Power and Property:
A Corollary

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The concept of property is widely discussed by social theorists and is a hot button issue within political circles. This is mostly because property is somewhat of an abstract concept. Property is a possession -- it belongs to someone or something. Seems simple enough, but the social ramifications of how property is acquired, distributed and managed are rather complex. Beyond the abstract, when investigating the concept, property quickly becomes a central theme in the politics we address. Property is incredibly important to economic systems, with far-reaching implications into our social organization, distributions of wealth and management of resources -- both manufactured and natural.

As property is a possession it must have an owner. But who has a right to property? How should property be distributed, managed and utilized? Should property be rivalrous and/or excludable, or perhaps not? If these considerations are not yet enough, the most important question remains: To whom should power be granted to make these decisions?

As property and property rights are fundamentally important to social organization it logically follows that with property comes the burden, responsibility and privilege of power. In this study I wish to investigate three prominent forms of property as they exist today: Public (read state), private and common. It is my desire to deconstruct the legitimacy of state property rights while leaving the options of both private and common ownership intact.

There has been much work conducted over private property rights in libertarian circles, therefore, I will briefly discuss private property and its legitimacy. It is my intent to focus the efforts of my labor on common property rights and the benefits they grant society in social and natural settings.

Three Prominent Forms of Property

Property can take many forms and functions, ranging from the tangible to the intangible. Property can relate to land and resources on one hand, and on the other one's own person, intellectual privileges and financial interests. Though there is much to be said about property in all its forms and functions, I wish to focus on land -- space that can be, or is, utilized for the purposes of resource extraction, conservation, financial interests or fellowship.

In determining how space is used, managed and owned there are three primary ideas on how rights should be distributed over said property -- each is unique and distinct from one another. The owners, or players, of this property regime game are government(s) in the form of “public property”, an individual entity in the form of private property and individuals or associations in the form of common control.

I. Public Property (State Territory and the Corporate Sector)

The term "public property" takes on many different forms. Simply put, the wide use of the term public property today refers to government, or more precisely, state ownership of property. Under these conditions we find the term is rather misleading. These lands are not really “public” at all as they are fully managed by state authority. Any individual or collective use of "public" property is granted solely by the state apparatus -- these rights of use are not transmissible.

National parks in the United States, along with national forests and seashores, even city parks, represent land that is state territory. Here, the state allows resources to be used by the populace with terms and conditions. The public can be excluded from these territories by executive decree, however, as we saw in previous government shutdowns.[1] Due to political grid-lock in Washington DC the public was barred from all lands under government management. There also exist other government institutions funded by public tax dollars that are either closed to the public entirely, such as national laboratories, or where one must pay a (often hefty) fee for access, such as public universities.

It is also important to note how far state property rights extend. In the current capitalist economy of Western nation-states government regulation has worked to produce a neo-liberal corporate-state nexus. In the United

1 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tag/government-shutdown-national-parks/

States, specifically, state sanctioned economic privilege has been granted to big business and the financial sector under the premise that these institutions are necessary for social organization. The corporate sector is separate from, but intimately related with, the state. The state bestows corporate charter and grants the corporate sector legal privileges and favorable regulation that it actively denies individuals. This prevents competition and affords monopoly status to many in the corporate sector. Independent scholar Kevin Carson, in his piece *Why Corporate Capitalism is Unsustainable*,[2] explains:

> Capitalism as a historic system is five hundred or more years old, and the state was intimately involved in its formation and its ongoing preservation from the very beginning. But the state has been far more involved, if such a thing is possible, in the model of corporate capitalism that's prevailed over the past 150 years. The corporate titans that dominate our economic and political life could hardly survive for a year without the continuing intervention of the state in the market to sustain them through subsidies and monopoly protections.

As such, the economy of the nation-state is directly linked to these institutions, forging a corporatist political economy where the state has direct interest in the success of these now "too big to fail" concentrations of capital. Proliferation of the corporate state results in the exploitation of thousands of hectares of wilderness area for resource extraction and enhanced neo-liberalism in our urban corridors. For this reason, it is prudent to step up simultaneous deconstruction of actually existing capitalism and the state, as further explained by philosopher Roderick T Long:

> But surely the way for libertarians, Austrian or otherwise, to win over those who mistrust concentrations of power both corporate and governmental is to increase our critical scrutiny of corporate power, not to relax our critical scrutiny of governmental power. After all, empirical research -- including Austrian empirical research -- has shown that these two forms of power are mutually reinforcing far more than they are mutually antagonistic.[3]

Virtually all tiers of government are involved in either outright property ownership, or partial ownership by an economic interest that favors corporatist institutions. For instance, nearly 25% of the territory of the

2 http://c4ss.org/content/10498

3 http://aaeblog.com/2014/07/07/cordial-and-sanguine-part-63-from-the-unthinking-depths/

United States is owned by the federal government. Additionally, the use of powers such as eminent domain, paid for by government contracts, and compulsory (forced) pooling, often used to obtain private property for oil and gas drilling, are just two among many examples of how government uses its privilege of coercion to obtain territory and simultaneously benefit the corporate sector.

Particularly concerning about monopoly capitalism is how it advances the states economic agenda outside of its geographic restrictions. With the rise of multi-nationals, economies around the globe have been centralized under state capitalism. This is rather dangerous because it allows states to expand their power without military conquest and it is an effective way to obtain new territory. Military imperialism of course still exists, but it is not as popular as it used to be within political circles. Corporate colonialism, however, is rarely discussed if not outright dismissed by the power structure -- it has redefined global economics, changing the course of individual labor nearly everywhere.

The corporate sector is polycentric in the sense that different corporations must coordinate and often compete with one another, but they all have monocentric agendas and hegemonic tendencies. Consider the differences in capitalism across the nation states. There exist differences in the corporate sector's relationship with their host state -- United States capitalism differs from the capitalist practices of other nations. Capitalists and state officials from all over the world, however, come together at economic summits such as G20, discuss best management practices and advance monopoly capitalism on world economic systems. Capitalism is thus dynamic while simultaneously centralizing. Actually existing capitalism is a dangerous current of state power.

State power lies in its monopoly of the “legitimate” use of physical force, commonly known as the monopoly of violence. Sociologist Max Weber first defined the state in this way in his essay *Politics as a Vocation* (1919)[4] where he argues “the modern state is a compulsory association which organizes domination.” One is beholden to question the legitimacy of such power as it has been evoked to claim property and resources for itself or close allies in the name of the “common good.”

Arguments for state authority are many, but the root of them all adhere to the long-held fallacy: “We are the state.” If one lives in a neo-democratic state or a representative republic, such as the United States, then the fallacy concludes we are all represented by the institution which will in turn

4 http://anthropos-lab.net/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Weber-Politics-as-a-Vocation.pdf

carry out policies that reflect our interests. But we are not the state. The state, as noted by Murray Rothbard, in his essay *Anatomy of the State*,[5] is the systematization of the predatory process over a given territory. The state is a rational actor that works in its own self-interest -- the interest of the ruling caste and its allies. The state never has, nor will it ever, allow for the spontaneous development of society. We are not the state, its property does not belong to us all in common, to call such spaces public is a linguistic deceit. It is not our heritage, it can be torn from us by government decree. The exclusion of the public from national parks and the caging of *Plow Shares* peace activists at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee,[6] who dared to protest nuclear proliferation, are testament to this.

By using terms like “public domain” in reference to public universities that are in fact closed to the public, the state works to socialize a major input of the corporate economy at common expense, thus privatizing wealth. The state sells the idea of “public” property as well as “legitimate” force and the “we are the government” fallacy to legitimize a common “national interest” that we all share -- though no such interest exists. The state is incredibly dangerous. Rest assured, every sacred piece of land or space available for, or currently utilized by, human labor inside government borders are territories of the state that may be taken at will -- this is a power that must be abolished. Agrarian Wendell Berry, in his essay *The Long Legged House* further elaborates:

> Since there is no government of which the concern or the discipline is primarily the health of either households or of the Earth, since it is in the nature of any state to be concerned first of all with its own preservation and only second with the cost, the dependable, clear response to man’s moral circumstance is not that of law, but that of conscience. The Highest moral behavior is not obedience to law, but obedience to the informed conscience even in spite of law.[7]

Large mistrust of, and dissociation from, centralized institutions has been a noticeable trend in human history since the rise of such hierarchies in the age of the ancients. Rudolph Rocker explains:

> ...a fixed, self-enclosed social system but rather a definite trend in the historic development of mankind, which, in contrast with the intellectual guardianship of all clerical and governmental institutions,

5 http://mises.org/document/1011/Anatomy-of-the-State
6 http://appalachianson.wordpress.com/2014/02/22/the-oak-ridge-three/
7 http://www.amazon.com/The-Long-Legged-House-Wendell-Berry/dp/1593760132

> strives for the free unhindered unfolding of all the individual and social forces in life. Even freedom is only a relative, not an absolute concept, since it tends constantly to become broader and to affect wider circles in more manifold ways. For the anarchist, freedom is not an abstract philosophical concept, but the vital concrete possibility for every human being to bring to full development all the powers, capacities, and talents with which nature has endowed him, and turn them to social account. The less this natural development of man is influenced by ecclesiastical or political guardianship, the more efficient and harmonious will human personality become, the more will it become the measure of the intellectual culture of the society in which it has grown.[8]

It is important to continue this trend and follow the principles behind such democratization to their only logical conclusion -- absolute liberty. In the stateless society property will be available for *inclined labor*,[9] conserved for leisure and, most importantly, preserved in its natural state. Property will be boundless, democratic and liberated.

II. Private Property

Private property may easily be defined as the ownership of land or space by non-governmental entities. Private property is not state territory, nor is it any kind of public aggregation of land -- rights to private property belong solely to the owner or owners. Much has been written about private property rights in libertarian (and other) socio-economic circles. I do not wish to re-invent the wheel but instead give a broad overview of private property ownership, defend its legitimacy and briefly discuss private property in a (social) free market economic system.

Many who identify as libertarians, market anarchists or advocates of laissez faire principles (especially those hailing from the Austrian or Chicago schools of economic theory) consider private property key to building a free and prosperous society. Many in these aforementioned traditions would argue land in the hands of private entities ensures the productive use and protected value of the property. In fact, Austrian economists Ludwig von Mises and F. A. Hayek up the ante and claim private control of property is the only legitimate form of ownership (a claim with which I disagree). Of all the defenders of private property, however, one would be hard pressed to

8 https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/rocker-rudolf/misc/anarchism-anarcho-syndicalism.htm
9 http://appalachianson.wordpress.com/2014/04/04/inclined-labor/

find a more ardent and boisterous proponent of associated rights than Murray Rothbard.

Rothbard is famous for noting that property rights are human rights.[10] Rothbard believed it to be the right of the individual to “find and transform resources.” Production is key for property here because the ability to produce allows life to be sustained and advanced. Rothbard’s anarchism and heterodox academics mold nicely with his view of property. The state, as a coercive body with a monopoly on violence, can restrict the labor of individuals, thus denying production and our civilization's sustainability -- the state is an enemy of private property. I do not consider myself a Rothbardian in any way, but I feel his argument here, much like those made in the same vein by Benjamin Tucker, Josiah Warren and other individualist anarchists, is correct.

Governments often steal private property, either by eminent domain or compulsory (forced) pooling. Much of this theft has not been for the purpose of “public” use or any common good, but for development of the corporate sector -- an extension of the arm of the state. Private property -- homes, land, businesses -- have been demolished to be replaced by the will of the affluent and politically connected. Furthermore, the state's conquest of territory has restricted homesteading, a valuable way for individuals to mix their labor with the land. It is not private property that is illegitimate, but rather the strong-arm of the corporate state reigning over the market. Private property is not to be confused with the corporati, for it belongs to individuals.

In a liberated society all property under private control would be legitimate as it would be obtained and managed without economic privilege, central planning or “too big to fail” corporate institutions. The current deformation of markets exists not because of property ownership, but from centralized authority -- free markets do not exist, rather state sanctioned economic privilege exists. The current system is not the result of property ownership (private or common), competition, or even profit but rather the captive market form. This system exists because legal privilege is granted to those with the most capital. The development of this economic and social order is indeed political, as opposed to free and participatory.

