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(Un)Earthing a Vocabulary of Values

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(Un)earthing a Vocabulary of Values: A Discourse Analysis for Ecocomposition

Paul Walker

The schismatic environmentalist Edward Abbey said, “developers and entrepreneurs must somehow be taught a new vocabulary of values” (85). Abbey’s statement maintains the existence of strong relationships among words, beliefs, and actions, and for him, such relationships were crucial in his lifelong efforts to alter society’s conceptions of how humans interact with their environment. From a rhetorical perspective, it is significant that Abbey did *not* say, “developers and entrepreneurs must somehow be taught new values.” By emphasizing the vocabulary of values—how we talk about them—Abbey understands that how we communicate our values may be more important and influential than what values we think we hold. In this way, his brief statement helps us look beyond how “terminology constructs the conceptual categories through which people understand the world” to the rhetorical implications of how that terminology is generated and used (Allen and Sachs 572). A variety of legitimate societal constructs promote developers to speak of the environment in economic terms, but alternative value-constructs are also legitimate and justified. When these constructs clash, the underlying attitudes and values are often misunderstood as primarily internal—separate from our external language and the language of our society. This prevailing view has emboldened varying academic approaches—cognitive, epistemic, and social constructionist—that contend, in different ways, that the only way we discover what we believe or know is through our communication of it.

These approaches to the relationship between writing/communicating and learning/knowing are central to composition studies, enabling the “rhetorical turn” in our analyses of writers’ social and physical contexts to look “beyond the individual writer toward the larger systems of which the writer was a part” (Hawisher et al. 65). In that vein, Sidney Dobrin and Christian Weisser encourage the combination of ecology and composition—ecocomposition—as a way to explore “the relationships between individual writers (identity) and local environments (ideology, space) as well as ways in which populations interact with environment (culture)” (18). Because of our keen understanding of the power of language as a meaning-making system, the field of Composition and Rhetoric is well-positioned to help students—future developers, entrepreneurs, and consumers—better understand the origins and potentials of their own identity, ideology, and culture: the catalysts for a vocabulary of values.

Therefore, I agree with Derek Owens in his promotion of the composition course as a "cross-disciplinary" location for which "sustainability-conscious curricula" is well suited (27). In addition, Peter Goggin and Zach Waggoner advocate the composition course as a location for English scholars and teachers to "take action" in worldwide efforts to promote sustainable practices (46). The key element for us to be active in such a role is our understanding of discourse as a meaning-making, rhetorical process. Dobrin and Weisser point out that utilizing rhetorical critique of environmental discourse and its multiple contexts to help solve disputes is not enough. Instead, "ecocomposition must look beyond environment as merely a thing about which we have disputes and about which discourse participates and creates, but as the very thing that the production of all discourse is reliant upon and contributes to" (46). The malleability of environmental and economic terms make issues of sustainability "wicked problems" (Rittel and Webber), because the values of various publics hinder resolution when there is inherently no "one-best solution." Nevertheless, while *sustainability* is often formulated as a solution to societal problems of energy consumption, "the information needed to *understand* the problem depends upon one's idea for *solving* it" (161).

The objective of this article is to propose an analytic method through which composition students and others might discover and understand the ecological complexities of prevailing environmental terminology that create "wicked problems." Through this method, students engage in "discursive ecology" by exploring the connections among discourse, people, and the environment with the intent to "produce writing" that addresses those contextual connections (Dobrin and Weisser 116-17). The close analysis of environmental discourse proposed here can provide students the opportunity to identify and critique the tacit societal values to which we adhere and how accepted language and labeling contribute to and inform the continuation of those values. As alluded to by Owens, much as the inclusion of texts exploring multiculturalism, race, class, and gender allows students to read and write about rhetorical and historical hegemony of culture, the study of sustainability likewise requires students to examine their understanding of the hegemony of progress (4).

