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LIS 522
Assignment 3
Opening Day Collection

Part I: Description of setting, collection/subject focus, users

In Assignment 2, I chose to evaluate selection tools for a non-profit environmental organization's library. In this assignment, I will select materials for this same library using the selection tools previously identified. I envisioned this library as one whose mission is 1) to promote educational awareness of both current and historically relevant environmental issues; 2) to provide its organizational membership with classic and popular materials relating to their environmental interests and 3) to support environmental activism. To accomplish this, the library would focus on making a small, select collection of popular, current, and classic environmental materials available to members, educators, and activists. Because a library of this type would, at least to begin with, be quite small both in collection and staff size, a "selection committee" might very likely consist of only one staff member; that person in charge of the library. At its inception, it is unlikely that \$1000 would be spent on any one environmental subject area. As a result, my plan is to build a beginning core collection carefully selected for its broad coverage of environmental subjects, with a focus on materials considered to be classic or essential by the environmental community, specifically the members of the environmental organization and those involved in environmental education or activism (into which categories many members will fall). As in Assignment 2, I will focus solely on the books, periodical, and film formats. Books I have divided into three selection categories: classic non-fiction, current non-fiction, and educational/reference materials. Because items within each category were selected for similar reasons, I have given a summary justification in each category.

Selection Criteria

- Selected materials will be the most current edition available (current information in this field can be outdated/updated very quickly; classic material often includes useful annotated material in more recent editions)
- Selected materials will be written for adult audiences
- Selected materials will be written for mostly popular audiences, as opposed to technical or scientific audiences (though works written for both simultaneously may be included)
- Selected materials will include educational and training resources for educators and activists
- Selected materials will include reference and non-fiction books, community/association periodicals, popular periodicals, and film documentaries.

Part II: List of Selected Items

Classic nonfiction print books

This section includes items that were found on several ASLE introductory bibliographies that focused on recommendations for essential general reading in the environmental field, particularly the first 10 items or so. Items after that were also given excellent reviews on ASLE's subject bibliographies, but cover more specific topics such as ecofeminism, environmental ethics and justice, and environmental and ecological history.

- A Sand County Almanac (Outdoor Essays & Reflections) by Aldo Leopold, Michael Sewell, and Kenneth Brower (Hardcover - Nov 15, 2001) – Illustrated \$32.40
- Desert Solitaire by Edward Abbey (Paperback - Jan 15, 1990) \$11.66
- Walden: A Fully Annotated Edition by Henry D. Thoreau and Jeffrey S. Cramer (Hardcover - Jul 11, 2004) \$19.80
- Pilgrim at Tinker Creek by Annie Dillard (Paperback - Jun 12, 2007) \$11.66
- Silent Spring by Rachel Carson, Linda Lear, and Edward O. Wilson (Paperback - Oct 22, 2002) \$10.17
- Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place by Terry Tempest Williams (Paperback - Sep 1, 1992) \$11.16
- Arctic Dreams by Barry Lopez (Paperback - Oct 2, 2001) \$10.20
- The Solace of Open Spaces by Gretel Ehrlich (Paperback - Dec 2, 1986) \$11.20
- The Outermost House: A Year of Life On The Great Beach of Cape Cod by Henry Beston (Paperback - Jul 1, 2003) \$10.98
- Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas (Studies in Environment and History) by Donald Worster (Paperback - Jun 24, 1994), \$26.09
- Discordant Harmonies: A New Ecology for the Twenty-first Century by Daniel B. Botkin (Paperback - Jan 1, 1990) \$26.00

- The Diversity of Life by Edward O. Wilson (Paperback - Feb 2000) \$21.37
- Nature and the American: Three Centuries of Changing Attitudes (Second Edition) by Hans Huth and Douglas H. Strong (Paperback - Oct 1, 1990) \$9.95; a major survey of the culture-nature relationship
- The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology by Professor Max Oelschlaeger (Paperback - Jan 27, 1993) \$25.20
- The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution by Carolyn Merchant (Paperback - Jan 10, 1990) \$14.00
- Wilderness and the American Mind, Fourth Edition by Professor Roderick Nash and Roderick Nash (Paperback - Sep 1, 2001) \$12.24
- The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics (History of American Thought and Culture) by Roderick Frazier Nash (Paperback - Nov 15, 1989) \$17.95
- The Norton Book of Nature Writing: (College Edition) by John Elder and Robert Finch (Paperback - Jan 17, 2002) \$43.87

Current nonfiction print books

These items were supported the organization's goal of having current information in addition to classic materials. Many of these items came with outstanding reviews from the Island Press publisher website. Other came again from ASLE subject bibliographies and some had multiple positive reviews on Amazon.com. Also, items were selected based on their collective ability to cover a wide range of environmental issues.