For this reason it is necessary to liberate property from the state. The libertarian argues that the free market, by its very definition, must resist domination, violence and privilege because these societal attributes are violations of liberty and human dignity. Free markets, then, based on the

10 http://mises.org/daily/2569

spontaneous order of human ingenuity are a fundamental aspect of a free and more egalitarian society. In *Markets Freed From Capitalism*, Charles W. Johnson describes poignantly the possibility of what may rise in market liberation:

> A fully freed market means the liberation of vital command posts in the economy, reclaiming them from points of state control to nexuses of market and social entrepreneurship -- transformations from which a market would emerge that would look profoundly different from anything we have now. That so profound a change cannot easily fit into traditional categories of thought, e.g. "libertarian" or "left-wing," "laissez-faire," or "socialist," "entrepreneurial" or "anti-capitalist," is not because these categories do not apply but because they are not big enough: radically free markets burst through them. If there were another word more all-embracing than revolutionary, we would use it.[11]

In this socio-economic order individuals would be free to labor. In a rather Lockean tradition, as labor is owned by the individual, the land or space with which labor is mixed is free to be claim. In this sense, private property ownership can take on a number of different traits, each expressed differently by the free will of those involved, as explained by individualist anarchist Benjamin R. Tucker:

> Anarchism is a word without meaning, unless it includes the liberty of the individual to control his product or whatever his product has brought him through exchange in a free market—that is, private property. Whoever denies private property is of necessity an Archist. This excludes from Anarchism all believers in compulsory Communism. As for the believers in voluntary Communism (of whom there are precious few), they are of necessity believers in the liberty to hold private property, for to pool one's possessions with those of others is nothing more or less than an exercise of proprietorship.[12]

The concept of private property is both simple and complex -- land in private hands with seemingly infinite possibilities for its organization. Fundamental to private property, however, is its voluntary nature. Whether acquired from homesteading or the exchange of goods and services, private property resists violence in its acquisition. So long its acquisition does not infringe on the rights of other individuals, private property will hold a

11 http://c4ss.org/content/27171

12 http://library.libertarian-labyrinth.org/items/show/318

respectable place in the markets of a libertarian society.

III. Common Property

Common property is land or space in which all members of a given community hold equal rights over said territory -- power is equally distributed. Here there is no coercive body delegating property management or use, as in state territory, nor is there exclusive ownership given to an individual or isolated group, as in private property. Common property is liberated of enclosure movements -- the cultural and natural resources remain accessible and managed by all stakeholders. This is not to say there is no governance of these resources. To the contrary, a highly ordered, decentralized, adaptive governance manages common property.

It is prudent in this discussion to differentiate between the property regime and the types of property. A regime is defined as a management system or a planned method for executing tasks. In the commons regimes work to protect and conserve resources, usually by consensus decision-making and adaptive management. Common types of property include natural or man-made resources such as water, the atmosphere, fish or an irrigation system in a community garden. The regime is a social arrangement that regulates utility of common pool resources.

In such a system place is an integrating concept. Land is easily associated with the community and the individual in the commons -- land is legacy as space is place. For this reason, as well as the efficiency of adaptive systems found in the commons, the true public arena labors for best management practices. Sense of place and place attachments are very powerful -- and with them come the tragic beauty of human emotion. Being connected to land, or place, is very moving. Perhaps Wendell Berry describes the feeling best in his essay, *Mat Feltners World* about an aging farmer and his land. Berry writes:

> As we watch Mat lean against the tree, we sense how like the tree he has become. They are kindred spirits, the two of them, equal enough in age and coming, finally, to the same spot. By the life he has led, standing erect in the light, Mat too, has stood “outside the woods.” Just as the walnut has relinquished its nuts, so Mat has given freely of himself, nourishing the land and giving rise to new life. Like the tree, Mat has sunk deep and lasting roots.[13]

13 http://books.google.com/books?id=_S8J65xgF6sC&lpg=PA82&ots=BBsIOeFjq-&dq=Mat%20Feltners%20World%20wendell%20berry&pg=PA78#v=onepage&q=as%20we%20watch%20Mat%20lean&f=false

The statement, “Mat has sunk deep and lasting roots,” speaks volumes about the attachment people have to place. Sense of place can resemble a host of things such as: memories with family and friends, coming of age, solace, comfort, etc. The concept of a human being having lasting roots and an area of land representing those roots exhibits deep human bonds and connections to the Earth. In many cases, respect for the land one lives adds to the importance of place attachments. Often times people equate their land with their legacy. The commons are tied to land and space through unique historical and cultural traditions. Furthermore, economic benefits, pride and a moral or spiritual relationship with land is experienced by many people. Respect of the commons is a demand of place attachment and in said commons, governance and management of place takes on an exciting, dynamic and libertarian form.

Incredibly important to the commons is adaptive governance, where all stakeholders are free to participate in democratic decision-making. Governance of this type utilizes Adaptive Collaborative Management (ACM) to determine the use and regulation of common pool resources. ACM is an effective instrument in bringing competing interests together to make these difficult decisions. The work of economist and Nobel Laureate Elinor Ostrom[14] demonstrates the success of horizontal property management and the conservation of common pool resources.

As common property has now been defined and management of such property has been introduced, I will now explore, in detail, adaptive governance and its consequences for our cultural and natural heritage. In this discussion I will focus on the human dimensions of governance, institutions and science. I will examine decentralized regimes and their use of natural resources.

Adaptive Governance

Adaptive Collaborative Management (ACM) is an approach to conflict resolution developed to resolve complex problems requiring collective action. Going beyond personal points of view, this governance style implores science, politics and underlying interests to come together to confront conflict. ACM develops resolutions to benefit all points of view. Though there are some very real challenges to achieving these resolutions, it is increasingly clear that the hurdles we face in the 21st century will require common action. These challenges thus require differing ideologies

14 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elinor_Ostrom

to make difficult compromises to ensure sustainability. ACM is an effective instrument in bringing competing interests together to make these difficult decisions.

ACM can best be described by a simple model composed of four levels. The ACM model promotes collaborative resolutions during conflict management. Each level of this approach is designed to alleviate disagreement and promote compromise among opposing sides of conflict. The model of adaptive governance is as follows:

1. ACM first distinguishes what the conflict is about,
2. followed by why the conflict exists,
3. the model then implores individuals to develop options for a plan of action,
4. and finally establishes an action plan to potentially end the conflict.

Determining what the conflict is about allows each party to voice their perspectives and concerns. This allows all members of the ACM process to state their positions while allowing interests, motives and feelings to be heard by the entire group. The groundwork for collaboration is laid by discussing why the conflict exists. First, this process calls for focusing on the problem at hand while considering all underlying interests. This allows the participants to then examine and understand the emotional link to all involved in the conflict, thus humanizing the argument. While examining different points of view practitioners may begin to find common ground. The model then shifts to a more progressive approach to resolve the conflict at hand.

Adaptive governance utilizes collaboration to explore possible options to resolve conflict. This pro-active approach allows the development of resolutions to promote mutual gains for all involved. Elevating compromise as a goal ensures that the interests of all parties are left in a much better position than their previous state. After options are thoroughly discussed, an action plan is then implemented to ensure real world success of the collaboration. Once in motion, it is important to note what part of the plan is working and what needs re-calculation. This allows for the continual assessment of the practice to yield maximum beneficial results to all parties.

There exist great challenges in the successful implementation of the four step model. In practice, the determination of what conflict is about and why it exists is usually rather easy. The challenge of ACM lies in the final two

steps. Reaching a consensus able to benefit everyone in a natural resource conflict is a rather daunting task. Equally daunting is the development of a fair assessment of these decisions. An intricate study of the mechanisms leading to periodic failure of ACM is a must, especially in the wake of the ominous global challenges of the 21st century, so that the approach can adapt and mitigate conflict. It is the decentralized nature of ACM that allows it to be so dynamic. This is perhaps its greatest benefit, it can adapt, where sweeping policy cannot.

There are many consequences involved in both succeeding at ACM and in failing. Success in the process leads to a number of desirable outcomes. The most important may be the emergence of pragmatic, decentralized leadership. In regards to natural resource management, this is important because it merges differing opinions together to promote sustainable resource use. This, in turn, promotes environmental stewardship and practices beneficial to natural resource management. This new sense of stewardship will positively benefit the development of a community and reduce impacts to the environment. On the other hand, failure to reach collaboration may result in prolonged harmful effects to the environment and halt sustainable community development.

Practitioners of natural resource management in the 21st century have their work cut out for them. We are approaching a point in Earth’s history where all of humanity will be forced to deal with anthropocentric impacts to the biosphere. We now live in a time where we can physically see and experience the impact of civilizations ecological footprint. There is a true human dominance of all global systems. This dominance is now effecting a range of topics from human health to the politics we address. As we further encroach on natural systems, the transmission of new diseases to humans from animals and insects is growing rapidly (Shah, 2009). A hotbed political issue in the United States right now is immigration reform. New studies suggest that a number of Latin American farmers will start migrating north due to the effects of climate change to their crop yields (Cattan, 2010). There are many more examples of the connection between human impacts to the biosphere and current affairs. The question is, how should society address these issues?

The implications of these challenges requires the science of resource management to rapidly change in the face of great uncertainty for the future. This uncertainty has been created by global environmental change and the globalization of the world economy -- it is a product of the corporate state. A reevaluation of the long-term implications of the use of

our natural resources, while paying attention to societal demands and well-being in a globalized market, becomes more and more urgent with each passing day (Franklin 2008). Natural scientists, social scientists, politicians, the private sector and the public are in need of a resource use paradigm shift. There exists a great need to restore the biosphere, protect bio-diversity and promote sustainability. It is in our best interest to remain honest about, and aware of, the limitations of our natural ecosystems. It then follows we should implement policies that best fit the needs, health and demands of an informed society. In doing so, the commons can sustain the long-term health of the biosphere -- of which human beings are included (Franklin 2008). ACM is one mechanism that, if used openly and responsibly, can merge competing interests together to better our ecology.

Perhaps the most important attribute of ACM is the insistent inclusiveness and diversity of ideas. This allows practitioners to move forward with the best plans possible. This diversity, however, has very large implications for traditional leadership. ACM is our instrument to promote and achieve the redistribution of power, to champion ideas that benefit people, markets and the environment. This idea of collaborative governance will bring people and common institutions together to build on the adaptive capacities and capabilities of the true public arena.

ACM then, is a tool of transition. Its power lies in its decentralised structure -- as it becomes implemented state power will recede. It is this reclamation of power that makes common governance so important, especially in regards to common pool resources. We live in an era of anthropocentric use of the bio-sphere. Human consumption trends, and moreover, the nation state’s consumption of resources, are at an all time high and with a globalized market show no sign of slowing down. The harsh reality of today is that instead of preserving nature for nature’s sake we may achieve more for the biosphere if we begin preserving nature for our own well-being (Armsworth 2007). This idea is the basis for market based solutions to conserve the biosphere. The idea that human beings are separate from, or above, the rules of nature is not only dated, but dangerous. A popular trend among ecologists and conservation biologists is to promote ecosystem services to save bio-diversity. This has the potential to revolutionize the market system.

American libertarian and political philosopher Karl Hess Jr., in his book *Visions Upon the Land: Man and Nature on the Western Range*,[15] attributes

15 http://books.google.com/books?id=UuUXOxomAPAC&lpg=PP3&ots=gCKovfldrH&dq=karl%20hess%20environment&pg=PP3#v=onepage&q=karl%20hess%20environment&f=false

the decline in health of natural lands to inherent problems in government policy, ecological destabilization due to government intrusion and the destructiveness of sweeping land use policies. Hess argues that instead of looking for more laws and regulations to manage natural resources (inevitably enhancing state economic power) we should instead seek an economic system based on voluntary market interactions without the involvement of the state.

This adaptive approach to ecological protection yields incredible results. Environmental sustainability is not the product of government intervention, but instead a result of self organized institutions where key management decisions are made as organically as possible. It is also wise to remember that community based, sustainable management of village lands was prevalent for much of human history until suppressed by the great landlords, the communist state and the neoliberal state in succession. Nature and human civilization are incredibly complex and dynamic -- neither will be sustained by sweeping ideas of natural resource management.

Ecological systems and free markets share an affinity for diversity and both long for sustainability. The dissolution of power and control will advance best management practices. For this reason, we should not look vertically to state institutions, but horizontally to one another in the market. The goal should not be the expansion of the floor of the cage, to borrow from Noam Chomsky, the goal should be its abolition. Neighborhood environmentalism will build sustainable markets -- and markets are beautiful.

Though the future is uncertain and an uphill battle awaits the public, ACM gives us the tools necessary to effectively manage our future. If used responsibly, in a sustained effort, the four step model can be used to resolve conflict and promote sustainability practices. ACM is also rather inspiring in that the concept demands an informed and engaged public. A people’s movement to become actively involved in collaboration is central to the models idea of diversity and inclusiveness. Though there are severe challenges in achieving collaboration, we must closely examine our shortcomings to ensure a growing rate of progress. ACM can continually be improved upon to ensure challenges are met and actions are set in motion to better every aspect of health and life on Earth. We will succeed because we must -- we all inherit this small, wonderful blue planet.

