As a researcher and writer, Shannon Donahue demonstrates integrity, creativity, and grace. Her analysis of “greenwashing”—the growing practice of ecological advertising campaigns on the part of petroleum and other heavy industries—draws on an impressive range of primary materials (such as print advertisements depicting Shell Oil’s environmental conservation projects). Indeed, the depth and originality of Shannon’s research sets her essay apart throughout. Further, her argument—which reveals unexpected similarities between the aesthetic and even political strategies of “greenwashing and non-profit ecological advertising campaigns—is supported with careful analysis. For example, she effectively contextualizes her findings, explaining how non-profit campaigns, like the one sponsored by Heritage Forests, are funded (in part) by corporate entities. She also shows that these “green” campaigns, regardless of funding, use corporate marketing strategies to appeal to increasingly media-savvy audiences. What makes Shannon’s essay particularly compelling is her ability to develop complex arguments. Thus, while her research reveals common tactics on the part of “greenwashing” and “green” campaigns, Shannon shows her reader the important differences between those campaigns’ purpose and ethos. Ultimately, then, Shannon’s essay is itself an exemplary piece of rhetoric, one that has a lively sense of purpose, engaging arguments, multi-faceted evidence, and a compelling ethos.
Evaluating Environmental Advertising in Contemporary Media

Shannon Donahue

Introduction

Today, print and television commercials air environmental awareness advertisements that address such ecological issues as land conservation, recycling, and energy/water consumption. At the same time, “Greenwashing” (or “dirty”) corporations, run pseudo-environmental ads. Masking their harmful actions against the environment with propaganda-driven rhetoric, dirty businesses strive to deflect negative publicity and to project a facade of ecological know-how and concern. The campaigns of environmental groups, which confuse casual audiences with mixed messages and forge unexpected corporate partnerships, compete with Greenwashers for audience attention and sympathy. Consumers may not understand the motives behind such seemingly innocuous partnerships, like those of C.A.R.E., which, contrary to its acronym, counts some of the world’s largest environmental degraders as its partners. Similarly, ad campaigns produced by environmental non-profit organizations, like Environmental Defense, may receive funding from major polluters. The sometimes dissimilar creators of today’s “Green campaigns” address audiences via print and television, while the recent growth in the number of such ads overwhelms the average reader with confusing information. Often, groups hide self-seeking motives behind Green facades. A multitude of organizations and companies present mixed messages on ecological issues, thereby challenging both the plausibility and the effectiveness of the promotion of Green issues in the media today.

Partisan Politics and the Environment

Partisan and monetary motives influence environmental media campaigns crafted by both large corporations and nonprofit environmental organizations. Many of today’s well-known environmental movements are connected to partisan political campaigns, making it difficult to separate political and environmental motives. For example, Al Gore’s declaration of his environmental record of “clean air, clean water, and action against global warming” contradicts his actual actions (Perry 22). In reality, Gore, as Vice President, denied the breaching of the Snake River Dams. The continued existence of these dams, according to environmental groups such as Trout Unlimited, promises extinction to the “already dwindling population of steelhead and trout in the Snake River” (Perry 23). Too often, political aims undermine the efficacy and minimize the imminent danger of fragile ecological conditions. President Clinton’s Roadless Area Conservation Rule, supported by “nearly two million public comments” (Greenpeace 1) apparently saved many “protected” pristine areas from logging and deforestation. However, according to Earth First!, the monthly publication of a radical environmental conservation group, the Rule did little but give Al Gore a Green-friendly facade in the 2000 election (Time 2). Not only is the Rule impermanent, but it allows for “grazing, mining, drilling…”

How Clean Are Green Ads?
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Introduction

