

Land use ethics

**managing driving forces and searching a
proper response**

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CENTER FOR SOIL AND

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE



Human welfare and natural resources

Human population
Land development
Tourism
Agriculture
Transport
Industry/Energy
Mining
Natural events
Climate change
Water stress

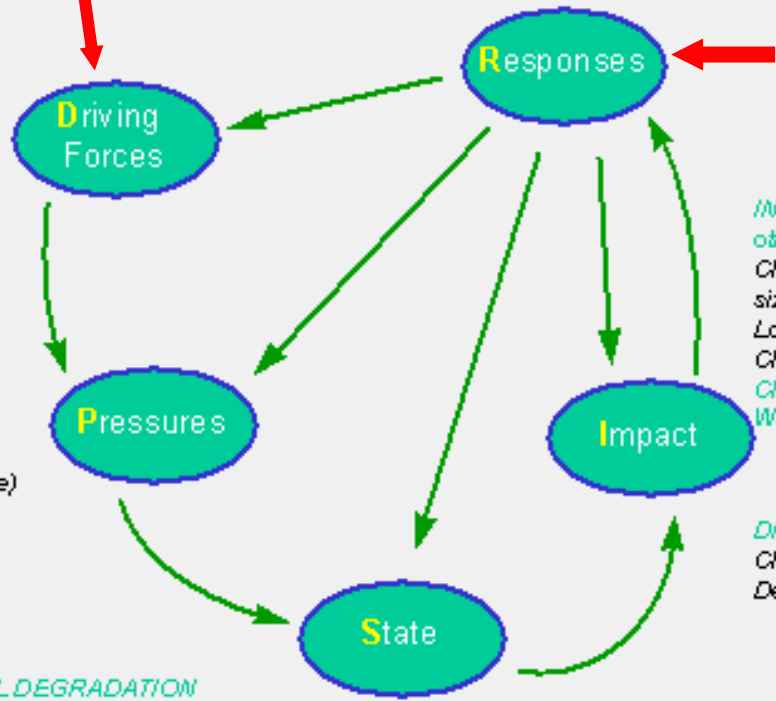
Emission to Air, Water and Land
Urban expansion (soil uptake)
Infrastructure construction
De-forestation
Forest fires

SOIL DEGRADATION
Local and diffuse contamination
Soil acidification
Salinisation
Nutrient load (soil eutrophication)
Physical deterioration

SOIL LOSS
Soil sealing
Soil erosion
Large scale land movements

PRIMARY PROTECTION
Desertification Convention
Development of a European soil protection policy

SECONDARY PROTECTION
CAP reform
Nitrate directive
Sewage sludge directive
Water framework directive



How to find a proper response for not to overburden the land

INDIRECT (effects on other media)
Changes in population size and distribution
Loss of biodiversity
Changes in crop yields
Climate change
Water stress

DIRECT
Changes in soil functions
Desertification



What are our (official) actions in that sense at the moment?

Soil degradation and soil loss is going on and the majority of people in our countries are waiting for the governmental response as a new and maybe more severe legislation or directive



More and more “soils” in the mean time look like this





WE CAN !!!!!

- **RISE THE AWARENES THROUGH EDUCATION**
- **ESTABLISH A SYSTEM OF VALLUES (WHICH ARE NOT MEASURED (ONLY) IN MONEY) and**
- **ESTABLISH SOME SELF REGULATING RULES OF BEHAVIOUR**

IN OTHER WORDS

A CODEX OF NORMS AND ACTINGS, WHICH IS QUITE FAMMILIAR WITHIN SOME PROFESSIONAL FIELDS LIKE HUMAN MEDICINE, IS

CALLED LAND USE ETHICS



The decisions how to manage the land is a political decision. A political group usually makes a decision how a certain part of land, even a landscape, will be used. Usually they take into account technical, legal, economical and political criteria. Often a narrow view point as economical cost-benefit view is prevailing.

But according to the cultural level of our civilisation the decision maker has also moral and ethical obligations!

One of the first who was thinking about this problems was Aldo Leopold – Leopold A. 1949: A Sand Country Almanac /chapter The Land Ethic.