Human Dimensions: Reclaiming Governance

As National Resource Management (NRM) has evolved over the years, traditional views of the environment and human relationships between nature and sense of place have also evolved. Today, NRM is characterized by certain “wicked” problems. The dynamic and often aggressive nature of these problems creates difficulty for management policy. It has become apparent we can no longer utilize the one-dimensional approach of centralized, private decision-making (Hunter 2007). The complexity of resource problems today often fall outside the realm of traditional policy analysis and centralized legislation. This has paved the way for more adaptive management styles which utilize alternative stakeholder approaches to NRM (Hunter 2007). These new approaches formally redistribute power from centralized authority to neighborhoods. This new style of adaptive governance actively educates stakeholders about the challenges and demands of NRM today. As societies ethical considerations of the environment and property continually grow so too do our considerations of governance. Today, as more people relate to their communities, and thus the commons, collaborative management between stakeholders and institutions work for a more sustainable world -- we decentralize all the time.

I. Methods of Governance

The adaptive governance and alternative stakeholder approach to NRM addresses the past failures of government and emphasizes the development of partnerships between all people involved in resource conflict (Decker 1997). The process of building alliances between private and common interest requires all parties to network with each other. This broadens consultation with community members who will most likely be responsible for, and experience the consequences of, resource management (Decker 1997). Governance is currently monopolized by the state, but it is important to explore and advance existing alternatives. To reclaim our governance, I find it beneficial to note that we will not simply wake up in liberty one day. Transition from state requires civic participation. Though governance is still monopolized by authority, there are emerging orders within currently existing institutions that have the goal to defuse power to the commons. In regards to common pool resources, there are five prevalent methods of governance:

1. **Expert Authority:** (DAD approach: Decide, Announce and Defend). This is a traditional approach largely practiced by the state.
2. **Passive/Receptive:** This approach is based on awareness and involves keeping ones eyes and ears open.
3. **Inquisitive:** This involves actively seeking information to understand stakeholder views, needs, wants, etc. Utilizes surveys, focus groups and other things of this nature to gain information.
4. **Transactional:** (Involve, Negotiate and Implement). Often has multiple objectives of involvement. This approach strives to develop trust and build relationships to reach implementable decisions. Stakeholders involved in some/many aspects of decision-making though their input is not binding.
5. **Co-Managerial:** This approach involves shared decision-making, action and accountability (Ostermier 2010).

The DAD approach is a traditional approach that remains in wide use today, especially in terms of crisis oriented conservation events (Decker 1997). DAD is the simple solution. Hierarchies make decisions and sweeping resource policy is the result. The problem is, no matter how simple an ecological concept, the natural system behind it is incredibly complex. Simple solutions cannot mitigate complex systems -- but evolving, dynamic systems can continually shift policy to meet public and environmental health demands. This is why there is a need for greater community involvement, free association and a stakeholder approach that allows equal participation among all. The goal of such collaboration is *resilience*[16] -- for both communities and ecosystems. In ecology, resilience is a property that reflects the ability of a system to withstand perturbations or shocks, of course we want this for our social systems as well. Resilience theory suggests that managed ecological systems are dynamic and unpredictable. Moreover, strategic top down management tends to erode resilience, making the system vulnerable to dramatic and surprising change.

Lucky for us, collaboration is in demand and the market is growing. Today, in the ACM setting, the authoritative approach seems to be outdated. Stakeholder interest in NRM continues to grow. These interests are diverse and stakeholders often demand desirable management policy. This can cause a great rift between a resource practitioner and stakeholders, thus the “I know whats best for you” approach to NRM is being met with criticism (Decker 1997). For example, in the Adirondack mountain region of New York

16 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resilience_(ecology)

stakeholders greatly disagreed with what biologists deemed to be acceptable deer populations. Resource managers wanted to uphold their decision and refused to change existing policies (Decker 1997). In response, local hunters contacted their representatives who eventually took authority away from the resource agency. As a result 1/3 of New York's deer population was mismanaged for over a quarter of a century (Decker 1997). It was not until power was redistributed, with the populace given equal footing, that the crisis was ameliorated -- a common trend I will discuss in more detail in the upcoming section Common Property: An Ecological Consideration.

The passive/receptive approach to NRM requires resource managers to listen to concerns of different stakeholders and place weight to these concerns prior to making decisions (Decker 1997). In this approach managers listen to the concerns of stakeholders but do not actively seek public input. Furthermore, resource managers decide what is the most important of these concerns, not the stakeholder. The result is that stakeholder concerns have little impact on the policy making process. Initiative in the collaboration process is solely the responsibility of the stakeholder as resource managers do not actively seek advice (Decker et al, 1997). During some instances, managers may interact with stakeholder groups, but generally interaction is avoided. At best the manager will take into account concerns of the public when making decisions with this approach (Decker et al, 1997). Clearly this management style does not fit the ACM model.

The inquisitive approach may be described as the antithesis of the passive/receptive approach. Here, resource practitioners (note: no longer managers) seek input from stakeholders, are engaged with the public during the decision-making process and place a lot of weight on public concerns when helping stakeholders develop policy (Decker 1997). With this approach, resource managers often utilize "systematic surveys" to gain a uniquely scientific understanding of stakeholder interests. This may be the most commonly used management style today and has produced a great many benefits (Decker 1997). This is closer, but the goal we seek is horizontal, dynamic adaptive governance.

The transactional approach to policy development greatly represents ACM. This approach requires practitioners to create and facilitate events in which stakeholders talk with one another about their concerns (Decker 1997). Traditionally, stakeholders met with resource managers separately, this transactional approach brings everyone together to address issues.

Additionally, transaction allows stakeholders to identify common ground in their conflicts, thus allowing negotiations to occur (Decker et al, 1997). More often than not, stakeholders reach a consensus on a management plan that suites the interests of involved parties. The role of the resource manager is to educate all stakeholders on the challenges that face resource management, facilitate discussion over complex issues, mediate debate between invested parties and allow collaboration to solve resource conflicts (Decker 1997).

The New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NY-DEC) practiced the transactional stakeholder approach to NRM in response to hunter discontent of New York's deer management program (Nelson 1992). In 1990, the NY DEC created citizen task forces (CTF's) to heavily influence policy. New York deer managers developed a forum and ground rules to allow various stakeholders to collaborate with one another (Nelson, 1992). Stakeholder discussions, with resource practitioners playing the role of resource experts, allowed citizens to negotiate the respective weight of their stakes throughout the process. The overall goal of the CTF's was to reach a consensus on deer population (Nelson, 1992). All important stakeholders were included, the resource managers discussed and informed these stakeholders about the challenges of resource management and a facilitator handled the meetings. Discussion among stakeholders was encouraged and everyone involved in the process had a clear understanding of each others interests (Nelson, 1992). Wildlife managers then helped participants determine management objectives. Overall, the transactional approach implored by the NY DEC has had resounding success (Nelson, 1992).

Finally, the co-managerial approach places great responsibility in the hands of the general public (Decker 1997). This approach recognizes the need for, and difficulty of, making resource decisions that meet the demands of stakeholders. To meet these challenges, this approach develops operational guidelines for managers and stakeholders while providing oversight, accountability and evaluation of the entire process (Decker 1997). This approach employs educational communication programs for all participants. This fully informs stakeholders about the process and challenge of NRM (Decker 1997). The resource practitioners provide expertise on what NRM is and establishes a management process to be followed by stakeholders. Furthermore, resource practitioners train community members in NRM, approve community management plans and monitor programs put in place (Decker 1997). The co-managerial approach requires resource agencies to work directly with stakeholders in local communities. The practice of

adaptive governance promotes collaboration with community members, while developing, implementing and monitoring management plans. The co-managerial stakeholder approach is a new and emerging practice in resource management as it is an evolution of the transactional approach (Decker 1997).

Of these alternative stakeholder approaches the transactional and co-managerial traditions of NRM are best suited to tackle the complex wicked problems facing resource management today. Human dimensions are growing continually important to the decision-making process. The two described stakeholder approaches work to redistribute power between resource agencies and the communities they serve. By practicing ACM, resource managers are able to make scientifically informed and community supported resource decisions. Human dimension considerations also provide a forum for honest communication among professionals, stakeholders and the community members who will be affected by management policies (Decker 1997). These approaches work to promote collaboration between agencies and people, thus promoting democratic decision-making. Engaging the citizenry while calling for public discourse and reasoned debate brings consensus and legitimacy to management decisions (Ostermier 2010). The public process also has the power to either expose or avoid agency capture, insuring the people's needs are being reflected, not the interests of state institutions or industry (Ostermier 2010). In the current environment, this approach assists a reclaiming of the commons because it redistributes power away from institutionalized authority only to labor towards a democratic alternative. The transactional and co-managerial stakeholder approaches consider and reflect upon public concerns when crafting resource policy.

A closer look at the NY DEC engagement of stakeholders to resolve the deer population conflict furthers the case for ACM to tackle today’s wicked problems. The NY DEC, due to public anger over deer management policies, needed to involve the community in the management process (Nelson 1992). The old management model put the wildlife manager at the heart of decisions making. After listening to everyone’s concerns, and reviewing available data, the wildlife manager alone dictated policy. The NY DEC promoted public hearings and interactions with stakeholders to develop policy. In a public hearing, each stakeholder would learn other concerns and positions (Nelson 1992). Stakeholders would also see how their input was used in the process. Furthermore, stakeholders would know the underlying interests of their opposition, find areas of common ground and be part of a collaborative process (Nelson 1992).

The NY DEC, in conjunction with the Human Dimensions Research Unit at Cornell University, developed their CTF's. The CTF's were used to bring opposing interests together and compile stakeholder recommendations to create management policy (Nelson, 1992). This approach takes the manager out of the middle of decision-making and places stakeholders at the heart of the process. The group determined what the deer population should be (Nelson, 1992). Group decision-making negates the idea of the agency pitted against the stakeholder. In addition, this eliminates the possibility of the loudest stakeholders dominating an entire hearing (Nelson 1992).

Aside from community input on deer management, the NY DEC also wanted to build relationships with stakeholders and the general public (Nelson 1992). The agency also desired to educate the public on deer biology and the challenges of deer management. These goals too were obtained through outreach and the development of CTF's.

The formation of the CTF's is groundbreaking. The process places the power of decision-making in the hands of those who will be directly affected by policy decisions. The resource practitioners have been able to educate the public about the issues of deer management thus allowing an informed and engaged citizenry to develop policy. The CTF's allow a direct and honest communication between all stakeholders and democratic decision-making follows. Opposing views are equally considered during these public meetings, compromises are made and ACM follows. Though challenges may certainly arise with this type of conflict resolution, the NY DEC has experienced great success with this process. By ceding power back to the people the agency built relationships throughout the community and involved the public in the resource management process (Ostermier 2010).

In a time of increasing complexity of the challenges facing NRM it is imperative that the public at large and resource professionals practice ACM. In our current social order the trend of resource practitioners to educate and inform the public about issues facing their communities should be championed. We live in a time of wicked problems, but with power continually growing in the commons resource practitioners can utilize public values, recommendations and preferences in their decision-making. Resource professionals also need to build working relationships with their communities. This relationship will foster greater stakeholder interest in the collaborative process and will promote consensus building around issues along with support for policy decisions. In conjunction with relationship building, it is imperative that resource practitioners are able to diffuse

conflicts among stakeholder groups. Resolving conflict and moving collaboration forward is essential to respond effectively to resource problems. Practitioners of ACM need to increase the quality of decision-making, offer advice when necessary and implement effective policies (Ostermier 2010).

Following the method of ACM it is easy to note the public also claims responsibility to the process. Stakeholders must take an active role in educating themselves about new challenges in resource management. It is beneficial for the public to address resource challenges in a civil manner and have honest communication with other stakeholders and resource specialists. Conflict would be better resolved if approached in a responsible and effective way. Stakeholders, with their new leadership role, are willing to build on common ground and compromise to develop a best management practice. The public is needed to fill the role of discussing management issues while reaching consensus on sound resource policies (Ostermier 2010).

The role of the commons stands out, utilization of stakeholder approaches in policy making is now a necessity for the development of management plans. This requires stakeholders to effectively engage the management process. The human dimensions of NRM are of growing importance. If this trend continues, full participation and power in the commons is the logical conclusion of such practice.

II. Conflict and Resolution

ACM would be incredibly successful under a common regime because diverse human values and perspectives would be taken into consideration. Over the years, there has been a shift in our institutions as they move away from anthropocentric utilitarian ideals towards a more sustainable ethic. Utility still plays a major role in society, but the recent shift to the ecosystem services approach of resource management reflects an emerging intrinsic value perspective. As western values change, at the personal level, society is beginning to relate more to place. Policy of state is still unsustainable, but the trend of adaptive governance is real -- we are living in the period of transition. But how did we get here, and how can we push ourselves ever more forward?