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Program in Writing and Rhetoric

in the nation’s forests and does not cover forests “in the Pacific Northwest” (Time 1). Furthermore, the rule is ineffective as the United States Forest Service, along with logging corporations, can and will circumvent it to protect profits (Time 2). Indeed, President Bush’s December 2003 exclusion of the Tongass National Forest from the Rule sparked much political and environmental debate and criticism. An article by Greenpeace not only blames Bush’s conservative administration for the Tongass decision and the consequences of this omission but also emphasizes his administration’s lack of environmental concern in policy-making. According to Greenpeace, “Americans will not sit idly by while our natural heritage is sold off for short-term profit and our rights are trampled” (Greenpeace 2). Here, the organization solicits broad support and concern, assuming that most people will feel that the environmental policy and actions of the Bush Administration violate their rights as American citizens. Greenpeace argues that as the national forests are our national “heritage,” it is our “right” that they are preserved. However, the declaration of Earth First! that Clinton’s rule caused “more logging, not less,” suggests a tug-of-war between the interrelated issues of partisan politics and environmentalism (Time 2). The real problem—the welfare of the nation’s forests—is lost in a mire of partisanship and negative propaganda.

The History of Greenwashing

The Greenwashing movement’s relatively long existence, a testament to the ongoing public relations battles issuing from the world’s most powerful companies on ecological issues, is today spurred by both public image demands and profit opportunities. Following the first Earth Day in 1971, Keep America Beautiful (KAB), a coalition of polluting companies in such industries as tobacco, glass, and solid-waste, ran television spots urging consumers to dispose of their trash in a responsible manner. The commercials, which featured an American Indian actor crying against a landscape of roadside litter, played to American ethos and pathos while it portrayed the companies as environmentally “concerned”. However, at the same time, KAB was vehemently opposed to a national recycling bill, the approval of which would have cut their profits (Helvarg 2). The problem, according to the Container Recycling Institute, lies in KAB’s ongoing promotion of “Clean Community Systems and litter taxes as replacements for container deposit laws and other government regulations” (Container Recycling Institute 1). The Institute “respects the efforts of well-intentioned groups and hard-working individuals across the country that enlist in programs sponsored by Keep America Beautiful” yet wonders whether these people are aware that they have “aligned themselves with a trade group rather than an environmental organization” (Container Recycling Institute 2). Hence, today’s consumers are required to be increasingly conscious of ecological issues and corporate alliances, or they risk unknowingly supporting Greenwashers.

Unfortunately, this objective is not a reality in environmental marketing. Partnerships between nonprofit Green organizations and major corporations proudly tout their combined efforts at environmental conservation. However, the underlying belief espoused by many corporations and even certain Green groups that economic development and profitability are compatible with environmental protection may be more a way of “putting the best public face on corporate irresponsibility” (Helvarg 1). Author David Helvarg contends that some companies form high-profile partnerships with mainstream environmentalist groups as they simultaneously lobby against green laws, which would restrict their profits. For example, Environmental Defense (ED), which, for many years embraced a public
assault on McDonald’s Styrofoam wrappers, joined with the multinational giant in 1990
to cut down on the company’s waste. ED accepted funding from McDonald’s while
the company in exchange improved its public image and profits. Today, campaigns
produced by the Environmental Defense Foundation frequently receive funding from
such polluting corporations, an ironic source of income for a Green group. It seems
that Green groups like ED feel forced to adopt a practical attitude to do “the most right”
action and sometimes contradict their fundamental ideologies.