Paul W. Taylor, 1986: Respect for Nature: Theory of Environmental Ethics

Van Deveer, Donald and Christine Pierce. 1997. *The Environmental Ethics and Policy Book*

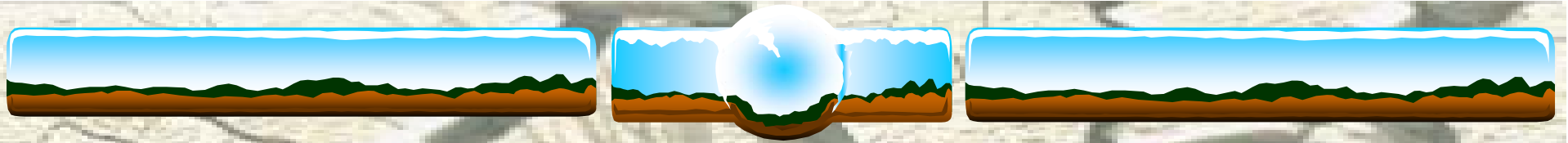


Utilitarists	Paul Taylor	Aldo Leopold
Comparing actions by:	Humans are non privileged	The land is a community
Greatest good for the greatest number of people	Natural world is an interdependent system	The land is to be respected
Promote efficiency	All organisms are teleological centers of life	Land has cultural and aesthetic value
Our judgements are universalizations	Human superiority is unjustified bias	Humans are community members only



*In this short overview there are interesting
two fundamental points of view:*

- 1. Biocentric philosophy which
excludes the human domination over the
nature and*
- 2. Principle of minimal harm*



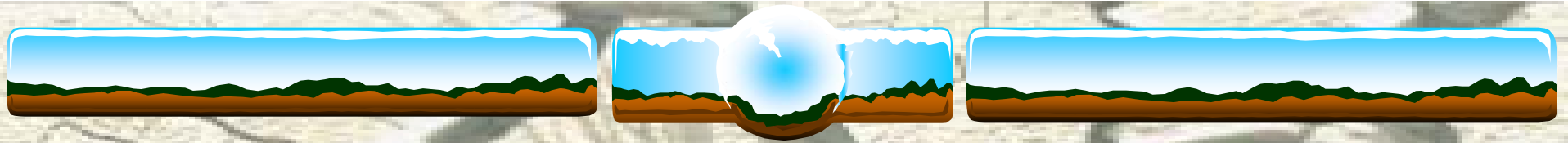
The fist is a dominant one and it helps us to create a respectful relation between human kind and nature. The second one helps us to orientate in a conflict situation. If we really have to do something, we must do it in a way of minimum harm- also to the other people (neighbours etc.)



As an example let me present you some statements of Timothy Beatley published in the article:

A set of ethical principles to guide land use policy

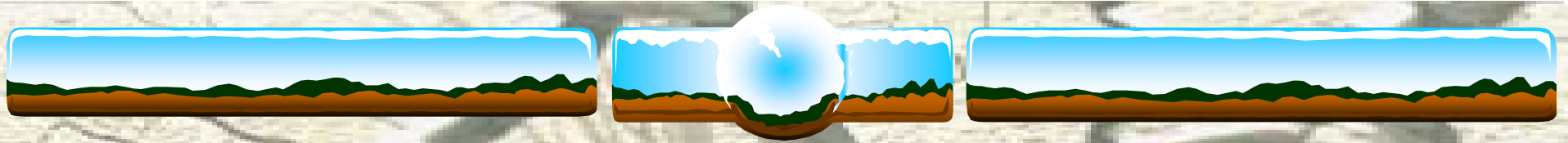
(Land use policy, vol.8, number 1, January 1991)



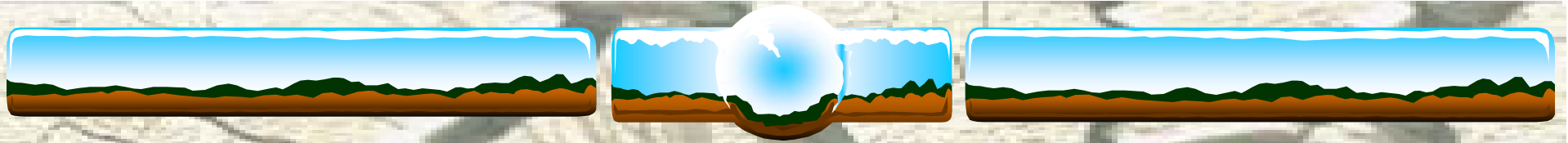
- 1. Land use decisions must strive to promote the interests of the least advantaged in society; land use decisions are influential in promoting a just society**
- 2. Land use policy must protect the minimum environmental and other rights due to every individual irrespective of income or social position (clean air and water)**
- 3. Ethical land use policy sustains and protects natural ecosystems; ethics requires a small human “footprint”**
- 4. Ethical land use policy acknowledges that man is not the only species on the planet; non-human life has inherent worth as well**