Power systems view natural resources as a means of maximizing utility (Wilson 2010). This anthropocentric outlook over resources expanded throughout the early history of the United States at the behest of

imperialism and capitalism. As the United States gained power in the world the nation continually waged military campaigns to acquire more land and resources (Zinn 2003). Early US history (from events such as the trail of tears, the war of 1812, manifest destiny and others) reflect the conquering of land from indigenous people or weaker nation states to obtain large tracts of land, enclosed property and new resources (Zinn 2003). As time progressed and the industrial revolution occurred unchecked capitalism viewed land as a commodity (Wilson 2010). As the natural world suffered from this unchecked capitalism, so too did the commons. Capitalism ensures the populace has little or no control over their individual labor or the means of production. Take Appalachia for example. In my C4SS commentary, *Wild, Wonderful and Free* I explain the impact of capital and industry on common governance:

> Before industry came to the mountains a unique form of common governance existed. Communities obtained subsistence from the surrounding old growth forest. Everyone understood not to claim more than necessary from the commons. This governance naturally produced the maximum sustainable yield of resources. Locals labored, bartered and brought goods to market together.
>
> As European expansion claimed the new world, land became the ultimate commodity and all eyes were fixed on the pristine forests of Appalachia. Enclosure movements commenced as a cash economy developed in the region for the first time. By the early 19th century violent confrontations ruined native populations. The mass slaughter of indigenous people culminated in the Trail of Tears, eradicating tribes from Appalachian governance.
>
> Decades later, in post-Civil War America, mountain settlers were coaxed into selling mineral rights to would-be industry barons. Broad form deeds were developed to acquire local lands. Mineral rights were obtained for less than a dollar an acre as mountaineers maintained surface rights. Clauses in these deeds, however, allowed industrialists to take over the land at the company’s discretion for resource extraction – even if such acquisition would surprise grandchildren decades later. Locals were forced off of their property to line the pockets of absentee capitalists, often by rights that had been sold generations before. By the end of the Industrial Revolution coal reigned as king.

> Industry came to own a vast amount of property in the Central and Southern Appalachians, affording barons incredible power over mountain communities. Company towns popped up near mining operations. Workers lived in company barracks, were paid in company scrip and were required to purchase goods at the company store. Mono-economies developed across the coalfields that still persist today.[17]

The rise of industrial capitalism deeply scarred landscapes as vast areas of land were managed for maximum utility. This rise has been long, but at the turn of the industrial revolution a growing social consciousness and awareness of the socio-economic divide -- the many poor, and the few wealthy -- gave rise to alternative movements. There is much history to discuss, far outside the boundaries of this study, but in regards to place society developed an idea that all human beings, culture and natural heritage deserved moral consideration. This idea of cautionary utility for all then began to consider future generations. The thought of preservation of the natural world and saving resources for posterity sparked a political and environmental movement throughout the West (Wilson 2010).

In the 20th century there also emerged non-anthropocentric views of the natural world -- property management could yield a mutualist relationship between human civilization and the surrounding ecology (Wilson 2010). This emerging consensus extended moral standing to organisms other than human beings. A humane movement has evolved, re-emerging views about the intrinsic value of the entire biosphere and ecosystems became again part of the national conscience. The environmental movement throughout the 20th, and on into the 21st century has reached great heights and is discussed regularly in social, economic and political arenas. The environmental movement today remains deeply political as western values continue to evolve. Climate change, environmental justice, sustainability and other issues are common dinner table discussions for many.

This evolution of western values has unique consequences for NRM. In an era of state controlled institutions laboring to understand the worldview and personal relationship community members have with the natural world can help reduce conflict and further democratic decision-making (Morford 2003). By understanding the public’s relationship with nature, both resource practitioners and stakeholders can mitigate conflict. Actively pursuing a

17 http://c4ss.org/content/33508

cultural awareness will help community members feel comfortable with the ACM process (Morford 2003). Public hearings can be very personal, both resource practitioners and stakeholders must become aware of cultural values and world views. It is also important to note how opposing viewpoints can exacerbate conflict (Morford 2003). Practitioners will have to respect opposing views and continually clarify what others have said to ensure collaboration. For public participation to be successful, resource practitioners, along with stakeholders, will have to learn, understand and respect differing ideas (Morford 2003). For resource practitioners, understanding the evolution of values will help develop the ACM process by bringing the public's idea of the natural world, sense of place and social views together (Morford 2003).

The importance of place and the attachments people share with them directly affects NRM. Sense of place re-enforces the need of NRM to continue the transformation from anthropocentrism to a sustainable property management ethic. Respect of the land is a demand of place attachment, furthermore, sustainable land use practices, along with community involvement in the land use process, is of growing importance (Freyfogle 1998). Land use utilizes both the public and private realms of our institutions, when this is realized, new visions of our landscapes will evolve to benefit individuals, communities and the natural world. NRM, with respect for land and the people attached to it, will maximize benefits to the environment, ecological communities and our neighborhoods (Freyfogle 1998).

In terms of resource use, place conflicts are unavoidable. The role of the resource practitioner is to minimize these impacts (Ostermier 2010). To be successful at this, in recent years professionals have labored to understand the place they are working in. This means understanding community members and obtaining information on their cultural and natural ties to property (Ostermier, 2010). These resource managers now take time to learn about land and space that is significant to people. This new development encourages practitioners to labor and leave as little impact on place connections as possible. To do so, common interests are discovered and collaborative management plans are developed to protect special areas (Ostermier 2010). Under the traditional DAD approach to governance this was not the case. A paradigm shift has occurred.

Many professionals now learn cultural ties to the land, the history between land and people and the connectedness local stakeholders share with their land. If the decentralised theme continues, resource decisions will be based on the interaction between property and the sociopolitical processes that act upon it. Professionals today need to share their decision-making power with stakeholders. Because of recent paradigm shifts this is a growing trend. ACM is essential to the resource management process, allowing experts to educate stakeholders and take careful consideration of connectedness to place (Cheng 2003). In an ever-changing world, the human dimensions of NRM are growing increasingly important to policy, conflict resolution and the achievement of a more just and sustainable world. Furthermore, to the libertarian, trends of adaptive governance underlie a more important current: One of changing institutions and a reclaiming of the commons.

Human Dimensions: Changing Institutions

There are a growing number of complex problems facing NRM and society. In the face of these problems it has become apparent that a reevaluation of the relationship between the public at large with the state, market and civic institutions is necessary to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Effective communication is imperative to uphold public welfare, seek justice and solve the issues confronting civilization. Furthermore, the public needs to continually challenge institutions to ensure their practices are legitimate. If a power structure wields illegitimate authority, which is usually the case, then it should be dismantled. This power, once institutionalized, will be liberated and reclaimed in common. The growing importance and successes of collaboration and partnerships in NRM indicates the need for an informed and engaged citizenry to work with each other in the public arena to develop sustainable resource policies that protect both the land and biosphere.

There are a number of institutions involved in NRM. Being that natural resources are a public good and that said resources are neither rival nor excludable, in the current market state institutions perhaps hold the most authority in regard to resource management (Armsworth, 2010). In recent decades, the environmental movement has been strengthened greatly by the formation of both large and small non-profit organizations (Armsworth, 2010). The civic sector has become a viable environmental force. The non-profit movement has been very efficient in promoting the sustainable use of resources at the local level. Their subsistence is imperative to the changing

world of resource management. As these institutions become well-known and respected in their communities this will allow non-profits to implement conservation strategies more effective than the state – another transition of power. Finally, market institutions greatly affect resource policy as well. In recent years, the emerging idea of investing in ecosystem services has prompted an economic movement to sustainably manage resources. However, under the corporate state, there also remain very powerful capitalist institutions with enough political clout to ensure the continuance of exploitative, often hegemonic, resource policies.

I. Systems of Governance

With a wide range of astounding resources all tiers of government have become involved in environmental policy (Armsworth 2010). Institutions at the multilateral (World bank, IMF, UN, EU, etc), national (federal government), regional (state governments) and local (city council, municipalities) all work to manage natural resource issues. In the United States, all branches of government are also involved in NRM. The legislative branch creates resource policy and author laws that dictate the use of our resources (Armsworth 2010). The judicial branch interprets and decides how these laws are to be applied. Finally, the executive branch and its multiple environmental agencies practice and enforce resource policy (Armsworth 2010). Just a few examples of major federal reforms are the Clean Water Act (CWA), Endangered Species Act (ESA), and the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA). These policies, along with many others, directly affect NRM.

There are three principal tools governments utilize in NRM. First, government defines the rules of resource management for both the civic and private sector. One example of government mitigation is the establishment of acceptable conductivity for groundwater; this is a concern for extractive resource industries that introduce heavy metals to watersheds. The federal government also enforces laws regulating the legal limit of environmental impact allowed. Again, examples of this are the ESA and the CWA. Also, through conservation easements and exempting non-profits from taxes, government utilizes the tax system to allow others to move forward with resource related issues. The state also purchases and manages public lands. The federal government owns 650 million acres of land in the United States. This is approximately 25% of the country's total landscape (Armsworth 2010). This has major implications for NRM.

Government institutions also exercise the authority to buy resource management responsibilities from other parties. A recent practice of the US Department of Agriculture under the Farm Bill has distributed 1.6 billion dollars a year to farmers to establish 10 year agreements to manage conservation initiatives on their land (Armsworth 2010). As a result, the government manages resources on 31 million acres of privately owned property. The federal government also outsources NRM responsibilities to non-profit organizations. This is done by awarding numerous grants to civic sector institutions along with establishing a tax exempt status for these organizations (Armsworth 2010).

For all the hype, government policies do not always garnish desirable results. Conflict currently exists between the regulatory state and the elite, but it is latent. Utility monopolies such as Duke-Progress Energy and the Tennessee Valley Authority (among others), coupled with industry giants King Coal, Big Oil and Fracked Gas have a lock on the energy market. Because of the state-capitalist system other market players (and people like you and I) remain economically dependent on these elite. The state knows this and is loyal to them. Its economic strength is fueled by the energy industry. Take, for example, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Bush Administration. In 2002 the Administration reclassified mining waste as permissible fill material under section 404 of the CWA. Because of this redefinition, the process of valley fill has been deemed legal for coal surface mine operations and dangerous pollutants such as arsenic, sulfates and selenium found in mine waste have made their way into the streams, tributaries and wetlands of Appalachia. This change in the interpretation of the law has allowed the massive acceleration of mountaintop removal permits and requires mining waste to be dumped into Appalachian waters. Aside from the environmental concerns, this has devastated the Appalachian rural poor by creating a mono-economy, controlled by the coal industry, all with a negative effect on public health. The relationship between our government and corporate special interest has a history of exploiting innocent people and our natural resources. People's movements across the country have been evoked due to this relationship.

Counter to the state, the non-profit sector has gained considerable power in the past few years as more organizations develop. Environmentally oriented non-profits are growing at a larger rate than any other civic sector initiative (Armsworth, 2010). These organizations have effected many aspects of NRM. This is because there are multiple organizations with diverse management objectives. The result is an eclectic set of institutions with

diverse management strategies. The civic sector is composed of large organizations such as the Nature Conservancy which operates both internationally and nationally, to local organizations such as the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and my previous employer Clean Water for North Carolina.

The growing importance of the civic sector cannot be ignored. Bill Bradly, a former democratic congressman, repeatedly stresses this point. In a 1998 article to the National Civic Review, Bradley states: “Never has a real vision come out of Washington and never has a real vision stemmed from just one of our political parties.” Bradley stresses the civic sector is more effective in defining a common purpose with local community members and stakeholders. This allows non-profits to negotiate consensus on, and agreements to, resource management issues at the local level. Non-profit organizations are effective because of their independence from the corporate sector and their ability to work on the ground in communities (Bradley 1998). The ethos of these organizations have greatly prompted public trust in their approach to NRM and has made them an effective force in the environmental movement (Bradley 1998).

The rise of non-profits are also very important politically. These organizations, especially at the local level, are composed of everyday citizens that are concerned about the well-being of their cultural and natural heritage. This allows for organization at the grassroots, alleviating restrictions over the discussion of NRM in terms of environmental sustainability, public health and the concept of environmental justice. Many non-profits are products of, and continue to build, people's movements against destructive resource agendas while advocating smart management initiatives to protect our environment, place and people.

Though there have been many accomplishments achieved by the civic sector, these institutions too must be closely monitored by society. New reports suggest that a number of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO’s) are in fact not actually NGO’s (Schott 2010). Instead, these organizations have been classified as GONGO’s or rather Government Organized Non-Governmental Organizations. These particular groups are not only funded by, but are fully staffed and supported by government (Schott 2010). What is most striking about GONGO’s is that being a government operation, they do not seek to bring change to the system, but to control and manage change (Schott 2010). The ethics and motivations of these institutions must be gauged to ensure that their interests positively affect humanity.