In this article, I demonstrate an analysis of land-use conflict language that includes the essentials of what might be used in a composition classroom. The framework of analysis has a range of applicability for composition teachers, whether as a short-term or long-term assignment. The extent of how the analysis is used is less important than the recognition of the connections between language and values, and the understanding that environmental issues, large or small, are embedded in language. From the constructed definitions of our vocabulary to the manipulation of its terminology, "the environment" is founded upon and contested through rhetoric and discourse.

This opens up the textual and discursive opportunities for classroom study, for, in any community, city or county, it is likely that a number of land-use conflicts occur each year.

Furthermore, similar to Goggin's and Waggoner's sustainability-based composition course, the method of analysis that I advocate here also embraces the New London Group's multiliteracy pedagogy within contextual locations by providing *situated practice*, *overt instruction*, *critical framing*, and *transformative practice* (see Goggin and Waggoner; Cope and Kalantzis). Students participate in the typical elements of a composition course by identifying, researching, and writing about the rhetoric of land-use conflicts, yet the critical analysis situates that work within the social and environmental complexities of their hometowns or college towns.

Therefore, envisioning this as a class assignment or project, I recommend beginning by helping students choose a local land-use or environmental conflict—initiating the *situated practice* by collecting documents and accounts from all sides. Once a conflict is chosen by the individual student or class as a whole, students should be instructed on the framework of analysis, which has two parts: *term analysis* and *conflict-language analysis*. Along with the *critical framing*, instructors should also help students understand the philosophy of the assignment by reading and discussing essays or excerpts relating to how values, language, rhetoric, and meaning are intertwined purposely by humans for various means. Once the analysis, as shown below, is conducted and complete, students should submit formal papers that describe, explain, and argue the results, and time should be given for presentation of papers and class discussion in order to enable *transformative practice*. The remainder of this article follows my recommended order of assignment steps: I provide background on a land-use conflict, unpack and explain the framework of analysis, demonstrate the method and results of my analysis of this conflict, and conclude with a summation of how such analysis elucidates the complexity of values and society.

Sacred Land, Sacred Snow

From 1999 to 2007, I lived in Flagstaff, Arizona. This small city sits at the foot of the San Francisco Peaks, the highest of which rises over 12,000 feet above sea level. Flagstaff's elevation is around 7,000 feet, giving it seasonal weather with normal annual snowfall at over 100 inches. My overview of the six-year land-use conflict that occurred there is a summary of lived experience with dates and details confirmed by various sources (see Cole, "Snowbow!" and "Court"; Fischer, "Key Dates"; Muller, "Deadline" and "Draft"; and Tanner).

In October 2002, the United States Forest Service office in Flagstaff released a Proposed Action that invited public comments on the expansion

of the Arizona Snowbowl, a ski resort located 14 miles from Flagstaff on the north side of the San Francisco Peaks. The Snowbowl resort leases 777 acres of Forest Service land, and the expansion, which included several more ski trails and a few more lifts, would remain within that acreage.

This proposal, however, was complicated by history, culture, and religion. Regional Native American tribes, including the Navajo and Hopi, consider the San Francisco Peaks sacred, a crucial spiritual location of the origin of life and where religious herbs and plants are found. Since 1938, when the Forest Service first built a road to the current location of the Snowbowl, the local tribes have protested each additional development on the Peaks. In 1979, contending that major development did not fit under the Forest Service's mandate to encourage mixed- and multiple-use on the public land, the tribes protested the plan to pave the road and build resort lodges. However, the litigation, which went to the Supreme Court, favored the Snowbowl owners. In the end, the court ruled that while the resort may *offend* religious practice, it did not *impede* it.

When the current owners of Snowbowl proposed the recent expansion, the key element of that expansion was the use of effluent, or treated wastewater. This water would be purchased from the city of Flagstaff and piped to the resort to enable snowmaking. Since 1999, Snowbowl has had inconsistent operations because of inconsistent snowfall resulting from a prolonged regional drought. In some of those years, the resort was open fewer than 21 days. The owners claim that snowmaking, a common practice for many ski resorts, is the only viable method to keep Snowbowl operating. Acknowledging the critical value of water in the high desert of Arizona, they proposed using effluent for that purpose, aware that effluent was already in use by the city to irrigate city property (including parks) and area golf courses.

