

Redefining Progress One Kearny Street, 4th Floor; San Francisco, CA 94108 <http://www.rprogress.org>

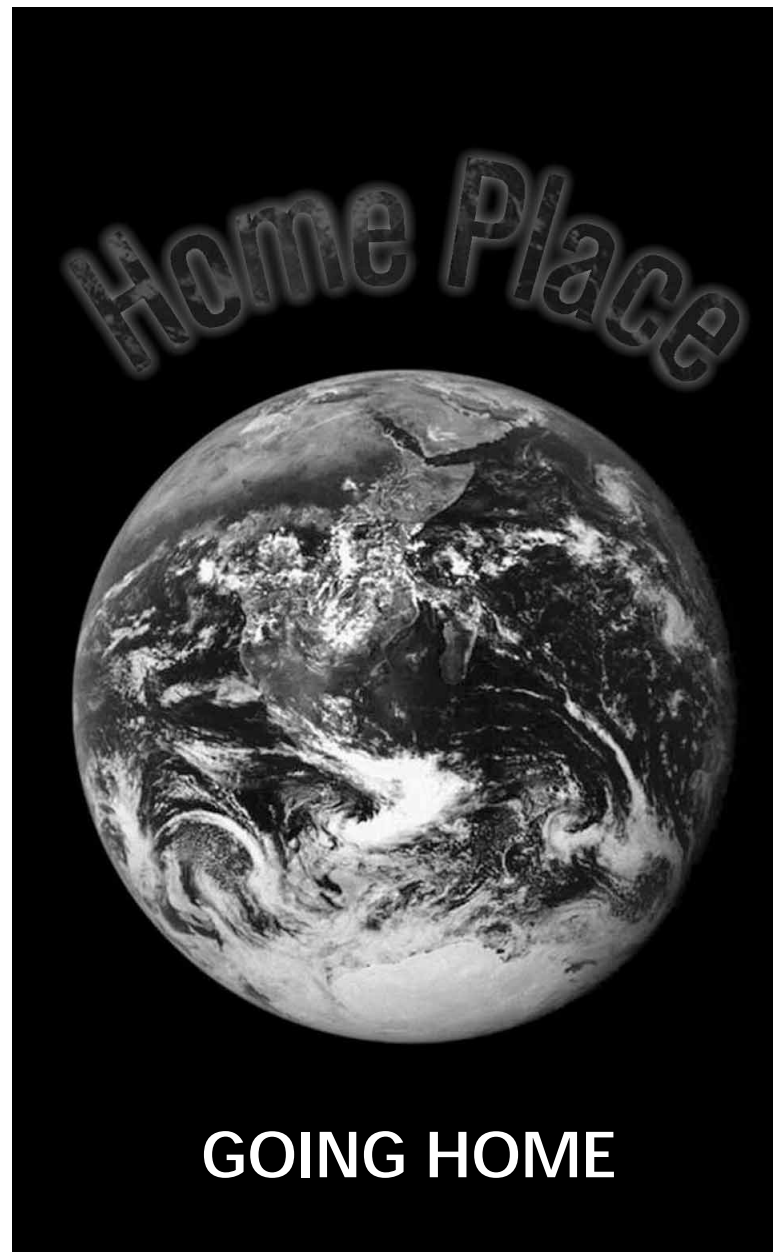
Renew America 1200 1th St. NW, Suite 1100; Washington, DC 20036 http://solstice.crest.org/sustainable/renew_america

Related Bullfrog Films

(Please call for a catalog or check our website, www.bullfrogfilms.com for the most up-to-date-listing of related videos.)

Gaia: The Living Planet
Turtle World
Our Planet Earth
The Green Zone
Yosemite & the Fate of the Earth
It's Gotten Rotten
John Livingston: The Natural History of a Point of View
End of a Millenium
Look Who's Talking: How Animals Communicate
Affluenza
Escape From Affluenza
All The Right Stuff
Down to Earth

Bullfrog Films
PO Box 149, Oley PA 19547
(610) 779-8226
video@bullfrogfilms.com
www.bullfrogfilms.com



**Study Guide by Leslie Karasin
Bullfrog Films**

The Control of Nature. John McPhee. Farrar Strauss Giroux, New York: 1989.