Market institutions also heavily influence NRM. The market system includes small business's and large multinational companies that have corporate policies that directly affect our resources. Some of these institutions consider sustainable resource management as a social responsibility, others use their relationship with the state to enforce policies that are detrimental to our land, water and air. The emerging idea of investing in ecosystem services is gaining the attention of some market institutions and environmental restoration and conservation initiatives have developed. Rio Tinto, for example, is one of the worlds largest mining and mineral companies (Armsworth 2010). The company operates in some of the most sensitive areas of the world in terms of biodiversity. Corporate policy dictates that their mining operations must be offset by a net-positive gain in biodiversity in another area (Armsworth 2010).

Though investment in sustainable NRM is on the rise, economic globalization has had detrimental impacts to natural resources around the planet. Wendell Berry often explains how the growth of factory farms and agribusiness has taken jobs away from local farmers. As industrialization continually forces locally owned farms and business's closed it removes the ability for communities to produce their own food and other necessities (Berry 2002). In terms of natural resources, Berry explains that rules imposed on farmland from mega-corporations result in soil loss, genetic impoverishment of our crops and contamination of our groundwater. In many cases, industrial economies impoverish communities they move into (Berry 2002). As natural resources in an area are exploited by large industries, the local uniqueness and cultural heritage of the area simultaneously diminishes (Berry 2002). Furthermore, there still remain state enforced laws such as compulsory pooling and eminent domain that serve to allow big polluters to disregard property rights and wreck natural habitats that naturally offer the ecosystem service of carbon sequestration. There still remain intellectual property laws that permit patent monopoly, producing a barrier to competition in the market. As argued previously, the current captured market is undesirable.

"Growth at any cost" economics, the dogma of neo-liberalism and government institutions, utilizes precious landscapes and resources needed for ecological subsistence. Even programs that seek mechanisms for conservation, such as the United Nation's REDD (Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation), inadvertently promote the total exploitation of natural areas simply because regulation diverts resource extraction to unprotected land/seascapes. Enclosure movements (acquisition of territories for the state or private capital) more often than

not exploit natural landscapes. To the contrary, democratic management of natural areas has resulted in best sustainability practices.

The freed market, operating underneath the spontaneous order, is categorically different, however. The work of Nobel Prize recipient Elinor Ostrom demonstrates environmental protection increases with Common Pool Resource Institutions. Arun Agrawal, in his work *Environmentality*, notes sustainable forest policy emerged in the Kumoan region of the Himalayas as a result of decentralized, democratically controlled resource management. In our cities, the establishment of urban wilderness areas popping up around the globe, from the labor of civic sector institutions and private citizens, are protecting large expanses of forest and crucial habitat from economic exploitation -- my favorite example hails from the Scruffy City of Knoxville, Tennessee, where over 1,000 acres of forested habitat is preserved. I will explore all of these in more detail in a later section.

There are many more examples of freed markets protecting wilderness and ecosystem services. This protection simultaneously provides ancillary benefits to all flora and fauna -- including humans. Government institutions and concentrations of private capital are all too often hurdles to the implementation of policies that can ease the current biodiversity crisis.

II. Common Institutions

Institutions administer both positive and negative impacts to society. Perhaps their greatest benefit is their openness -- in the true public arena, the commons, people have the power to sway the opinion of their institutions as they are democratically operated. The public’s ability to change policy is very empowering because this responsibility calls for everyday people to become an active force in the advancement of their communities. The question then becomes, how is the best way to ensure our civic participation? The answer lies in responsible and just policy crafted by common regimes. At the local or regional level, people advance non-profits they believe in via philanthropy, donations or becoming members or volunteers. As more citizens become active and engaged, true grass-roots movements develop. Peoples movements have the power to alter all of their institutions, ensuring they work to better society and use natural resources sustainably. Put simply, power is best when shared in common.

A reconstruction of both public and private institutions is necessary to allow future generations to inherit a world of social responsibility and environmental sustainability. History is full of people's movements

achieving great victories against institutional oppression. Social movements must progress society towards an economic system that does not seek to achieve maximum profit; instead, economic systems should utilize their capital to provide for the public good. This is the mutualist political economy, where decentralized communities own their labor and influence the means of production thus advancing civil and individual liberty.

Perhaps the most important deconstruction of power to be made is that of imperialism. Wars are fought for the attainment of natural resources, not the absurd notion of a national interest. There is no greater conflict between people and their institutions than that of war because war ends lives. Utilizing natural resources to build weapons of war for the conquest of more natural resources can no longer be accepted. War as means of resolving conflict must be eliminated because technology today allows for the indiscriminate killing of mass amounts of innocent people. No longer can a “just” war be waged because human beings cannot protect themselves from armed forces in possession of great machines and weapons of war. In regards to the commons, governments will not protect natural resources. Nation-states work as rational actors to advance their own self interests and expand their power, largely through exploitation of natural resources. There is an inherent conflict of interest among states -- the state with the most territory has the most resources for consumption. States will not share a territory or resource for too long. This is why war (be it military or economic) is the health of the state -- it provides a monopoly over a territory and thus its resources. The state will only enhance the complex problems facing the world today. Progress, development, growth and industry are the objectives of states. States and their supported industries are rapidly using up the common pool resource base to enhance their own power. It is the name of the game. Nation-states are large, bloated structures that require tons of resources -- they will never protect the commons.

Free people will develop alternative federations and institutions to protect resources, however. It happens every day. People are becoming more aware of what burdens their societies. Education and awareness of public and environmental health are fostering concern for natural resources. Though markets are still largely controlled by the corporate state, liberation is coming. Contrary to the state, the liberated market, controlled and crafted by free human beings, will build the sustainable communities of tomorrow. Indeed, only in a liberated society, with no political boundaries, will human civilization realize its relationship with the environment. States can only destroy, never create. It is individual labor and initiative that enriches the

commons, not executive decree. Common power would ensure best use of finite resources, beneficial ecosystem services and property, thus ending the vicious cycle of global warfare for the attainment of more resources.

It is wise to be continually suspicious of authority -- such suspicion allows the public to reclaim illegitimate institutions. This can create a world in which individuals are truly free -- liberated from the ill effects of concentrated power. This is worthy, and I would argue necessary, of our labor. Perhaps the closing paragraphs of Arthur C. Clarkes, *Profiles of the Future* best describe why:

> One thing seems certain. Our galaxy is now in the brief springtime of its life -- a springtime made glorious by such brilliant blue-white stars as Vega and Sirius, and, on a more humble scale, our own Sun. Not until all these have flamed through their incandescent youth, in a few fleeting billions of years, will the real history of the universe begin.
>
> It will be a history illuminated only by the reds and infrareds of dully glowing stars that would be almost invisible to our eyes; yet the sombre hues of that all-but-eternal universe may be full of colour and beauty to whatever strange beings have adapted to it. They will know that before them lie, not the millions of years in which we measure eras of geology, nor the billions of years which span the past lives of the stars, but years to be counted literally in the trillions.
>
> They will have time enough, in those endless aeons, to attempt all things, and to gather all knowledge. They will be like gods, because no gods imagined by our minds have ever possessed the powers they will command. But for all that, they may envy us, basking in the bright afterglow of creation; for we knew the universe when it was young.[18]

As a species, one day humankind will cease to exist. Whether there exists an opportunity to evolve, or if the rules of nature or hegemony force our extinction, in time, humanity will be realized as nothing more than a fleeting moment in the history of space. Perhaps the rise of our civilizations will remain a silent memory for all the eons that follow. For all of that, here we are, with one another, basking in the bright afterglow of creation. We have but one bright and shining moment, such a precious space, for our

18 http://books.google.com/books?id=ch19NjEERFMC&dq=Profiles+of+the+Future&hl=en&sa=X&ei=o8puVNzdEZD6iAK1mYHgBg&ved=0CCgQ6AEwAA

inclined labor to craft a beautiful existence. If we achieve such a feat, we will know what it means to be free -- such grandeur is only attainable in liberty.

Common Property: A Neighborhood Consideration

Hennri Lefebvre,[19] a French sociologist, is most famous for his observation that there are no neutral spaces in the city. The city center should be rich in places that can be occupied by the public. Most venues, however, are spaces of capital exclusions and barriers exist everywhere. Even the geography of the city is affected by this power system, creating spaces of privilege and spaces of disparity, blocked apart by neighborhoods, zoning laws and manipulated by the gentry.

Lefebvre strongly believed in the commons, however, holding that the public had the right to common utilization of city space without restriction. In this view, being an agent in the city is not dependent on wealth or property ownership, but by participation in ones community -- an idea deemed the “right to the city.”

In the same tradition, political economist Elinor Ostrom, in her groundbreaking work, *Governing the Commons*[20] (1990), showed that common management led to more democratic and far more efficient systems of governance than that of private capital or state control. It is important to note that this is the result of action -- reclaiming the commons requires an active, participatory populace. In his piece in Aeon magazine, *Cities Belong to Us*,[21] urban historian Leo Hollis explains:

> Through violent and defiant protests, provocative performances, citizen action, even unsolicited horticulture, the battle for civic space continues to reinvent itself. Sometimes, the action starts in reaction to the state. Other times, it kicks off because the powers-that-be are too slow to react to events, and local residents or campaigners take matters into their own hands, taking the urban domain to be a common realm rather than "someone else’s problem".

People are proud of their communities, long for clean, safe neighborhoods and a healthy environment to live out their lives. It is also a desire of many to feel connected to their community. This longing is why social power and common property are so important -- place and action are connected.

19 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henri_Lefebvre
20 http://www.kuhlen.name/MATERIALIEN/eDok/governing_the_commons1.pdf
21 http://aeon.co/magazine/society/cities-thrive-when-public-space-is-really-public/

Common property ownership demands the inclined labor of the citizenry.

“This place is our place.” This is the mantra of the commons. The ramifications of this statement are revolutionary. As such, the state and concentrations of capital seek its destruction – but the people do rise. In this section, I wish to discuss state violence against the commons and growth coalitions in the city that threaten common stewardship of property. I will then identify ACM as praxis for moving forward.

I. People's Park – Then and Now

The University of California, Berkley, was a hotbed of political activity in the 1960′s. The civil rights movement, anti-Vietnam War movement and the feminist movement were all forces on campus -- movement participants were ready colleagues who assisted each other in their respective cause. On the Berkley campus, libertarians and the New Left worked together and squared off against the state, corporate interests and, the newly elected Governor of California, Ronald Reagan.

Dissent persisted throughout the decade of change, but perhaps the greatest confrontation between state and social power occurred at the People's Park in 1969. Here in the people’s park, dedicated students, members of the “public” university, took control of corporate land on their campus that was held under the dominion of the state of California.

The existing property was muddy and dormant. The space lied in the hands of absentee landowners to, one day, become a for profit parking lot. The student activists turned it into a park. Using a wide variety of tools, after days of manual labor, the students dug up the Earth and transformed the land into a student commons -- access was open to the Berkley community. The space became a gathering ground for students and a safe haven for the cities homeless. The students argued at this public university that they had every right to reclaim the corporate controlled property for common use. The creation of the people’s park represented a new way of looking at property and looking at the distribution of power throughout the Berkley community. The park resembled an image of a new society -- a decentralized participatory system, as opposed to a space for capital.

The University did not take the acquisition lightly -- college administrators and corporate bureaucrats turned to the state. As supporters of the park argued the university was a public institution and thus the will of the student body should be upheld. Reagan instead put his support behind

state property under private contract.

Reagan called in the National Guard, as they marched onto campus fully loaded in combat gear violence soon followed. In a violent clash with the student body, riots ensued. Images of tear gas and batons soon filled the news. When questioned about the use of force on the student body, Reagan noted: “We cannot choose the laws we obey just because of social protest.” The state took control of the park and fenced it in. The military presence occupied Berkley for a month -- and the movement changed.

To raise awareness about state violence and the closure of the park, a peaceful demonstration was planned for the campus. Students and community members gathered at the University plaza to denounce the police treatment of students, the National Guard occupation of the campus and town of Berkley, as well as the hostility the University displayed towards the park. The gathering was a typical non-violent demonstration -- full of cheers, jeers and chants. Jentri Anders, a student at Berkley attended the rally that day. In the documentary film, *Berkley in the 60′s*, she describes the violent actions taken by the state to kill the demonstrations:

> Everybody on the outside of the police line was running to try and get away from the gas. Everybody on the inside of the police line was trying to get out and police were beating people as they tried to get out. We went back to Grover Hall and waited for my friend to show up. She had been through the mill. She had been throwing up, it was nausea gas. So we drove up to the rose garden. We were standing up there at the rose garden looking out across the campus and the helicopters were still circling around…. I said I don’t think we can stay here anymore. It was a very poignant moment. We all felt very defeated.[22]

The response was indeed incredibly violent. The state, police and the National Guard set their sights on unarmed student activists. Endorsed by Reagan, these state officials moved into the plaza and attacked the populace with fixed bayonets, they shot into the defenseless crowd, wounded 70 people and murdered James Rector. All of this as helicopters flew over the student body, who were caged in the plaza by police and sprayed with burning mace. Karl Hess and Murray Rothbard, in their piece *Massacre at People’s Park* condemn the action:

> The issues are crystal-clear: the armed, brutal, oppressive forces of the State stomping upon peaceful, unarmed, homesteading citizens.