**Corporate Irresponsibility**

The false claims produced by Greenwashers have generated significant negative
attention from various critics. Some censors go so far as to term the epidemic proportions
of Greenwashing as “ecopornography” (Karliner 2). A 1989 poll showed that “77% of
Americans said that a corporation’s environmental reputation affected what they bought”
(Karliner 2). In light of such consumer interests, many corporations and “eco-partnerships”
focus solely on image maintenance and do not in fact address ecological issues. While
mottoes like “Clear the Air, Don’t Cloud the Issue” and “We’re Returning the Favor,”
suggest a commitment to renewable energy sources, Shell, the creator of these slogans,
spends only 0.6% of its annual R&D budget on “environmental” projects like its newly
formed Center for Sustainable Development at Rice University (CorpWatch 2). Though
the world’s third-largest oil company presents itself as Green-friendly, it consistently sullies
the environment. Take, for example, Shell’s refusal to clean up what has become the world’s
largest underground oil spill in Durban, South Africa, where to date “over one million
liters of oil have been dumped” (Weissman 1). Moreover, the corporation’s involvement
in partnerships like the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), comprised of such
“dirty” giants as BP Oil, Shell, Chevron, General Motors, and U.S. Steel, contradicts its
claims of efforts toward environmental conservation. NAM, which at the 1997 Earth Day
celebration in Washington D.C. promoted renewable and energy-efficient technology, in
reality uses such campaigns as “ecopornography.” In fact, “NAM members consistently
pay millions of dollars in environmental fines, sponsor anti-environmental front groups
such as the Global Climate Coalition and the Business Network for Environmental Justice,
and oppose environmental laws in Congress” (Karliner 2).

The eco-pornography produced by such companies is an attempt at what some term
“Astroturf,” defined by Sharon Beder as a “grassroots program that involves the instant
manufacturing of public support for a point of view in which either uninformed activists
are recruited or means of deception are used to recruit them” (3). These appeals by major
corporate interests advance their questionable agendas (Helvarg 3). Indeed, the National
Association of Manufacturers and its major members routinely produce ecopornography
in their “Astroturf” public relations campaigns. General Electric, one of NAM’s largest and
most influential member companies, runs ads about its “cleaner, greener power machines”
(General Electric). However, while GE’s new H-System Turbine reportedly produces
fewer emissions, it is relatively unclear: the system simply “produces fewer greenhouse gas
emissions compared to other large gas turbines” (General Electric). GE’s ad, featuring a
large, shiny, clean-looking turbine and simple text against a white background, has every
element of an attractive, responsible Green ad, yet the advertisement assumes that viewers
are unaware of its membership in NAM, many of whose members are global polluters. GE
hopes that viewers instead will regard it as the “cleanest” gas company. Today, it seems
both GE and the American public are satisfied with the “Greenest” solution. However,
this means that a new technology is often an image ploy and not a Green solution at all. Likewise, on its website, the NAM tells readers in its “About Us” section that “Fortune rates NAM as one of the top ten most influential advocacy groups in the country” (National Association of Manufacturers). This status is detrimental to the environment, for the organization wields much power over major environmental proposals and Congressional decisions. One such bill, S.8, suggested a rollback of “Superfund.” This program, initiated in 1986 to make oil companies pay for and inform the public about the nation’s worst toxic waste sites, has been hotly contested by polluters like DuPont and industry trade associations such as the American Petroleum Institute. Shell, along with other “dirty” conglomerates, has to date given over $4 million to the campaigns of the proponents for reducing the “Superfund,” including congressmen Trent Lott, Bob Smith and John Chafee (U.S. Public Interest Research Group 2).

A recent DuPont print campaign features an ad with a “cuddly” polar bear while in another, the Great Wall of China dominates a pristine wild environment (DuPont). However, DuPont has “paid out an estimated $1 billion on some 1,400 claims since 1990 when their fungicide Benlate 50 DF destroyed crops and land” (Hladky 3). With a slogan of “To-Do List for the Planet” headlining their print advertisements, DuPont promotes itself as an earth-science pioneer. Also remember DuPont’s involvement in lobbying against Superfund: clearly, the corporation’s main achievements have not been environmental conservation. The ads’ check-list of environmental goals ironically frames their glowing portraits of animals and nature. According to European Association of Communication Agencies for Sustainability board member Mike Longhurst, the problem with companies like DuPont is that “there is a disconnection between what advertisers are saying and doing on the issues and what they are communicating through advertising” (Longhurst 2). Although these companies appear environmentally friendly through simple ads showcasing “cute” animals like polar bears, they just hide their real actions, such as NAM membership and lobbying against environmental protection bills.