The Trumpeter Journal of Ecosophy. P.O. Box 5883 Stn. B, Victoria B.C. Canada, V8R 6S8.

Western Man and Environmental Ethics. Ian Barbour, ed. Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA: 1973.

What Are People For? Wendell Berry. North Point Press, Berkeley: 199028; San Francisco, CA 94133

Earth Island Institute 300 Broadway, Suite 28;
San Francisco, CA 94133

Institute for Global Futures Research PO Box 263E
Earlville QLD 4870 Australia

Institute for Local Self-Reliance 2425 18th St. NW;
Washington, DC 20009 <http://www.ilsr.org>

International Turn Off Your TV Week
<http://www.whitedot.org/welikeit.html>

National Centre for Sustainable Society 1896 Watson
Street Victoria, BC Canada V8R 6N6 <http://www.islandnet.com/~ncfs/ncfs>

National Parks and Conservation Association 1015 31st
St., NW, 4th Floor, Washington, DC, 20007.

The Land Institute Route 3, Salina, KS, 67401.

The Nature Conservancy National Headquarters: 4245 N
Fairfax Drive, Suite 100, Arlington, VA 22203 <http://www.tnc.org>

TV Free America <http://www.tvfa.org>

Going Home is one of the four videos in the Home Place series, which are based on Canadian ecologist J. Stan Rowe's book Home Place: Essays on Ecology. The series attempts to redefine the role of human beings as one of Earth's species and look anew at the systems which sustain and constitute life on the planet. Hosted by J. Stan Rowe and narrated by Liona Boyd, the series consists of **Inside - Outside, Life Cycles, Partnership, and Going Home**. Each film is 26 minutes.

Other videos in the series:

Inside - Outside

Images of the earth from space finally enabled us to discard the human-centered concept of environment, replacing it with a more universal idea of ecosystems. Earth itself is conceived of as living...as an ecological being.

Life Cycles

Explores the problem of trying to distinguish between living and non-living parts of the Earth. Everything on earth is linked by the cycling of matter and flows of energy. Life is a property of Earth.

Partnership

Explores the challenges faces by industrial societies as they shift from their present exploitative relationship with earth ecosystems towards a more sustainable partnership. Shows what happened to ancient societies that lived beyond their ecological means, and points to models of partnership that are possible.

© Copyright 1999 Bullfrog Films, Inc.,

This guide may be copied for noncommercial classroom use.

Simple in Means, Rich in Ends: Practicing Deep Ecology. Bill Devall. Peregrine Smith, Salt Lake City: 1988.

Technology, Environment, and Human Values. Ian Barbour. Praeger, New York: 1980.

The Arrogance of Humanism. David Ehrenfeld. Oxford University Press, New York: 1978.

The Control of Nature. John McPhee. Farrar Strauss Giroux, New York: 1989.

The Trumpeter Journal of Ecosophy. P.O. Box 5883 Stn. B, Victoria B.C. Canada, V8R 6S8.

Western Man and Environmental Ethics. Ian Barbour, ed. Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA: 1973.

What Are People For? Wendell Berry. North Point Press, Berkeley: 1990.

Organizations and Websites

Center for a New American Dream 6930 Carroll Avenue, Suite 900; Takoma Park, MD 20912 <http://www.newdream.org>

Not Man Apart. Friends of the Earth, 530 Seventh St. SE, Washington, DC, 20003.

Simple in Means, Rich in Ends: Practicing Deep Ecology. Bill Devall. Peregrine Smith, Salt Lake City: 1988.

Technology, Environment, and Human Values. Ian Barbour. Praeger, New York: 1980.

The Arrogance of Humanism. David Ehrenfeld. Oxford University Press, New York: 1978.

