

## **Conservatives and Environmentalism: A Complicated Relationship**

### **Article: Brian Allen Drake's "The Skeptical Environmentalist: Senator Barry Goldwater and the Environmental Management State"**

#### **Class Discussion/Analytical Questions**

- 1) During the 1960s and 1970s, environmental management was seen as a major federal responsibility. Since 1980, the government has redefined its environmental role, shifting away from direct regulation. Should environmental regulation be one of the primary roles of the federal government? If you answered yes, why so? If you answered no, why not?
- 2) Some scholars see the "conservationist ethic" epitomized by Gifford Pinchot and Theodore Roosevelt as the beginning of the environmentalist movement, yet modern conservatives are rather hesitant to identify with the environmental movement. Have environmentalism's values and ideals forced the movement out of the mainstream?
- 3) Perception holds that conservatives often fight against environmental regulation, while liberals tend to fight for environmental protection. What inherent political values differentiate these two terms, environmental regulation and environmental protection? Are these perceptions accurate? Why or why not?
- 4) Must conservatives, like Barry Goldwater, compromise their anti-statist beliefs in order to effect environmental change? Can conservatives cope with environmentalism's growing desire for government policies tied to proactive regulatory legislation? Is environmentalism becoming a movement solely for liberals?

#### **Activities**

##### **1. Barry Goldwater's Life: Conservative Ideals VS Environmental Sympathies**

Drake splits Barry Goldwater's life into six titled sections in his article. Break the class into five groups, assigning each group a different section beginning with "Desert Genesis." Inform group five that they should analyze the last two sections, "New Green Shoots" and "Sunset," together. Explain that each group has four tasks to complete.

##### **Tasks**

- 1) Explain the significant events occurring in your section of the article.
- 2) Describe and evaluate Goldwater's actions and decisions in regards to the historical events.
- 3) Analyze how Goldwater balanced his environmental sympathies with his conservative ideals through these actions and decisions.
- 4) Teach the class your section of the article. Be sure to include your analysis of Goldwater's decisions and reactions to the historical events

##### **2. Bringing Environmentalism Back into the Mainstream**

Break the class into small groups and ask each group to list three conflicts between environmentalism and conservatism. After the class has a general understanding of what hurdles stand between conservatives and the environmental movement, ask the small groups to come up with a plan for overcoming some of these hurdles. Each group should write a detailed plan as well as an explanation as to how their plan will encourage conservatives to embrace the environmental movement.