Bioregionalism Encyclopedia Article

Bioregionalism

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Bioregionalism

Drawing heavily upon the cultures of **indigenous peoples**, bioregionalism is a philosophy of living that stresses harmony with **nature** and the integration of humans as part of the natural **ecosystem**. The keys to bioregionalism involve learning to live off the land, without damaging the **environment** or relying on heavy industrial machines or products. Bioregionalists believe that if the relationship between nature and humans improves, the society as a whole will benefit.

Environmentalists who practice this philosophy "claim" a bioregion or area. For example, one's place might be a **watershed**, a small mountain range, a particular area of the coast, or a specific **desert**. To develop a connection to the land and a **sense of place**, bioregionalists try to understand the natural history of the area as well as how it supports human life. For example, they study the plants and animals that inhabit the region, the geological features of the land, as well as the cultures of the people who live or have lived in the area.

Bioregionalism also stresses community life where participation, self-determination, and local control play important roles in protecting the environment. Various bioregional groups exist throughout the United States, ranging from the Gulf of Maine to the Ozark Mountains to the San Francisco Bay area. A North American Bioregional Congress loosely coordinates the bioregional movement.

Resources

Books

Andruss, V., et al. *Home! A Bioregional Reader*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1990.

Sale, K. *Dwellers in the Land: The Bioregional Vision*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1985.

Snyder, G. *The Practice of the Wild*. San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990.