those who pollute end up paying for the disposal and environmental costs
- ❖ Public access and participation principle - allow citizen access to environmental data and allow them to participate in the political process
- ❖ Human rights principle - all humans have the right to live in an environment that does not harm their health and well being
- ❖ Environmental justice principle - no group of people should bear an unfair burden

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# United States Model of Democracy

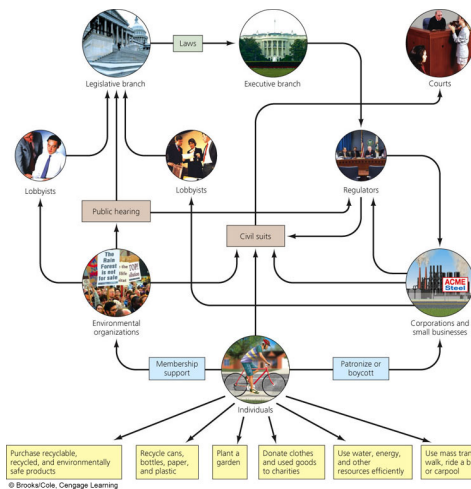


Fig. 24-3

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## Major Environmental Laws and Amendments

1969	National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
1970	Clean Air Act
1971	Clean Water Act; Coastal Zone Management Act;
1972	Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act; Marine Mammal Protection Act
1973	Endangered Species Act
1974	Safe Drinking Water Act
1975	
1976	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA); Toxic Substances Control Act; National Forest Management Act
1977	Soil and Water Conservation Act; Clean Water Act; Clean Air Act Amendments
1978	National Energy Act
1979	
1980	Superfund law; National Energy Act Amendments; Coastal Zone Management Act Amendments
1981	
1982	Endangered Species Act Amendments
1983	
1984	Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments to RCRA; Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments
1985	Endangered Species Act Amendments
1986	Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization
1987	Clean Water Act Amendments
1988	Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act Amendments; Endangered Species Act Amendments
1989	
1990	Clean Air Act Amendments; Reauthorization of Superfund; Waste Reduction Act
1991	
1992	Energy Policy Act
1993	
1994	
1995	Endangered Species Act Amendments
1996	Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments

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## Managing Public Lands

- ❖ Federal government manages 35% of the nation's land (3/4 is in Alaska)
- ❖ National Forest System - 155 National Forests and 22 National Grasslands (managed by the U.S. Forest Service - USFS)
  - ❖ Used for logging, mining, livestock grazing, farming, oil and gas extraction, recreation, and conservation
- ❖ National Resource Lands (managed by the Bureau of Land Management - BLM)
  - ❖ Used for mining, oil and gas extraction, and livestock grazing
- ❖ National Wildlife Refuges (managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - USFWS)
  - ❖ Protect habitats for water fowl and big game for hunters
  - ❖ Some protect endangered species
  - ❖ Permitted activities: hunting, trapping, fishing, oil and gas development, mining, logging, grazing, military activities, and farming

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## Managing Public Lands

- ❖ National Park System - 58 major parks and 311 national recreation areas, monuments, memorials, battlefields, historic sites, parkways, trails, rivers, seashores, and lakeshores (managed by the National Park System - NPS)
  - ❖ National parks used for camping, hiking, sport fishing, and boating
  - ❖ National recreation areas used for sport hunting, mining, and oil and gas drilling
- ❖ National Wilderness Preservation System (702 roadless areas)
  - ❖ Used for hiking, sport fishing, camping, and non-motorized boating