22 http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0099121/

> Anyone who fails to raise his voice in absolute condemnation of this reign of terror, anyone who equivocates or excuses or condones, can no longer call himself a libertarian. On the contrary, he thereby ranges himself with the forces of despotism; he becomes part of the Enemy.[23]

The violent actions taken to disrupt the commons in 1969 still exist today. The events in Ferguson, Missouri, following the shooting death of teenager Michael Brown offer a corollary to the events of Berkley.

Following a vigil for the slain teen, community members squared off against police. What started as a protest regarding police brutality was soon met with military force. The police in Ferguson ascended on the town dressed in military garb, with M-4 carbine automatic rifles, sound machines, tear gas and military vehicles. What has evolved in the time since this first confrontation is the “Hands Up, Don’t Shoot”[24] movement.

Central to the story of Ferguson is the local QuikTrip gas station. On the second night of protests the store was looted and burned, but in the days that followed the property was reclaimed and served as a space for organizing and the exchange of information. The front of the store lot even bore the sign “QT People’s Park.” As in Berkley, police power soon peppered those gathering in the lot with tear gas. Just three short days after the park was occupied as public space, the police fenced off the lot. There are no longer social gatherings on the property, no demonstrations, no music or dance and no organizing. A story in the Washington Post, covering the QT People’s Park closes with the following:

> On the large metal post that once displayed the red and white QT logo, one person spray-painted “The QT People’s Park. Liberated 8/10/14.” But on Monday, police cleared the lot, removing the dozens of people who had been gathered there for days. The signs were torn down. And on Tuesday morning, a newly constructed wire fence protected the gas station at the corner. A group of men in hard hats and yellow vests worked to pick up debris and drain the gasoline from tanks beneath the pavement. They moved quickly, and silently. A single news crew shot a stand-up on the corner. But after a few takes, they left. Nothing happening here anymore. The lot is private property, so the protesters had no right to assemble there. As rapidly as it had sprouted, it was gone.

23 http://mises.org/journals/lf/1969/1969_06_15.pdf
24 http://appalachianson.wordpress.com/2014/08/19/hands-up-dont-shoot/

Is it that open and close, however? It is proper to question the legitimacy of the statement: “The lot is private property, so the protesters had no right to assemble there.” The lot had become a rallying point for the community of Ferguson. State senator Maria Chappelle-Nadal, a central figure of the Ferguson protests, told the Washington Post that the lot became a point of pride for the community: “These people have no other place, so they've made it their own.” The common control of property is legitimate, the coercive state justifies it use of force in closing off the park as necessary for protecting private property.

The lot still lies vacant, however, and no individual for some time will labor on the space. The lot was reclaimed, even if it it was private property, the gassing and clubbing of the new occupiers by state agents was brutal, unnecessary and criminal. This state sanctioned violence far worse than behavior with a simple charge of “failure to disperse.”

The state does not want common control of property. When the true public arena is discovered nothing but massive decentralization is sure to follow. As seen in Berkley nearly six decades ago, and in Ferguson today, the state will deploy brutal and violent tactics to remain in control of the public sector.

A revolutionary moment is inevitable, however, and such a moment will allow us to reclaim the commons -- it is a cause that is just and it begins simply through civic participation. Protest is just one example of engaging the power structure, there are many more. The emergence of new technologies and our global connectedness has an incredible liberating capacity. There exists a constant push throughout human history to decentralize when the time is optimal. The emergence of democracy, for example, shows off this trait. We are connected. With each social movement that results in the abolition of illegitimate authority we take one step closer to the commons and the mutualist political economy[25] that awaits.

II. The Growth Machine

In 1976, urban sociologist Harvey Molotch published his landmark paper *The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place*.[26] In his work, Molotch turned the prevailing dogma of urban space on its head. Molotch objects to the idea that cities are the product of competition

25 http://www.mutualist.org/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/MPE.pdf
26 http://phobos.ramapo.edu/~vasishth/Readings/Molotch-City_As_Growth_Machine.pdf

between rational actors for property. In short, the prevailing idea of his time was that the spatial construct of urban systems were developed from market competition -- this idea was wrong and Molotch knew it.

Our urban spaces are as complex as the power structures that govern them. It is important to remember though, that the power structures of local governance are different from the halls of power of the nation-state. Local power structures exist as land-based growth coalitions -- they wish to enclose property for maximum utility. This utility often leaves them at odds with local neighborhoods, as they are invaded, stolen via eminent domain or compulsory pooling, polluted and/or developed (Domhoff 2005). Growth, the urban mentality, does not benefit everyone – it is largely the affluent coalitions that profit off of the current distribution of property. As sociologist William Domhoff (2005) explains:

> A local power structure is at its core an aggregate of land-based interests that profit from increasingly intensive use of land. It is a set of property owners who see their futures as linked together because of a common desire to increase the value of their individual parcels. Wishing to avoid any land uses on adjacent parcels that might decrease the value of their properties, they come to believe that working together is to the benefit of each and everyone of them. Starting from the level of individual ownership of pieces of land, a "growth coalition" arises that develops a "we" feeling among its members even if they differ on other kinds of political and social issues.

The "we" feeling Domhoff describes is exacerbated when pro-growth land interests attract opponents to property development. These challengers are community members -- neighborhoods and civic sector institutions with common interests. It is conflict that arises out of these competing interests that determine the spatial geography of the city. The power structure is responsible for increased suburbanization and gentrification for the affluent, urban renewal for spaces of capital and the disenfranchised parts of town – namely ghettoization and working class neighborhoods cut off from the urban center (Domhoff 2005). Spaces of capital invade the city, thus human labor, especially of the working poor and working class is trapped in these spaces. Property is carefully divided in the city and usually benefits the growth coalitions who wish to obtain rent from property (land or developed space), as Harvey Molotch (1987) explains:

> Unlike the capitalist, the place entrepreneur's goal is not profit from production, but rent from trapping human activity in place. Besides sale prices and regular payments made by tenants to landlords, we take rent to include, more broadly, outlays made to realtors, mortgage lenders, title companies, and so forth. The people who are involved in generating rent are the investors in land and buildings and the professionals who serve them. We think of them as a special class among the privileged, analogous to the classic "rentiers" of a former age in a modern urban form. Not merely a residue of a disappearing social group, rentiers persist as a dynamic social force.

As capital is produced from rent, growth coalitions often look to government to create an environment friendly for capitalist control of space. There exists tension between the corporate sector, government and these growth coalitions. The relationship is certainly not a healthy one. However, in the neo-liberal era, a favorable relationship does exist for spaces of capital, as opposed to spaces to be owned in common. Of course profit is not the argument made by these institutions in their self-justification -- the appropriations create jobs. In actuality their appropriations are thefts of property and common labor. Molotch (1976) describes the situation:

> Perhaps the key ideological prop for the growth machine, especially in terms of sustaining support from the working-class majority, is the claim that growth "makes jobs." This claim is aggressively promulgated by developers, builders, and local chambers of commerce. It becomes part of the statesman talk of editorialists and political officials. Such people do not speak of growth as useful to profits–rather, they speak of it as necessary for making jobs.

This structure of growth and the political forces within the city that exemplify the importance of advancing the ideas of adaptive governance and ACM. Property (space) and land are resources of utmost importance in the city. With increased stakeholder involvement in the decisions over how such resources will be utilized, policy that reflects the common good will be more prevalent in our urban landscapes. The goal of ACM, as mentioned in previous sections of this study, is to redistribute power equally among all stakeholders -- ending domination of the policy process. There is political success in common, however, as social movements develop and claim their right to governance; as Domhoff illustrates in this list from his publication *Power at the Local Level: Growth Coalition Theory*[27] (2005):

27 http://http//www2.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/local/growth_coalition_theory.html

1. Urban renewal increased tensions rather than resolving them, leaving cities in a greater state of fear and uncertainty.
2. Demands by African-Americans to integrate neighborhoods and schools put the growth coalitions in a bind because they feared increased white flight if the demands were met. Most growth coalitions tried to walk a tightrope, some more successfully than others.
3. Many local banks and corporations were bought up by even larger corporations from outside the city, or moved their headquarters to even larger cities, leaving the growth coalitions holding the bag. Some growth coalitions then fragmented.
4. Up-scale neighborhoods, environmentalists, left-wing activists fresh from Civil Rights and anti-war struggles, and well-educated high-tech workers passed slow-growth legislation or blocked specific projects in some cities.
5. Low-income people in small towns and urban neighborhoods, often led by women and minorities, became part of an environmental justice movement that resisted the creation of chemical dumps and waste treatments plants in their areas (Szasz, 1994).
6. Unions based in service workers and government employees later joined the slow-growth, pro-neighborhood coalitions in some major cities.

With increased civic participation in the ACM process, it follows logically that challenges to these growth coalitions and spaces of capital would result in a true commons. In our urban areas, the commons would be a space communities understand as open to all for public benefit. Enclosure of the commons for capital or monopoly, as championed by absentee landlords and those who appropriate rent for profit, would be considered aggression against the entire community. This is not to say private property should not, or cannot, exist in the city -- it is a legitimate form of property and thus permitted. This is to say, however, that along with private property there would also exist robust common space.

Common property within urban political boundaries would mean common ownership of production, usage of factories and the wealth produced from these activities. It would also mean the conservation of space, as the freed market mechanism would naturally provide economic incentive to protect and conserve the ancillary benefits awarded to the commons from ecosystem services. Decisions pertaining to urban space would follow the

ACM model, thus liberating the populace from growth coalitions, concentrations of private capital and the theft of space.

Common Property: An Ecological Consideration

We are living through Earth’s sixth great mass extinction crisis -- on par with the rate that ended the reign of the dinosaurs, thus terminating the Mesozoic. As flora and fauna continue their precipitous decline, geologists and ecologists are again looking at the geologic timescale -- a system of chronological measurements that relate rock strata with time. The timescale is divided by major moments in Earth’s history -- the most common divisions are in recognition of mass extinctions and the subsequent great radiations of life. As we experience this modern biodiversity crisis a new epoch is being contemplated, and it is already (unofficially) in wide use -- welcome to the Anthropocene.

The Anthropocene marks the complete human dominance of the Earth system. This dominance effects a range of topics from human health to the politics we address. Our dominance raise important questions: How, and perhaps more importantly, by whom, did this dominance arise and how, and by whom, should these ever important issues be addressed?

This ecological challenge requires constant revision of natural resource management/policy. If we are honest about the limitations of our natural ecosystems, however, and implement policies that best fit the needs, health and demands of an informed society and its natural heritage, then we also need to take conversations about the nature of governance very seriously. What is governance, where should its power lie, how can its influence best support a healthy, sustainable, ordered biosphere?

This final question has often been used to once again argue the great fallacy that state power is legitimate -- it is not. The state's property monopoly has yielded a continual process of compromise between conservationists, big business and government courts resulting in ever more encroachment on needed habitat. Government and industry continually sacrifice natural lands for development to fuel its consumption, which makes it necessary for the state and industry to sacrifice more natural areas.

Common property management, however, works to find maximum sustainable yields as opposed to maximum utility. In the commons, land is not a commodity, but a connection -- a place of labor and heritage. This is true of wilderness areas, but also rural counties and urban environments.

Adaptive governance offers unique ecological considerations -- respect for cultural and natural heritage along with sustainable management of common pool resources.

I. Urban Ecology

When most folks think of ecosystems they probably envision natural wilderness landscapes. This need not always be the case, however, as urban landscapes are in and of themselves ecosystems. Urban landscapes may even be home to large forest tracts and aquatic systems that provide habitat for many different species. Urban ecology is a biological science in its own right. The subject not only deals with human beings living in neighborhoods, towns and cities but also with other organisms, how they relate to the urban landscape and what habitats are available to them (Rebele 1994). Even a single city park can be divided into various different types of communities such as lawns, meadows, woodlands, and aquatic habitats that all interact with one another (Rebele 1994).

Ecosystems are evolving landscapes that direct the development of species (Tansley 1935). Management of urban space then, has rather far-reaching implications for biodiversity. Construction and *urban development*[28] destroys habitat and can eliminate local populations (Rebele 1994). Use of groundwater, eutrophication from nutrient loading of local aquatic systems, waste dispersal and a host of other activities normal to the neo-liberal city can have negative impacts on local biota (Sukopp 1981). Poor planning can exacerbate the effects of anthropogenic activity, impacting species richness and diversity, ecosystem complexity, stability and equilibrium.