Nonprofit Green Groups’ Advertising Campaigns

Consequently, nonprofit responses to harmful environmental actions and partisan agendas work to spark public interest and pique the attention of a certain segment of the population. The Heritage Forests Campaign, for example, vilifies the Bush Administration and incites public support against the President’s exclusion of lands from Clinton’s Roadless Rule. The ad’s brightly-colored image of logged trees combined with a succinct, all-caps message, aimed at multiple audiences, appeals to both educated persons who already know about the issue and the lay reader attracted by catchy aesthetics. Even if a reader has never heard of the Roadless Rule, he or she will likely be concerned by the felled trees or will feel slightly angered by the “April Fools!” message (Heritage Forests Campaign). Yet the ad assumes preexisting knowledge in that neither the Roadless Rule’s details nor the implication of a quote from Agricultural Secretary Ann Veneman are explained. The ad purposefully overlooks the shortcomings of the Roadless Rule from its 1998 creation by President Clinton. Instead, it focuses on Conservative Agricultural Secretary Veneman as an environmental villain comparable to Bush. Her decisions have “severely restricted future wildlife protection” (Center for Native Ecosystems) and the Heritage Forests ad clearly highlights her negative involvement in the Rule’s recent exclusion. Again, the emphasis is on the inadequacy of Bush’s administration in addressing apparently popular environmental concerns. Magazines printing the ads, such
as *Stanford Magazine, Outside* and *Reader’s Digest*, reach multiple audiences with different educational levels, demographics, and interests. Displayed in mainstream magazines, these ads incite immediate audience sympathy, or at least consideration, for uninformed readers may easily fall prey to mawkish ploys about the tragic situation of the forests.

Despite endorsement or design by a non-profit organization, such campaigns seek to advance political agendas through environmental issues. The Heritage Forests Ad focuses more on a viewer’s perceptions of President Bush and his political decisions, rather than the environmental issue of the forests at stake. The ads, then, play to dual audiences: an informed readership cognizant of party politics and history, and an unassuming public capable of being swayed by popular media on television and in magazines inspired to develop activist sentiments and sympathy. Similarly, the Heritage Forests campaign, composed of diverse organizations and people, promotes the cause to various groups yet publicly maintains that they all seek the same goals: “The Heritage Forests Campaign is an alliance of conservationists, wildlife advocates, clergy, educators, scientists, and other Americans working together to uphold protection of our National Forests” (Heritage Forests Foundation). United under the slogan “Once they’re gone, they’re gone forever…” (Heritage Forests Campaign), the movement threatens all readers, uninformed and activist-minded, with a sense of inevitability and impending doom. In repeated ads, they highlight the Bush Administration as responsible for brutal environmental harm. Although the Heritage Forests Campaign is a nonprofit, its partisan political undertones make it appear similar to Greenwashing advertisements that blatantly promote a certain political or corporate stance. Hence, while the Heritage Forests Campaign seeks a green agenda, they procure funding from “dirty” corporations and thus debase their stated goals of conservation and restoration.

Another Heritage Forests advertisement is a play on *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. Its macabre colors, busy graphics and text immediately draw the viewer’s attention. The ad is “produced” by the “timber, oil and logging companies” and has text located in a giant chainsaw image (Heritage Forests Campaign). Again, we are influenced to develop negative opinions not only of President Bush’s actions regarding the Roadless Rule but of his environmental policies in general. The nonprofit group’s ad appears angrier for the environmental issues it addresses, while the Shell ad actually resonates with a calmer image of harmonious restoration. Heritage Forests’ design actually promotes a more partisan-political-laden, chainsaw-toting message than does Shell’s Astroturf attempt. After viewing such ads, it is nearly impossible to resist developing subjective partisan political and ecological viewpoints. Emotional and ethical appeals trump fact to enforce arbitrary attitudes that favor each campaign’s goals.

