

SCB meeting – 1/17/2006

Announcements:

Ingrid: Alejandra's visit – full room. Visit w/ Jose from Bolivia. Impressed with turn out. We'll be working with them on collaborative education project. 5 classes, 2 days each at local elementary schools. Bolivian and Californian prospective. We're adding Alejandra to our listserv and Christine Maynard to theirs so we can keep up with each other.

Coffee sales weren't a good fundraiser – broke even, no bids for silent auction items

Bay area conservation biology symposium at SF state Feb. 4

Berkeley has sister chapter in East Africa – are we interested in going to a restaurant after the conference and asking them to donate a portion of their profits from the evening to the sister chapter travel fund

Some members haven't heard about SF State conference – forward to email list

Plenary speakers are good – Dan Simberloff

Rodd: One more oak planting Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> – Putah Creek Reserve – end of oak planting for this year

Related: Helen Thompson, supervisor for Yolo Co. wants to look at how the chapter can get more involved with Yolo Co. conservation in general. She'll be talking at our meeting on the bill she's sponsoring. Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>

Magpie observers – if interested contact Holly Ernest

Katie: Student conservation conference at Duke in March – deadline for abstracts and registration is January 27<sup>th</sup>. Good plenary speakers, the rest is student presentations and posters.

John Gelbard, presentation on Conservation Value(CV) based out of the Bay area:

Got PhD here in 2003, in addition to science also has communications background from Cornell. During time as a grad student was interested in debate over how to promote public awareness of the environment and related political issues. For instance, the media promotes incorrect images.

Frustrations came together during the 2004 election, current events like Katrina and Rita – the importance of a healthy environment. Tsunami – areas with healthy mangrove habitats served as barrier against storm damage. W/out trees to hold the slopes together, Pakistanis died in earthquake landslides.

What do we need to do? Looking at social sciences, market research – what can we do to improve public awareness of the importance of a healthy environment. In America people are selfish and look for their own benefit – altruism isn't marketable. How does the environment benefit everyday Americans?

Read excerpt from “Things of desire – making sustainability sexy” from Grist.org.

The point: “Sustainability is the product differentiator of the near future”

The connection between sexy and sustainable hasn't been made properly – we should want to, be enticed to sustainability.

Access issue: w/in green commerce market – 80% are aware of the benefits of renewable energy, but only ~20% use it. People don't know where to find sustainable resources. People will naturally do what's easier until they have the time to find info on where to purchase sustainable products. There's no centralized place you can go to find sustainable products.

How can a product benefit the consumer? This is what gets people to listen. Gas costs and PGE are increasing. The benefit of renewable energy is that it allows independence from susceptible resources like power – adds economic stability.

Communicating to the concerns and the desires of everyday people – helping them get by.

People have to know what you're talking about for them to understand why it's better. Over and over in public research it comes up that about 40% of the public have an idea that they affect the environment and only 8% understand why certain products are differentiated from others. People generally tend to say that if they knew what to do though, they would do it if it's not too expensive – in most cases they just don't know how.

Conservation Value seeks to meet these needs by putting together a green products and services dtb. It's user created so that a couple of motivated people in a town could visit, and applying hard standards (shade grown coffee, post-consumer recycled paper) products and places can be added to the dtb.

Also provide a forum for people to review green products – many people think green services are of lower quality.

Benefits: Article on greenbiz.com (Joel Makower) – misinformation about green energy is pervasive. Many people think they're imperfect tech.

Rice: How does it happen that the big companies get to the buyer where green products do not? Home depot switched to green wood, for instance.

CV: If you show a company they can make money, they will convert. Strong campaigns and some negative publicity. Duke's school of the environment sent students to Home Depot to work on these kinds of issues.

Molly – it's also survey driven, people agreed they would pay a certain amount for green products

Kevin Rice –

Member – gather info on companies, not just products. GFI came up with sustainability report that's voluntary for companies to use.

CV

Website that lists companies that produces sustainability reports. Triple bottom line – environmental, social and economic.

GE's case – their CEO went for ecoimagination – practical and profitable

Rise of green MBAs, rising list of case studies and knowledge about improving efficiency and decreasing waste.

CV seeks to publicize that. We can help by examining natural resource management – what are people doing as far as practices that are better for the environment and boosting their productivity

Weed management for example – what are ways to manage weeds the reduce pollution and increase crop production and a low cost?

Dtb – product info and environmental benefits of the products, economic benefits

Restrict input of benefits to experts in the fields, through coursework or collaboration with groups like SCB. Could describe in layman's terms.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs to appeal to. Need for self recognition – let companies know they're doing a good thing.

Also letting companies know that consumers will create a market for greener products – foster markets to create demand for greener practices.

Co-op America has a green products dtb but isn't complete for some states and product listings don't have reviews.

Sustainability savings guide – list small changes people can make to save themselves money and help the environment

Replacing lights with compact fluorescents – save around \$250/year

Give people a worksheet to work with. People are looking for ways to save.

Go to rural communities, inner city communities and let them know what they can do to save money.

Energy independence in rural communities – eg freeing America from foreign oil

Rice: Seafood watch tab – effect tool for communicating which fish to eat to people and now they're everywhere. What can this organization provide like that, to connect the decision to the information?

CV - Potentially go for agreements with markets. The idea is that as good products are more available the people who make the bad products will increase their good value because green value will sell. GE as example.

To get information out there will do events, workshops. Musicians are interested in sustainability (Phish, DMB, Santana, Jack Johnson). Will use Headcount network to have educational benefit events.

Get students to staff the tables at festivals and concerts to communicate to general public.

Also use the press. If you're interested in working with CV, there are fun and educational opportunities to use your knowledge of ecology to address what works through tabling.

There are also projects that could contribute to the website, like assembling articles and term papers for classes and explore the implications of your findings that would matter to the general public. Also looking for case studies.

Final points (courtesy of Katie)

Possible projects we could work with Conservation Value on:

- 1) Developing a Best Practices Guide - creating a list/database of scientifically based "best practices" for sustainable practices in different industries, using case studies, scientific literature, etc...
- 2) Writing papers for general audiences (non-scientific) about environmental/conservation stuff - basically working on public communication
- 3) Helping with the Database of Projects and Services - especially adding the environmental, health, and economic benefits portion
- 4) Doing comparisons of different types of standards - e.g. Forest Stewardship Council vs Sustainable Forestry Initiative? and which are actually meaningful, etc...