- Millipedes and Moon Tigers: Science and Policy in an Age of Extinction by Steve Nash (Hardcover - Feb 15, 2007) \$22.95
- A Contract with the Earth by Newt Gingrich and Terry Maple (Paperback - Sep 30, 2008) \$11.90

- The Dominant Animal: Human Evolution and the Environment by Paul R. Ehrlich and Anne H. Ehrlich (Hardcover - Jun 30, 2008) \$23.10
- Communicating Nature: How We Create and Understand Environmental Messages by Julia B. Corbett (Paperback - Nov 6, 2006), \$29.25
- More: Population, Nature, and What Women Want by Robert Engelman (Hardcover - May 8, 2008) \$14.30
- Cities in the Wilderness: A New Vision of Land Use in America by Bruce Babbitt (Paperback - April 30, 2009) \$12.21
- The Green Building Revolution by Jerry Yudelson and S. Richard Fedrizzi (Paperback - Oct 30, 2007) \$22.50
- Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder by Richard Louv (Paperback - April 10, 2008) \$9.72

Educational/reference/activism print materials

These materials were chosen for their usefulness in providing quick reference for statistical and educational information. They were all recommended by the introductory bibliography from the ALSE Graduate Handbook

- State of the World 2009: Into a Warming World by The Worldwatch Institute (Paperback - Jan 12, 2009) \$13.57
- State of the World 2008: Toward a Sustainable Global Economy by The Worldwatch Institute (Paperback - Jan 17, 2008) \$12.87
- Vital Signs 2007-2008: The Trends That Are Shaping Our Future by The Worldwatch Institute (Paperback - Sep 17, 2007) \$12.89
- Ecological Literacy: Educating Our Children for a Sustainable World (The Bioneers Series) by David W. Orr, Michael K. Stone, Zenobia Barlow, and Fritjof Capra (Paperback - Oct 1, 2005) \$11.35

- Greening the College Curriculum: A Guide To Environmental Teaching In The Liberal Arts by Jonathan Collett, Stephen Karakashian, Holmes Rolston, and William Balee (Paperback - Dec 1, 1995) \$40

Periodicals

These items were selected primarily from the publications section of the Environment Directory and also ASLE's introductory bibliographies. They are all quality publications that come highly recommended from several sources.

- Earth Island Journal, \$9.95
- Orion Magazine, \$35
- Green Teacher, \$32
- High Country News, \$29.95
- World Watch Magazine, \$33

Documentaries

These films were all produced by organizations listed in the Environmental Media Fund Distribution Resources listing. Films were chosen for their general coverage, popular and educational focus, and high production values. A mix of series and standalone items were chosen to ensure variety.

- Planet Earth & The Blue Planet Seas of Life (Special Collector's Edition) ~ David Attenborough (DVD - 2007) \$73.99
- Big Ideas for a Small Planet: Season 1 (2pc) ~ Big Ideas for a Small Planet (DVD - 2008), \$34.95
- A Crude Awakening - The Oil Crash ~ Wade Adams, et al. (DVD - 2007) \$12.99
- Energy Crossroads: A burning need to change course (DVD - 2007) \$25.95
- The Living Planet - A Portrait of the Earth ~ David Attenborough (DVD - 2003), \$44.95
- An Inconvenient Truth ~ Al Gore, et al. (DVD - 2006) Nobility, \$15.99

- Out of Balance ~ Tom Jackson (DVD - 2007), \$22.95
- EARTH AID: Recycling ~ Ed Begley Jr. (DVD - 2008) \$9.98
- Solar Energy: Saved by the Sun, 19.95
- TRASHED (DVD - 2007) \$17.99
- NOVA: Solar Energy - Saved by the Sun (DVD - 2007) \$17.99

Part III: Rationale and Discussion

What selection tools were most useful and why?

I found the process of using selection tools for this type of library rather difficult. Probably the most useful tool would have been the Environmental Resource Handbook, which I did not have access to. Another tool, Envirolink Network Publications listing, uses a classification by subject and resource type that could potentially be very useful, but the actual content is extremely uneven being heavily weighted with online and organizational resources, even under the publications listing. Similar to this but more useful was the Environment Web Directory, especially for journals and magazines. Overall, however, I ended up relying heavily on a combination of ASLE Bibliographic lists, official editorial reviews on Amazon.com, recommendations from Island Press, and film producers and distributors listed by the Environmental Media Fund Distribution Resources. Of those, I was most impressed by Island Press for the professional quality of its reviews, but of course, as it was concerned only with its own publications, it could not be used for selecting the majority of materials. Film resources were easy to find through the Environmental Media Fund Distribution Resources, but the quality and availability of reviews varied according to the individual distributors and producers.

Were there items that you would like to have included but did not? If so, why did you decide not to select those items?