**Creating Confusion: Green and Greenwash**

The recent growth of Greenwashing media campaigns further complicates the efforts of nonprofit Green organizations to mount a successful and united front while it quiets criticism of underhanded environment pollution by multinational corporations. The Oxford English Dictionary definition of Greenwashing, quoted in *Boise Weekly*’s “The Name Game” as “disinformation disseminated by an organization so as to present an environmentally responsible public image,” solidifies an abstract and previously esoteric concept. Here, the article educates uninformed readers prompting public support against Greenwashing or at least, asks for consumers to become aware of Green issues. Maybe, according to *The Green Guide*, an environmental activism publication, “We
can stop buying into it” (3). *The Green Guide* contends that environmental messages are “cheapened by the very perpetrators of the ecological crisis” (2). Often, these organizations seek to change only their public image while environmental degradation goes unnoticed by the average consumer and citizen. Coalitions of major corporations in similar markets, like The National Association of Manufacturers, sponsor Earth Day events and related activities to show they are “our country’s leading environmentalists” (Karliner 3). However, according to “The Name Game,” companies such as BP Oil “use advertising only to portray themselves as more environmentally friendly.” The author cites the Cascade Corporation, headquartered in Boise, as being responsible for such Greenwashing. In light of negative public connotation of the name “Cascade,” typically associated with heavy chemical use that damages the environment, the company seeks to reinvent its public image with a name change to “Boise Cascade Corporation.” These same commercial giants “pay millions of dollars in environmental fines and sponsor anti-environmental front groups” (Karliner 3), while they publicly pour support and money into “Astroturf” programs which laud their commitment to nature. For example, in 1999 Boise Cascade was fined an “undisclosed” sum for its illegal tree-cutting practices in Brazil (Draffan 1), while General Electric agreed to a $200 million settlement in September 1998 for pollution of the Housatonic River resulting from chemical releases from its plant in Pittsfield, Massachusetts (Corp Watch). “Astroturf” may be a sham, but, like its synthetic namesake, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between fake and real. Again, outward appearance supersedes environmental concern as these companies sneakily attempt to wash their image without actually cleaning up their actions.

The campaigns and programs of Greenwashing companies attempt to mirror those of ecological groups to garner public support and appeal to expanding Green-conscious audiences. Shell’s commitment to “sustainable development,” (Shell 2004) portrayed in aesthetically pleasing print ads, appeals to a wide audience. The accompanying text, detailing in poetic prose the beauty of America’s endangered wetlands, easily solicits sympathy from an unassuming public. Shell, “returning the favor” (Shell 2004) of protection to the land, is, according to *The Green Guide*, actually one of the major perpetrators of environmental degradation. However, for the employees pictured in the ad-environmental specialists affiliated with Shell, “it’s their responsibility” (Shell 2004) to help with conservation efforts. To the casual reader, both the Heritage Forests Campaign’s ad and Shell’s “Astroturf” seek support for environmental conservation. However, it would be difficult for the same reader to evaluate the advertisements’ deceptive messages. Certainly Shell hides its continued negative environmental impact in its “concerned” ads. Ironically, the ad, printed on the back cover of *Stanford Magazine*, reaches a well-educated readership.

These ads create “public confusion about which consumer products are or are not, environmentally sound” (Karliner 1). Another Shell campaign, “Cloud the Issue or Clear the Air?” focuses on Shell’s commitment to reducing global warming by limiting their Carbon Dioxide emissions and fossil fuel use. However, Shell continues to lobby congress for a lowering of standard emissions levels as decided in the Kyoto Protocol. In Shell’s own sustainable development booklet, entitled “Profits or Principles,” Shell clearly chooses the former by allowing that “a sustainable oil company is a contradiction in terms” (Shell). Here, their glossy print ads with clear blue skies run contrary to their stated goal of clearing the air: instead, Shell has “clouded the issue once again” (ARG Online). By imitating the motives and campaign strategy of nonprofit Green groups,
Greenwashers like Shell mask their actions with false concern, changing only their public image while they allow real environmental problems to worsen daily.