- 5. Ethical land use policy prevents or minimizes the imposition of harms; the principle of culpability holds those causing land use harms accountable for them**
- 6. Ethical land use policy acknowledges important obligations to posterity and to people and generation yet to come**
- 7. Ethical land use policy acknowledges that no political jurisdiction is freestanding; ethical obligations exist to other jurisdiction, particularly those which are adjacent or surrounding
(don't consider only the local interests)**



- 8. Ethical land use policy allows individuals to pursue unique lifestyle choices; land use policy must assist individuals in pursuing their own fundamental life plans.**
- 9. Public land use authorities must keep the promises they make; land use ethics requires acknowledgment and respect for explicit and tacit promises made**
- 10. Land use policies and decisions must be formulated through a fair and equitable political process; land use policy making must provide the opportunity for all interested and affected parties to participate**



11. Land development must be viewed as a privilege, permissible at the discretion of the collective and subject to the conditions of the collective; land ownership does not imply the right to radically change the environmental integrity of the land.



In the content of this presentation about the land ethics I think I have to mention also a principle which is in planning processes popular for a few years but in forestry is well known since 1713 (Carlowitz)

**It is
SUSTAINABILITY**



Sustainability as a requirement has been posted

because of

economic reasons

and/or

**because of deficiency or endangerment of certain
forest welfares (water, game, forest functions,
biodiversity, landscape elements,)**



In the 19th century the German utilitarian forest type and system of production has been intruded to central Europe shortly presented in/as:

Geometric perfection

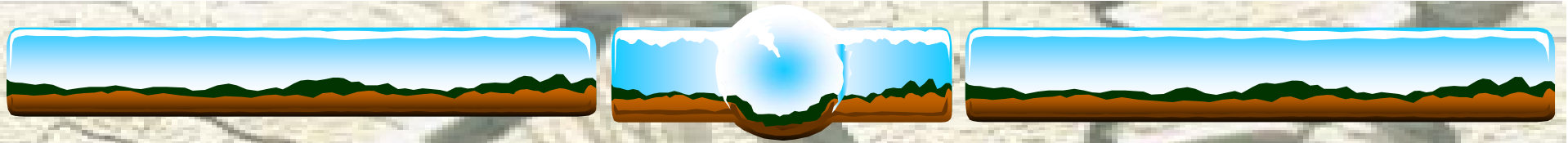
Mathematical calculations of maximum incomes

The response of the nature has been:

Broken trees by snow, ice and wind

Increasing population of pest

Soil erosion



A professional response was to change the ideas and concepts

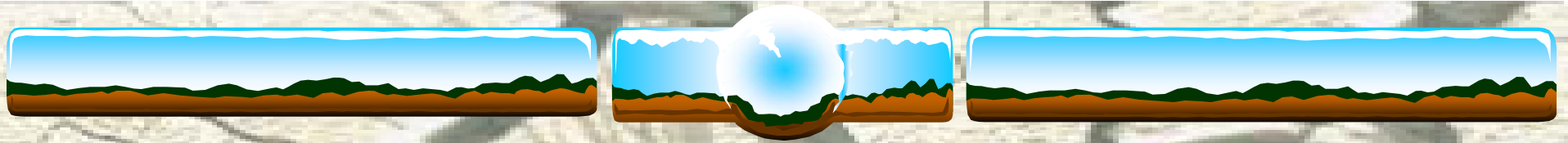
as a nature-based forest

For example:

In Swiss clear-cuts has been forbidden already in 1902 due to

presume that mountainous forests are more sensitive .

But today we know the whole planet is a sensitive system



Old wisdom connects ethics and sustainability:

Ancient Indian Proverb

"Treat the earth well: it was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children. We do not inherit the Earth from our Ancestors, we borrow it from our Children."

<http://onlineethics.org/environment/envsdbib.html>