The most unique feature of urban ecosystems is absolute human dominance over the landscape -- the urban environment is manufactured by politicians, concentrations of capital and developers to support public needs and wants in the local economy. But is this desirable? People care about where they live and hope for the best for their communities. New markets are beginning to emerge in cities as local business begins to network and scale up production against corporate institutions. People care about place -- the neighborhood and the town -- more with each passing day. The local movement is alive and well, and this feeds into the “this place is our place” mentality -- it is important to extend that feeling towards our urban ecosystems as well. Feeding off of these human dimensions and sense of place connections, a healthy urban ecology can foster desire to

28 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urban_planning

protect local biodiversity. Through different mediums, the urban ecological movement can help people become aware of (and thus more concerned about) both their cultural and their natural heritage. This will naturally lead to a populace that is more concerned about conservation -- urbanites will invest in the natural world to protect their commons. This is an important point because there currently exists a dilemma between urbanization and conservation.

Over 50% of the human population now lives in cities and as populations expand so too does urbanization. This creates an incredible challenge to species conservation as the total size of urban space in the United States now exceeds the total size of areas protected for conservation (McKinney 2002). It is important then for markets to develop that encourage biodiversity conservation. Urban landscapes are very large and thus are very important for local, regional and even global biodiversity (Dearborn and Clark 2009). It is here where the case for reclaiming the commons in urban space is particularly strong. The halls of power in the capitalist city seek maximum utility of land and space to create places of wealth. Elinor Ostrom has demonstrated the commons are managed as a net neutral -- common regimes seek conservation of heritage and thus the maximum sustainable yield of available resources.

The dilemma is conserving biodiversity while creating a habitable environment for human beings. The aforementioned place connections, however, coupled with common property, create a liberating space for both human flourishing and habitat conservation. Our connections to place, after all, are dependent on our communities and our natural heritage. Civic participation is necessary for the public to gain control of the urban ecosystem. This participatory engagement would also encompass the entirety of an ecological system. Ideas of urban wilderness have been popping up in cities recently. An example near and dear to my heart, the Knoxville Urban Wilderness (KUW), is not a perfect reclaiming of the commons, but it is a start. Here, civic sector institutions, community members and private land owners donated property, time and labor to work with the city government to establish the largest urban wilderness corridor in the United States.

Two miles from Knoxville, Tennessee’s urban center there is a large patch of interconnected wilderness areas that offer recreational activities for all trail enthusiast and valuable (now protected) habitat for a number of plant and animal species (LPF 2013). The south-side of this wilderness system is defined by 35 miles worth of surface trails that connect city parks and

natural areas with public and private lands. In all, the KUW is estimated to be over 1000 acres. The project was championed by the Legacy Parks Foundation and is the result of partnerships among Ijams Nature Center, the Appalachian Mountain Bike Club (all civic sector institutions), Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (state agency) and both the City and County of Knoxville (LPF 2013). Many individual Knoxvillians dedicated time to the wilderness project, offering their labor to build trails and bridges. Others donated their money, property and even their legal advice to see the project through. Of course, all volunteer labor built the system -- there was no help from any other source.

How does the urban wilderness support biodiversity? Urban ecosystems have usually been examined in how they *negatively* impact species diversity -- this is not the case in urban *wilderness*, however. The KUW provides 1000 acres of natural habitat to a variety of species in Knoxville. The spatial heterogeneity, complex structure and function, and diverse specie composition of vegetation greatly helps the fitness of other living biological organisms such as mammals and birds (Tilgham 1987). The KUW just existing enhances biodiversity in the city. For birds alone there are great benefits of the wilderness area: Trees and shrubs provide viable habitat, they provide nesting structures, places to feed and now enhance civic participation and common governance.

An example of this community governance is noted in the popular uprise against a road project in the city. In 2013, the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) looked to use eminent domain to build yet another highway across East Tennessee. This highway, the James White Parkway, would have bored through crucial habitat in the Knoxville wilderness and destroyed part of the trail system that so many had labored over -- and even more had come to enjoy. What followed was a fury of protest, and massive turnouts to public forums, all denouncing the land grab. In August of that year, due to public outrage and significant participation in public forums, TDOT scrapped its plans for construction, noting explicitly the wilderness system and common objection. This preserved the benefits of the wilderness for a host of other species living in Knoxville.

A feed back loop exists here too -- enhancement of biodiversity as a result of the KUW has increased the quality of life for Knoxvillians and this alone will indirectly facilitate the preservation of biodiversity in urban centers and natural ecosystems. In short, urban wilderness is essential for promoting and preserving biodiversity in the urban forest. It is this type of participation that is needed to reclaim property in our urban space. In the

years since the establishment of the KUW, civic sector institutions, private landholders and disparate user groups have all come together to acquire even more territory. The system continues to grow, providing crucial habitat for all flora and fauna and true public places for city dwellers. Social power has spurted ahead of state power. This place is our place -- mountain heritage and a true public commons are on the way.

This is a particularly interesting point in regards to the commons. Power lies with the decision makers. Adhering to the rules of adaptive collaborative management, places like Knoxville are in a unique position to advance common property. The labor of locals built the system. In South Knoxville in particular, there is a large sense of community pride in the ability to host the wilderness system. It has enhanced sense of place and with it, civic participation. Halting TDOT, a state agency, and the capital to be made off of a new highway system is no feat to casually overlook. It is an advancement of social power and thus a reduction in state power. If movements such as this, reclaiming wilderness areas, installing community gardens, open access farms, etc, become a trend then social power will continually advance -- all while the grip of the state over our inclined labor is reduced and (hopefully) eventually forgotten.

This is the true beauty of the commons and decentralization movements. These liberating ideas open markets, allowing spontaneous order, as opposed to top down decree, build the communities we live in. The market mechanism and common regimes naturally look to the economic incentive of resource conservation. The ecosystem services awarded to the public from natural landscapes far outweigh maximum utility of land and roll with it development. Ecosystem services are for human beings. The more an urban populace realizes the economic and social benefits of natural areas the more return investment ecological systems will receive from human populations.

Just a few examples of these market incentives: Wetlands in urban areas improve urban hydrology by absorbing containment’s and mitigating flood hazards (Pankratz et al. 2007). Increased vegetation can reduce the heat island effect during hot summer months -- the more green space, the more comfortable urban dwellers live (DeNardo et al. 2005). These green areas also enhance local biodiversity for plants and woodland species plus beetles, birds, spiders and other species that colonize the area (Brenneisen 2006). These insects and birds may also help as pollinators supporting another growing industry: Urban agriculture. With the growing local food scene, there is enormous potential for more small-scale farms that provide

local food to the public. Another incredible ecosystem service is the regulation of air quality – which is notoriously bad during the summer months in many places across the country. In the United States, urban trees annually remove 711,000 tons of air pollutants -- an economic value of nearly $3.8 billion (Nowak et al. 2006). Urban wilderness systems would be/are instrumental in providing a cost-effective way to reduce pollution in the city. Another service of urban trees, often overlooked, is their capacity for carbon sequestration. The more trees there are in an urban area the more carbon is sequestered. This is particularly important in the age of climate change -- especially interesting is the fact that urban trees may have a larger effect on climate regulation than trees in wild landscapes (Akbari 2002).

Perhaps the most pertinent ecosystem service provided is how natural landscapes improve the health and well-being of the human population. There exist, of course, physical benefits of air quality regulation from wilderness flora and water quality regulation from aquatic species, but there is also encouragement to get out and play. There are many psychological benefits to having a green escape near the city: it enhances leisure. Fuller et al, (2007) shows something particularly amazing about urban greenscapes: pyschological and emotional benefits awarded to the human population from urban wildernesses actually increases with the amount of biodiversity in the ecosystem, as measured by species richness of plants, birds and butterflies. The mutual feedback loop exists, conservation enhances urban life.

There are many more incentives for conservation in urban ecological systems, but they will only be actualized in the market. Because of its presence, future development must be mindful of the human dimensions of urban green space -- providing ancillary benefits for the public arena, biodiversity and surrounding landscape -- otherwise known as the whole of the commons.

II. Natural Resource Management

As adaptive governance is the name of the game in managing common property, it is necessary to investigate how such a mechanism would manage the resources we need to sustain and progress society. Here, the commons really get a chance to shine. Beyond the liberating qualities innate to decentralization, there also comes sustainable management of natural resources.

This of course makes perfect sense. Contrary to arguments made in *The Tragedy of the Commons*, Elinor Ostrom and other horizontalists such as Arun Agruwal have demonstrated in the economic literature that adaptive governance yields the best results. The reason is rather simple: When the populace is not included in the process of conservation, often enough, individuals feel like they can dismiss the relevance of executive decree. Authority alienates the individual, leaving a sentiment that not only does public dissent not matter, but any destruction or mismanagement of resources wrought upon a natural system is perhaps unfortunate, but justifiable. However, when individuals are brought into the process of governance there is a transformation: individuals become responsible collective actors. When ACM is applied to natural resource management, transition economies move away from centralized policy making toward adaptive, dynamic governance -- from state to neighborhood.

This trend holds rather large implications for traditional leadership. The success of decentralized policies can be used as an argument to promote the redistribution of power, to rethink the common perception of authority and perhaps of most importance, to rethink property. This success builds the case for public, as opposed to state, ownership of the commons. Collaborative governance ultimately empowers the populace, it takes power from authority and promotes the concept of democratic governance.

The commons experiences this success because those in an environment, as opposed to a displaced authority, better understand human impacts to said environment and how subsistence is bettered/tied to natural resources. This makes sense; humans are part of nature, but nature continues to exist outside of human civilization. It is reckless and ill-informed human actions that pose a great risk to natural areas. The conclusion of many, that in order to protect our ecology there must be a strong government to oversee our natural areas, is refuted by poor land management at the hands of the state -- excessive road construction, dams, surface mining, clear cuts and much more. The state views land as a commodity, first and foremost, but the commons view land as their cultural and natural heritage.

A real world case study of the benefits of ACM can be found in the Applegate Partnership. The partnership is a result of competing interests of environmental groups, farmers, the timber industry, Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service. The conflict began in regards to management of the Applegate watershed in southern Oregon. Accelerated logging and road building after World War II raised great public concern for the local environment. In the 1990′s the Spotted Owl, whose habitat range

is within the boundaries of southern Oregon, was listed as an endangered species. This was cheered as a victory for environmental groups as it halted a majority of the logging operations. Fires became a grave concern for southern Oregon, however, as a result of decreased logging. All the major players in this struggle remained greatly autonomous until the partnership was formed (Rolle, 2002).

The conflict is a consequence of unique interests of natural resources, industry and environmental quality. The very existence of this conflict is based on the perception that these entities are mutually exclusive. The Applegate Partnership examined and sought to end, this conflict with a distinct mission (Rolle 2002):

> The Applegate Partnership is a community-based project involving industry, conservation groups, natural resource agencies, and residents cooperating to encourage and facilitate the use of natural resource principles that promote ecosystem health and diversity. Through community involvement and education, this partnership supports management of all land within the watershed in a manner that sustains natural resources and that will, in turn, contribute to economic and community well-being within the Applegate Valley.

The partnership explored collaborative options to bring all interests together and “encourage and facilitate, the use of natural resource principles that promote ecosystem health and diversity” (Rolle, 2002). Furthermore, their mission allows for the development of an action plan to support “management of all land within the watershed in a manner that sustains natural resources and that will, in turn, contribute to economic and community well-being within the Applegate Valley” (Rolle, 2002). Though the conflict is ongoing, the Applegate Partnership is working because the organization is utilizing the principles of ACM. Sustainable forestry practices have helped industry and preserved forest tracts from fires and over harvesting.

The success of Applegate has greatly depended on the partnerships insistent inclusiveness and diversity of all parties on all sides of issues pertaining to the valley. Members are also continually successful at creating a forum of diverse ideas for mutual education. Due to this effort, over the last few years, community trust in the partnership has grown as problems are solved. Furthermore, the relationships between all parties corresponding with the partnership have greatly improved. Another success of the partnership is, through continual outreach and education, enormous

benefits to the environmental and economic health of their community. Perhaps most important for the commons, Big Timber and the BLM are subject to the same rules as the other stakeholders -- they hold equal, not greater, power within the partnership. This is another example of the reduction of state power, placing more in the hands of our social order.