Contents

Synopsis	p. 1
Key Concepts	p. 2
Before Viewing	p. 4
After viewing	p. 5
Glossary	p. 6
Resources	p. 6
Related Bullfrog Films	p. 10

Synopsis

The beaver, observed busily preparing a dam, appears to have quite a lot in common with humans. It is felling trees, actively transforming its environment, working hard to generate favorable conditions. We might stop our observation there and conclude that we are much like at least one other species. But if we look closer, we realize that the beaver is still different from us in many important ways. It does not drive other animals from its environment, nor does it cut down more trees than it needs. Instead the beaver satisfies its own basic needs while peacefully tolerating other species and respecting natural limits.

Humans have gotten out of kilter with natural systems and natural limits, and we are often intolerant of other species. The lack of cooperation which we demonstrate towards other species does not come from a uniquely human hyper-competitive nature. It derives from the belief that we are different—that we are superior. We are inculcated at a young age into the cultural myth that humans are superior to all other species, since uniqueness must imply superiority. Following this illogical leap, we make others. Since we are superior to other species, clearly natural resources are meant for our use, and we need not heed the welfare of others. These dangerous conclusions spring from the isolationism we have adopted toward other natural beings.

We have isolated ourselves physically as well as intellectually. Most North Americans have little real contact with nature. We spend most of our time inside, and depend increasingly on technology for insulation from natural processes. We light the night so it is no different from the day; we regulate temperatures so that summer and winter feel the same; we look to computers and televisions for stimulation. With each technological advance, we lose some of our connections. It is easy to see how many people are able to ignore the problems that we are causing in the ecosphere; most people are so out of touch with natural systems that they might not notice even dramatic changes.

We have become aliens on our own planet, pursuing human growth with no thought to the impacts of our actions. The promise for a reversal of this trend lies in the opportunity we still have to break out of the cultural and technological isolationism we have generated. When we reconsider our role as earthlings, we will come to understand that we are part of ecosystems, and we are as dependent on other species as they are on our sensible behavior.

Key Concepts

The film presents some revolutionary and highly philosophical ideas, many of which are a challenge to conventional modern thought. To help both students and teachers work through the material in the film, some of its key concepts are enumerated below.

- Cultural myth. There is a widespread belief, established and disseminated through church, state, and education, that humans are the most important species on the planet. The implications of this idea for our behavior towards other species and the planet are monumental: we take full liberty to behave

Connecting with Nature: Creating Moments That Let Earth Teach. Michael J. Cohen. World Peace University, Oregon: 1989.

Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle. Arne Naess. Cambridge University Press, New York: 1989.

Environmental Science: The Way the World Works. Nebel and Wright. Prentice Hall, NJ: 1993.

Healing Gaia: Practical Medicine for the Planet. James Lovelock. Harmony Books, NY: 1991.

How Many People Can the Earth Support? Joel E. Cohen. WW Norton and Co., NY: 1995.

“Human Ecology: The Subversive, Conservative Science.” Garrett Hardin. In *American Zoologist*, Vol 25, 1985, pp. 469-476.

Human Ecosystems. WB Clapham, Jr. Macmillan, NY: 1981.

Living in the Environment. G. Tyler Miller, Jr. Wadsworth Company, CA:1992.

Making Peace With the Planet. Barry Commoner. Pantheon Books, NY: 1990.

Man and the Natural World: A History of the Modern Sensibility. Keith Thomas. Pantheon Books, USA: 1983.

Monster or Messiah?: The Computer's Impact on Society. Walter Matthews, ed. University Press of Mississippi, Jackson: 1980.

Not Man Apart. Friends of the Earth, 530 Seventh St. SE, Washington, DC, 20003.

progress consists of understanding our dependence on ecosystems, rather than having more technology and wealth. He says that progress will be achieved when we look beyond human welfare. How do you feel about this idea of progress? How can we achieve it? How is it different than conventional notions of progress?