**Coming Clean: Combating Greenwash**

Today, some ethical environmental and corporate activists have taken the initiative to combat Greenwashing. CorpWatch, a five year old Bay-Area based organization, confers bimonthly “Greenwashing” awards to companies responsible for heavy public relations campaigns that blatantly ignore or misrepresent ecological issues (CorpWatch 2). According to CorpWatch, “With the Greenwash Awards, we research and document the reality behind the rhetoric, to reveal the true corporate role in various environmental issues” (CorpWatch 2). Companies that seek to be the “greenest of the green” (CorpWatch 2) today cannot escape the nonprofit group’s attention to such scams. Rachel Heller, coordinator for Earthday Resources, a group which publicizes Greenwashing scams, says, “These companies are trying to make fools of the public” (Heller). Watchdog groups are “delighted to recognize these companies for what they are: hypocrites” (CorpWatch). The group uses vibrant logos, such as the skull and crossbones image over Shell’s signature red and yellow namesake, to make its critique more effective.

Unfortunately, the average consumer is more likely to see an ad about Shell’s Sustainable Development efforts in an issue of *Reader’s Digest* than the in-depth articles and graphics posted on CorpWatch’s somewhat esoteric website. The accessibility to Americans of Greenwash ads makes disseminating the truth of these campaigns difficult. While lofty goals are laudable: “It is our mission to hold corporations accountable. The Greenwash Awards help expose the global corporate political agenda” (CorpWatch), few people actually encounter such anti-Greenwash efforts in their daily lives. Similarly, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has issued a series of “Green guidelines aimed at halting deceptive Greenwash ads” (Karliner 4). Again, the problem lies in the enforceability of such guidelines. The Guides for the Use of Environmental Marketing, issued in 1992 following FTC investigations, public opinion, and hearings, are neither legally enforceable nor do they preempt state or local laws and regulations (Karliner 4). For example, the FTC states “broad claims like ‘environmentally safe’ or ‘environmentally friendly’ should be qualified—or avoided—because they can convey a wide range of meanings to consumers that may be difficult to substantiate” (Federal Trade Commission). However, the FTC merely advises, rather than requires, that corporations comply. Finally, claims of false advertising can be used to sue companies responsible for Greenwashing. Many corporations, though, are cognizant of such exposure and skirt lawsuits with clever wording in advertisements, for example replacing “cleanest” with “cleaner.”

According to E. Bruce Harrison, the “father” of environmental marketing partnerships, a corporate-environmental partnership is a winning combination: “it avoids legal problems, and it widens your options” (Helvarg 3). By joining with mainstream environmental groups, polluting corporations put on a facade of cleaning up their acts-when in reality, they only clean their public image. Frequently, companies seek to misinform the public, as evidenced by a 1991 study in which 58% of environmental ads reviewed had at least one misleading claim (Journal of Public Policy and Marketing). Soon, it becomes all too difficult to incriminate these companies for ad campaigns that may appear misleading even to a highly informed segment of the population. All the better, according to major Public Relations firms like Burson-Marstellar, the industry’s leader in corporate Greenwashing. The advertising giant receives millions of dollars every
year to market dirty companies as environmentally friendly. As long as the American public shows concern about companies’ environmental actions, corporations that want to stay competitive must make environmentalism their main public relations focus (Karliner 2). And companies like Burson-Marsteller will continue to benefit, as they generate millions in annual revenue on their “environmental” accounts alone.