To examine a true example of common governance creating best management practices, one may look to the Kumoan villagers who reside in the foothills of the Himalayan mountains. Their natural heritage is enriched by tremendous valleys and expansive rivers -- the product of tectonic forces that continue to mold the region. Of incredible importance to the villagers is the bio-regions forests tracts. The ecosystem services the Kumoan forests offer the villagers are immeasurable. These forest tracts were, at one time, very beneficial to the colonial British state as well. Often at odds, the Kumoan people and the British state had very different ideas as to how the forests should be managed. Arun Agrawal, a political scientist who studies natural resource management, in his book *Environmentality*, discusses the history of intense conflict between the colonialist and villager. As his book progresses, it becomes a story of decentralization, community empowerment and best management practices. Agrawal provides readers with a historical overview of natural resource management in the Kumoan region and explains the emergence of collaborative management, environmental identity, sense of place and changes in the relationship between the state and the local.

The story of the Kumoan people is one of reclaiming the commons. Agrawal's book is a great example of how the cost of bureaucratic control always falls on locals. This burden forces democratic change. The regulatory mechanisms separated the Kumoan villagers from their natural heritage. The burdens of regulation and revolt lead to a decline in ecological health which manifested itself throughout the population. As a result, the Kumoan villagers began to organize -- the principles of democracy and the ideas of self governance lead to the development of forest councils. It is during this stage of transition, from revolt to organization, that the state was forced into ceding its power. The entire relationship between the state and community was transformed -- there were more channels for the flow of power. This empowerment caused stakeholder participation to increase and best management practices shifted from the centralized state to communities.

Agrawal's book echos a theme prevalent everywhere today. As natural resource management has evolved over the years, traditional views of the

environment and human relationships between nature and sense of place have also evolved. The trend is indeed welcome to libertarians and environmentalists. States tend to view natural resources as a means for maximizing utility -- especially when considering military strength (as is the case in Agrawal's book) and neo-liberal economics. As nation states rise to power they continually wage campaigns to acquire more land and resources. The concept of collaborative management offers an alternative to the states view of natural resources. Furthermore, this collaborative approach offers the method of achieving sustainability -- reclaim the commons, understand the nature of power and the making of subjects and dismantle illegitimate authority. It is this unique intersection of common property, political ecology and environmental sustainability that is an incredibly concise argument for decentralized governance.

The conclusion of many, that in order to protect our ecology there must be a strong government to over see our natural areas, is refuted when examining common resources and regimes. The state views landscapes as a commodity, first and foremost, but the commons view the places as natural heritage -- a place for labor and preservation. It is decentralization, not authority, that will produced sustainable management of resources.

III. Wilderness and Wildness

Ecology, the study of the living environment, has a rather interesting etymology. It is derived from the Latin *ecos*, meaning the home, and *locos*, meaning the discourse or study of. Ecology: The study of our home. Our home has its origins in wilderness, wildness and place. Reclaiming our home, by reclaiming the commons, would allow for the emergence of a new but all to familiar order -- one that asserts wildness in the human condition. As naturalist Gary Snyder states: "Wild doesn't mean disorderly; it means a different kind of order." A different kind of order is what all living species desperately need.

Thus far this has been a rather anthropocentric argument for the commons. The history of land and space includes not just people, politics and economics, but also the biodiversity and environment of a given region. Every piece of land on this Earth has been shaped by the forces of deep time. Every living organism, all flora and fauna, landscapes and seascapes are products of evolutionary adaptation. The world as we know it is the result of countless selection pressures, changing landscapes, restless seas and vastly different climates. The land and resources that are subject of our

civilization exist because of 4.6 billion years of natural history. Though ecosystem services offer a market mechanism for the preservation of natural areas, it is important to remember the moral imperative of treading lightly on the land. Nature for nature's sake has become somewhat of a forgotten ethic, but its importance is extraordinary.

All biomes are unique. Landscapes and seascapes are incredibly vast, and depending on ones travels, place connections, and experiences, favorites are made. We truly are a bounded people on boundless land, but my favorite area of the world lies in the humble, weeping mountains of the Appalachians. Humble because of eons of geologic time weathering majestic peaks to form the valley and ridge we know today. Weeping, because they have been subjugated to so much trespass.

When thinking of Appalachia, I am amazed by the sheer amount of water in the region. Imagine a drop of water falling from the sky over the rolling mountain ecosystem. As it plummets towards the Earth, a vast green valley and ridge awaits it. The water may land on a mountaintop, perhaps on the limbs of a great Eastern Hemlock, only to join with countless other molecules and make its way to the topsoil. The water would either provide nutrients to the local plant community or make its way into the ground where millions of microbes and bacteria await to naturally filter the precious resource. Water could escape to fresh mountain springs, to be lapped up by a number of animals or perhaps travel further still -- until a great turn in the rocky slope takes it to the beginnings of a trickling stream. Here, the water will travel along the river continuum, passing vast aquatic communities, providing habitat for some of the regions incredible, endemic biodiversity. The water will carve and erode ancient rock, just to lay the sediments that will one day tell future travelers about our unique place in history. Water is nourishment, and it is incredibly important to this regions ecology.

The Appalachian mountain chain is a mixed temperate rainforest. The Appalachians, at one point in their history, were the largest mountain chain in Earth history, dwarfing the Himalayas of today. The chain currently exists as a great cradle of biodiversity, home to over 100,000 species. The Eastern deciduous forest boast incredible trees including Oak, Hickory, Maple, Birch and the great Poplar. The canopy of this forest provides habitat for numerous species of animal, and the peak of this succession also assists shrubs, fungus, aquatic systems and even the soil. Maximum diversity has been reached in the Appalachians. The magnificent landscape is the product of the labor of snails, fungi, birds, salamanders, frogs, freshwater mussels, bear and countless others. These mountains, often purple across

the horizon, have had hundreds of millions of years to evolve a complex ecological community -- among the most complex that currently exists. Perhaps Charles Darwin, in his groundbreaking work *The Origin of Species*, best describes this phenomenon:

> It is interesting to contemplate an entangled bank, clothed with many plants of many kinds, with birds singing on the bushes, with various insects flitting about, and with worms crawling through the damp earth, and to reflect that these elaborately constructed forms, so different from each other, and dependent on each other in so complex a manner, have all been produced by laws acting around us…There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved.

The Appalachian region is the oldest habitat in North America. These ancient mountains rose out of the Earth 200 million years before life evolved to occupy them. The first inhabitants of the land were plants. It is here plants developed vascular systems for the transport of water and essential nutrients. Evergreens soon marched across the ancient land creating one of the greatest forests in Earth’s long history. Today, just one acre of forest in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park is home to more plant species than the whole of Europe. Ecological succession on the continents began in the ancient Appalachians, allowing the formation of an array micro-climates that in turn provided an environment for enhanced specie radiation. There were suddenly new niches for all flora and fauna to develop. This process of deep time was absent of human beings until just 12,000 years ago. At the end of the last ice age, humans came to the Appalachians for the first time.

Human history has taken its toll on Appalachia. To tell the story in its entirety is perhaps impossible, thus beyond the boundaries of this study. But perhaps the greatest agents of change in the Appalachians came in the 1750′s when Europeans first colonized the land. Life on the frontier, prior to this point, was occupied by Native American tribes and early settlers of Scots-Irish, English and German descent. Frontier life was radically different from life in the mountains today: everyone enjoyed the land. There was a true commons in the mountains, homesteading demanded sustainable control of resources. It was ill practice to take more than the forest could

replenish. This changed when the Europeans came to the mountain communities: they sought to change both the natural and social order.

The communal use of land was at odds with state and private ownership of property. The affluent soon sought conquest and the race for resources was on. The new comers soon began enclosure movements. Looking into the vast forest, the colonialists saw only commodities for exploitation. Missing from such a short-sighted view is the work of the soil microbes, fixing nitrogen to nourish an incredible array of plant species. These plants, as the base of the food web, from grasses and ferns to the Hemlock's and the towering Popular's, provide habitat to a truly remarkable succession of avian, terrestrial and aquatic species. Conquest of land was devastating to this ecological community. These early enclosure movements were incredibly dangerous to human inhabitants as well because they gave rise to the iron fist of capital over the region. Timber and coal became king.

In just a few fleeting centuries, the result of over 200 million years of evolution was, and is still being, changed forever. The timber industry effectively logged the majority of Appalachia. The coal industry evolved, came to prominence in the late 1800′s and became King during the industrial revolution. This industry eventually developed coal surface mining which has leveled over 520 mountains to date throughout the region via mountaintop removal valley fill operations. These industries, coupled with others, are owned and operated by absentee landowners. The reign of capital over the mountains has spawned ecological tragedy. It is estimated that 700,000 acres of temperate Appalachian forests throughout West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee have been destroyed by coal surface mining (ilovemountains.org). As a result, more than 7% of Appalachian forests have been timbered and over 1,200 miles of streams across the region have been buried and polluted.

The cost of losing the commons has been great. The human story of what has been lost in Appalachia alone is troubling, but the plunder of this ancient landscape is a story of incredible tragedy. It is a story that is not isolated to this region, either. What has plundered Appalachia is centralized authority and this is a global phenomenon. Across the world, wilderness destruction and biodiversity loss is managed, even desired, by top-down decree -- power requires maximum utility of resources.

Kevin Carson, in his studies *The Great Domain of Cost-Plus: The Waste Production Economy*[29] and *Energy and Transportation Issues: A Libertarian*

29 http://c4ss.org/content/5580

Analysis[30] expertly tells the story of how our manufactured economy utilizes far more energy per unit of output than necessary. The state does this because it makes energy inputs artificially cheap -- this is why coal is so cheap, we do not pay the high price of losing a mountain ecosystem. This, in turn, provides extractive resource industries preferential access to land -- space enclosed by the state. The corporate arm of the state then heavily subsidizes resource extraction, highway transport and, let us not forget, the war campaigns to secure, enclose and exploit even more natural lands.

Management in the commons, however, was, and would again be, incredibly different. Liberated of state sanctioned economic privilege, the market would equilibrate. Communities would purchase goods produced in smaller factories in the towns they live. Good benefits for us, but even better for landscapes, watersheds and biodiversity. Such an order would ensure that vast landscapes will rarely, if ever, be occupied by our bodies. Liberty and wilderness are necessary for each others survival, as American environmentalist Edward Abbey writes in *Desert Solitaire*:

> A man could be a lover and defender of the wilderness without ever in his lifetime leaving the boundaries of asphalt, powerlines, and right-angled surfaces. We need wilderness whether or not we ever set foot in it. We need a refuge even though we may never need to set foot in it. We need the possibility of escape as surely as we need hope... Wilderness is not a luxury but a necessity of the human spirit, and as vital to our lives as water and good bread. A civilization which destroys what little remains of the wild, the spare, the original, is cutting itself off from its origins and betraying the principle of civilization itself.

Natural habitats, absent of human beings, are communities in their own right. In every corner of the Earth species and resources interact to form the living environment. There are associations among these populations, they work in competition with one another, while simultaneously, living in incredibly mutualistic relationships with one another. Some species are so connected, in fact, that an evolutionary change in one will lead to a change in the other. The natural world is home to a wonderfully complex order. This order does not deserve to be subjugated to the Anthropocene, but liberated from it.

30 http://c4ss.org/content/11542

Power and Property

In the final analysis, any individual or institution with a claim to property wields power. When the libertarian examines property rights, they must consider systems of power, domination, enclosure and assimilation. If one is to mix labor with land, the individual(s) hold dominion over it. A claim to property is a claim to power, but where should such power lie? If we wish for a society rooted in liberty, then there exist a necessary reclaiming of the commons. Full commitment to liberty demands both the individual and the collective.

In many libertarian circles the idea of individual liberty is well championed, while all to often collective liberty is shunned. But, these ideas are one in the same. The commons are built and sustained by individuals -- empowering the commons, by default, empowers all individuals. This is the true beauty of the freed market. A society operating under the principles of liberty necessarily rejects the concentration of power and coercive claims to property. Such an order thus champions individual labor, place connections and civic participation in the political economy. Individual achievement exists not despite of, but due to liberty. The commons are not coercive in any fashion and thus meet the standards of appropriate property for a libertarian society as laid out by Benjamin R. Tucker:

> Anarchism being neither more nor less than the principle of equal liberty, property, in an Anarchistic society, must accord with this principle. The only form of property which meets this condition is that which secures each in the possession of his own products, or of such products of others as he may have obtained unconditionally without the use of fraud or force, and in the realization of all titles to such products which he may hold by virtue of free contract with others. Possession, unvitiated by fraud or force, of values to which no one else holds a title unvitiated by fraud or force, and the possession of similarly unvitiated titles to values, constitute the Anarchistic criterion of ownership.

A libertarian economic system would fully support common governance of property. In such a system, collective labor would be free to mix with the land. The possibilities such a society could achieve are endless, the spontaneous order is awe-inspiring. What can we craft together during our time under the sun? What will our property gift future generations? It is exciting to think of the prospects. To get there we will need to reclaim the commons. When control of property, and the power over it, is decentralized

our lives will fully be are ours to craft -- individually and collectively, in liberty.

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