Glossary

Humanism A belief in the superiority of the human species.

Biodiversity, Biological Diversity Diversity of living things; includes not only variation of species on Earth, but also variation of ecosystems and genes.

Native species A species which normally lives in a particular ecosystem.

Invasive species; Alien species; Non-Native species; Exotic species One which is introduced, whether through migration or deliberately or accidentally by humans. These species sometimes do no harm, but may take over and eliminate native species.

Resources

Books, Articles and Journals

A Bicentennial Malthusian Essay: Conservation, Population, and the Indifference to Limits. John F. Rohe. Rhodes and Easton, Michigan: 1997.

A Sand County Almanac. Aldo Leopold. Oxford University Press, NY: 1949.

Ashphalt Nation. Jane Holtz Kay. Crown Publishers, NY 1997.

recklessly and without regard for others. Wrapped in this pervasive notion, we do not deal with the harmful impacts of our actions.

- Technological isolation. We are removed from our environments and ecosystems by the technological comforts and conveniences of everyday life. As a result, we rarely experience nature personally and vividly, and we have largely forgotten how to relate to the natural world. This isolation is another important factor in our lack of respect for our surroundings.
- Aliens on Earth. The cumulative effect of our cultural and technological isolation is that we do not know or relate to our planet, while we behave as if the Earth is ours for the taking. Consequently, we have lost touch with natural limits and the balance which nature has, over time, established. As long as we ignore these limits, we have a frightening potential to do enormous harm.
- Breaking down our cocoons. There is hope for our ability to shift away from the isolationism we have created, but it hinges on: our recognition, ideologically, of our proper role as earthlings, and an effort to move away from the comforts of technology, at least sufficiently to get to know our natural communities again. If we think of ourselves as just one species of millions, and we make an effort to experience natural processes, we will be much closer to being in balance with the planet.

Before Viewing

The following activities are meant to enhance understanding and enjoyment of the film, and can be effectively performed in a variety of ways.

- Take a poll among students of how much time they spend outdoors each day, on average. The film says that the average North American spends 95% of her time indoors. Since each hour is 4.2% of the day, this means that most are indoors for 22.8 hours. In comparison with time outdoors, how much time do students spend watching TV? Using computers or playing computer games?
- Think about *where* our time outdoors is spent. How much time do we spend in truly “natural” settings? What do we do in these regions? (e.g. If we go to a park or wilderness area, do we fish/hunt/swim/boat/hike/ski/bird-watch/etc?) What do each of these activities say about our relationship to nature?
- Discuss humans’ role on the planet. What is our relationship to other species? We are different from other species; does this mean that we are better? Do we have the right to behave very differently from other animals in terms of our use of natural resources, etc?
- List things that are considered vital for a decent life. Make distinctions between needs and luxuries. How have our consumption requirements changed in the past 100 years? Do these changes reflect improvements or steps backward for society?
- As a society, what do we think of as progress?

After viewing

- The film says that we’re wrapped in cultural and technological cocoons. How can we move away from this situation? What might happen if we don’t?
- What’s wrong with humanism? What is the importance of balance, and of respecting limits?
- Think back on the fast-forward car scene in the film. How did you feel about it? What did it seem to say about the way we live?
- Why do alien species like knapweed threaten native ecosystems? Think about evolution and the idea of natural balance. The host says that knapweed lacks “healthful connections.” Are we, as humans, in a similar position?
- The host at one point says that cocoons are *comfortable*, but that they do not give *life*. He says that we are still dependent on the ecosphere, despite our isolation from it. Is *comfortable* always good? Can you think of examples of times when the comforts of modern technology have prevented you from experiencing something? Trying something? Learning something?
- What were the results of your preliminary time survey? Ask students to change their time-use habits for a week. Set a goal as a class of what the changes will be, and try to reduce TV and/or computer use for the week. As an alternative, provide information about outdoor events or activities, or take a field trip as a class.
- At the end of the film, the host says that we need to redefine the notion of progress. He says that real