Nonetheless, the rise of environmental concern in America today, evidenced by movements to restore, recycle, and conserve America’s natural resources, provides an impetus for Green campaigns. Amidst a sea of Greenwashers, nonprofit Green groups still seek to inform the public and to address environmental issues. Unfortunately, groups like the Heritage Forests Foundation adopt aggressive aesthetic tactics to counter Astroturf ads and end up confusing readers with their visuals. Also, their motives, contaminated by the possibility of lucrative partnerships with global corporations and the individual campaigns of Greenwashing companies, are increasingly questionable. Even apparently Green groups, like Environmental Defense, have questionable partisan political motives, while “dirty” multinational corporations like Shell and BP blatantly pitch their misleading “environmental concern” to readers around the globe. If Green groups truly want to remain “Green,” they must rely on informed readers to separate fact from fiction. Greenwashers such as Shell, however, hope for ignorance on the part of their audience. Their ads improve their public image by professing true concern and support for the environment. However, their actions are too often at odds with the environmental-friendly theme of their public relations campaigns.

Conclusion

Both nonprofit environmental groups and large multinational corporations appeal to similar audiences. While dirty corporations hope viewers lack the foresight to investigate seemingly innocuous claims, nonprofit organizations struggle to match the ostentation and high profile budgets of these campaigns. Hence, the nonprofits form partisan political and corporate partnerships and soon adopt much the same advertising strategies as the very companies whose practices they seek to change. Both corporations and nonprofits benefit from our tendency to accept media presentations at face value and not question the possibility of hidden motives. Today, many Green groups must find a way to circumvent Astroturf or risk losing public awareness and interest for pressing ecological problems. Consequently, political and monetary motives appear behind previously Green agendas in hopes of increasing audience attention.

The future, then, is not promising for the advancement, or even maintenance, of genuine environmental efforts in the media. David Helvarg’s declaration that Greenwashers “threaten our basic democratic institutions” is increasingly true, for the disinformation campaigns of these companies, disguising membership in industry front groups and support of “Wise Use” coalitions, undermines the facts and the ability of Americans to make informed decisions about environmental issues. Without drastic improvements and restrictions, Greenwashing will soon dominate environmental advertising and render worthless the campaigns of remaining real Green movements.
End Notes

1 In this essay, I will use the term “dirty corporation” to reference companies that, according to The Environmental Magazine writer David Helvarg, present themselves as environmentally concerned but are actually degraders of the natural environment.

2 The group C.A.R.E. was established in 1996 with $175,000 in seed money from the timber industry, to advocate for the extension of clear-cut logging permits in the Tongass National Forest of Southeast Alaska. Its acronym stands for Concerned Alaskans for Resources and the Environment (Inter Press Service).

3 In using the term “political,” I refer to environmental campaigns funded or created in major part to emphasize certain opinions and aspects of a politician seeking election in office.

4 “Greenwash” is defined in the 10th edition of the Concise Oxford English Dictionary as the “disinformation disseminated by an organization so as to present an environmentally responsible public image.”

5 The Environmental Defense Foundation counts Federal Express, McDonalds and CitiGroup among its major supporters, corporations identified with high smog production, excessive use of Styrofoam, and wasteful paper practices, respectively.

6 The term “ecopornography,” coined by Advertising Executive Jerry Mander, refers to the wave of Greenwashing ads in the media today (Ecopornography).

7 According to Corp-Focus, Shell began its campaign to preserve the Louisiana Wetlands in November 2002, titling the project “Returning the Favor.” Similarly, the “Clear the Air” campaign began in late 2001 and is an example of the oil corporations “giving millions to environmental groups and activists to buy silence and good will” (Corp-Focus).

8 CorpWatch, a 5-year old group dedicated to revealing the identities of major polluting corporations, defines Greenwashing as follows: “the phenomenon of socially and environmentally destructive corporations attempting to preserve and expand their markets by posing as friends of the environment” (CorpWatch).

9 A UN Conference on Climate Change, held in Kyoto, Japan, in 1997, produced an international agreement to combat global warming by sharply reducing emissions of industrial gases. Although the Unite States abandoned the treaty in 2001, saying it was counter to U.S. interests, most other nations agreed that year on the details necessary to make the protocol a binding international treaty (Encyclopedia.com).
Works Cited