Many items were simply not selected due to cost concerns. Where there was a choice to make, I selected items that seemed more essential than elective. In some cases, I did not select an individual item based almost exclusively on its cost, as this freed up money for several other valuable resources by sacrificing one. Some items falling into this category were: *The Comedy of Survival: Literary Ecology and a Play Ethic*, *BBC Atlas of the Natural World: Africa and Europe/Western Hemisphere*, and *Antartica*, and *Ecological Economics: The Science and*

Management of Sustainability. At the same time, the opposite was true for other resources; they were so central to the collection that their elevated cost was worth the sacrifice of several other more peripheral resources. Examples would be *A Sand County Almanac (Outdoor Essays & Reflections)* and *Greening the College Curriculum: A Guide To Environmental Teaching In The Liberal Arts*. Even though cost was said in the assignment parameters to be flexible, I worked to keep the cost as close to the \$1000 guideline because I felt that in a nonprofit specialized library budget issues would be especially critical with little room for overextension.

Some items were not chosen because they were not directly available from Amazon, and I wanted the assurance of material quality that comes with purchasing from Amazon. Three such items were *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*, *Unequal Protection: Environmental Justice and Communities of Color*, and *The Sierra Club Nature Writing Handbook: A Creative Guide*.

Did you have any particularly difficult or interesting decisions?

Originally I had intended to purchase all my classic nonfiction in hardback with the idea of a highly durable, quality collection, but in the process of looking up materials on Amazon, I realized that many paperback versions were nearly as good quality, often more recent in publication, and of course a better cost. Paperback versions are also likely to be more usable for the service population, and in terms of durability, the usage of this collection is not going to be at the level of a public library. Exceptions to this included choosing annotated or special editions versus plain editions; this was especially an issue with classic non-fiction. So, for instance, I determined that the hardback illustrated edition of *Sand County Almanac* was worth the extra cost, coming so highly recommended and being such an important classic. Likely many users of this collection would have already read this book, so a special edition of it seemed more attractive

and useful. I came to a similar conclusion for *Walden*, but in that case due to the well-done annotations, which again seemed like it would be very useful for this user population.

What sorts of problems or challenges did you encounter?

As noted before, I felt there was a lack of adequate selection tools, which may be a result of the relative newness of field. As a result, I found it difficult to make choices among an enormous volume of high quality resources. I also noticed that after selecting classic materials, there was the further selection task of deciding which of many, many editions to choose, as many of these books had had several editions published over the years for varying reasons. In general, I tried to choose the most recent publication, with a few exceptions when a particular edition seemed more attractive due to added features.

How did you determine your particular mix of formats?

As discussed earlier, since this was beginning collection starting from scratch, I focused primarily on the traditional formats of books and periodicals as well as documentary films. Online subscriptions would have assumed technological capacity that this type of organization might not have available at its inception. In addition, as noted in the Evans and Saponaro text, electronic resources are quite expensive (p. 163). The technological resource I did include, documentary films, were particularly expensive as compared to most print materials, and in the interests of providing a relatively substantial starting collection, I chose to limit the DVD collection quite a bit to free up resources for print items that seemed essential.

Part IV: Reflection

What did you learn from this assignment?

I learned that starting a collection from scratch is very daunting! In this subject area at least, there were an overwhelming number of viable options. For this type of special collection there were few established and comprehensive tools for selection. I found myself really wishing I had the print resource *The Environmental Resource Handbook*, since there did not seem to be any comparable online counterpart. Most online tools, with the exception of Island Press, were not created by professionals but instead community and nonprofit organizations. I also found that the certain selection tools were useful for certain types of format and that taken together they were much more useful than they would have been individually. Decisions to select many items were made clearer when found in multiple selection tools. In other words, the more selection tools I used, the more I was able to increase breadth, depth, and authority. However, this also meant that I was constantly going back and forth between several sites to make decisions and then finally to Amazon.com to determine availability, edition, and price, all of which were very time-consuming.. I also learned while there will always be some guesswork and some personal preference that play into selection decisions, this is more emphatically the case without more facilitative tools. If I were to undertake this process in the real world, I would absolutely want to solicit input from organizational members before making purchases. This would both make the collection more relevant to its particular users but also mitigate my own biases. Finally, I learned that reading reviews and looking up price and bibliographic information is much more time-consuming than one might at first imagine. I am not sure if this is due to my not having one or two central, comprehensive selection tools or if this is the case generally.

What is your future vision for this collection and how will it continue?

It might be an interesting idea in the classic non-fiction to carry more than one copy of certain items, such as both a regular/paperback edition as well as one or more special editions, giving the users the options of the convenience and simplicity of the former, and the depth and interactivity of the latter. Several classics had gift editions with very attractive illustrations, commentaries, and annotations that users would likely find enjoyable and useful. If the organization to which this collection belongs had the space and financial resources, it would be very beneficial to add some online subscription resources to various periodicals and databases. Also, both the current nonfiction and educational/reference collection areas would be the ideal focus area next for development, as they are not yet as complete as the classic section and will also continually be having new important materials to add. This is also true of the documentary section, though cost may preclude a rapid expansion in that area. Continued input from community and organizational members should be solicited to make the collection more responsive to the needs of its users. While deselection should be a regular part of the collection's development, it may not be needed for some time, as this beginning collection is small enough not to require too much space. However, the yearly statistical references and periodicals will obviously need regular updating.