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## Public Lands

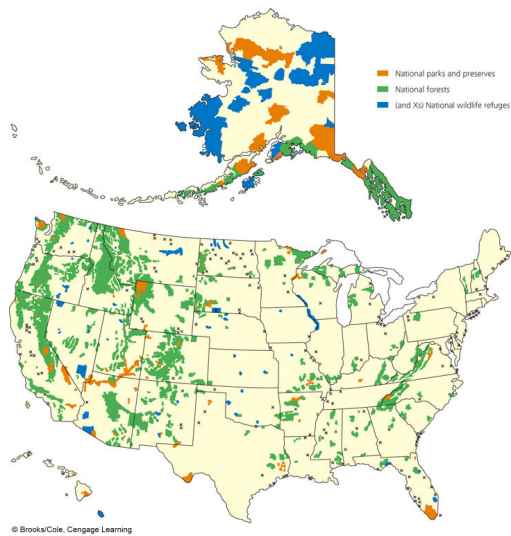


Fig. 24-5

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## Individuals Matter

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

#### Influencing Environmental Policy

- Become informed on issues
- Make your views known at public hearings
- Make your views known to elected representatives, and understand their positions on environmental issues
- Contribute money and time to candidates for office
- Vote
- Run for office (especially at local level)
- Form or join nongovernment organizations (NGOs) seeking change
- Support reform of election campaign financing that reduces undue influence by corporations and wealthy individuals

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## Environmental Law

- ❖ Defines what is acceptable environmental behavior for individuals and groups
  - ❖ Statutory laws - developed and passed by legislative bodies
  - ❖ Administrative laws - rules and regulations, executive orders, and enforcement decisions related to implementation of statutory laws
  - ❖ Common law - unwritten rules and principles derived from thousands of past legal decisions

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## Environmental Lawsuits

- ❖ Difficult to win
- ❖ Plaintiff must establish the legal right (legal standing) to bring the suit
  - ❖ Must prove they have personally suffered health problems or financial losses
- ❖ Lawsuits are very expensive
- ❖ Difficult for public interest attorneys to collect legal fees (corporations can deduct legal expenses)
- ❖ Difficult to definitively prove
- ❖ Statute of limitations
- ❖ Takes years to go through the process
- ❖ SLAPPs - strategic lawsuits against public participation

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## Types of Environmental Laws

- ❖ Set standards for pollution levels
  - ❖ Clean Air Acts, Federal Water Pollution Control Act
- ❖ Screens new substances for safety
  - ❖ Toxic Substances Control Act
- ❖ Encourages Resource Conservation
  - ❖ Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), National Energy Act
- ❖ Sets aside or protects certain species, resources, or ecosystems
  - ❖ Endangered Species Act, Wilderness Act
- ❖ Requires evaluation of the environmental impact of an activity proposed by a federal agency
  - ❖ National Environmental Policy Act

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## National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

- ❖ Requires creation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for any federally funded project that will have an effect on environmental quality
  - ❖ Must describe why the program/project is needed, duration of the program, short and long term environmental benefits and harms, ways to lesson harmful impacts, and an evaluation of alternatives
  - ❖ Document must be published for public comment
- ❖ NEPA does not prohibit environmentally harmful projects, but it does require agencies to take environmental consequences into consideration

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## Attack on Environmental Laws

- ❖ Corporate leaders (see them as threats to profits), citizens (see them as threats to private property rights), state and local government officials (see them as unfunded mandates)
- ❖ Movement to weaken environmental laws began in the 1980s
- ❖ Major attempts to weaken or repeal laws started in the early 2000s
  - ❖ Natural Resources Defense Council found that most organizations are staffed with people who favor weakening them

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## Environmental Groups

- ❖ Nonprofit nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)
  - ❖ Range from grassroots groups to World Wildlife Fund (WWF) with 5 million members in 100 countries
    - ❖ Other large groups: Greenpeace, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, and the Grameen Bank
- ❖ Email, text messages, and the Internet have revolutionized the impact environmental groups

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## Grassroots Organizations

- ❖ Work for many environmental issues
- ❖ After two years of protests, Home Depot agreed to sell only wood products from certified sustainably grown timber (Lowe's eventually joined)
- ❖ After three years of protest, Citigroup (largest bank holding company in the U.S.) agreed to reduce lending to unsustainable industries (caused Bank of America and JP Morgan Chase to get on board as well)

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# Colleges and Universities

- ❖ Students pressure campuses to carry out environmental audits
- ❖ Since 2007, almost 500 university presidents have pledged to add no additional CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to their campuses
- ❖ Pressure officials to build green buildings
- ❖ Pressure to decrease pollution in public transportation

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## Environmental Security

- ❖ Relates to military and economic security
- ❖ Tied in with the impacts of war
- ❖ Many environmental components can be tied to war
- ❖ Need to work as a global community to solve environmental issues



Fig. 24-9

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## International Treaties



Fig. 24-10

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