In February 2004, per regulations for public land development, the U.S. Forest Service released the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) and opened it to public comments. In the EIS, which was written with the assistance of the consulting company SE Group, Inc., the U.S.F.S. outlined three options: 1) no change; 2) expansion of the resort with the use of reclaimed water for snowmaking; or 3) expansion of the resort without the use of snowmaking. The draft EIS nominally acknowledged the religious concerns of the Native American tribes without any discussion. The conclusion focused on the physical resources only: the effluent, with a Class A+ rating, would not harm the ecosystem or aquifer.

Water thus became the primary rhetorical and legal factor of this controversy. Opponents protested its use as desecration of a sacred mountain or as dangerous to the drinking water supply (openly questioning the no-harm claim). Proponents viewed effluent as a sustainable catalyst for increased tourism revenue spread throughout the city's businesses. The issue was ar-

gued about in letters to the editor, public forums, protests and debates at the local university, and city council meetings. The Chamber of Commerce lost members who opposed the Chamber's support of the resort. Other people were caught between their sympathy for indigenous rights and the prospect that their own ski recreation might cease.

Following the extended public comment period, the U.S.F.S. decided to proceed with the proposed expansion with the use of effluent for snowmaking in March 2005. In June of that year, the affected tribes, local and national organizations, and individuals filed separate lawsuits opposing the U.S.F.S. decision. The lawsuits were eventually combined, and in January 2006, a U.S. District judge sided with the U.S.F.S. In March 2007, a three-judge panel of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals overruled the verdict in a preliminary ruling and sided with the tribes, but in August 2008, the full 9th Circuit Court of Appeals overturned that ruling, and Arizona Snowbowl began planning the infrastructure for snowmaking with reclaimed wastewater in 2009.

Values and Resource Terminology

While a seemingly nondescript physical resource, *water* was at the heart of the Snowbowl controversy; the language and rhetoric that arose from its physical properties ultimately defined and decided the issue in interesting ways. The underlying values and language of land use, resource use, and planning became the variables in how each side of the issue was perceived and judged. Stakeholders in this case study appropriated the authoritative and scientific influence of regulatory environmental and planning language for their own interests, introduced crude non-scientific terms, and often reduced the debate to mean-spirited statements that created a strong division among proponents and opponents.

The work of Alfred Guttenberg, a planning scholar who 40 years ago recognized that American planning is not "sufficiently conscious of its own language" (16), provides the basis for my exemplary framework of analysis of the Snowbowl situation. Guttenberg proposed a uniform standard of planning language in recognition of its influential role in "social evaluation and control":

Not only is [planning] a form of social action, it is also action which achieves its effect through the use of signs and symbols. That is, land use planning is a language. Ordinarily, we do not think of planning as a language, and yet what else to planners use as tools of their trade if not words, mathematical notations, graphs, and lines on maps? These are all signs which are used either to represent existing reality or to give directions for changing that reality.¹ (50)

His proposed standard for planning language had two dimensions, and it is easy to find echoes of Aristotle's deliberative, forensic, and epideictic oratory. First, planning language can be classified according to what information it provides. Guttenberg describes three categories of this dimension: *referential* (what it is), *appraisive* (what its value or state is), and *prescriptive* (what it can be). The second dimension, tense, is an extension of the prescriptive classification: when prescribing change to something, the tense or mood of the phrasing influences the perception of the action. Those tenses are: *indicative* (is being, will be), *optative* (ought to be), *imperative* (must be, shall be), and *indeterminative* (perhaps can be, perhaps will be). The taxonomic potential of these dimensions is immense, but for composition students, I propose a modification of these two facets into one to make the analysis simpler without sacrificing adequate complexity. The *optative* tense in my modification retains its idealistic sense but focuses on how those ideals are put forward as a vocabulary of values. In this way, an optative value matches the definition of values put forward by Jonathan Turner and Charles Starnes, who state, "values are those highly general and abstract conceptions that provide the criteria for defining and assessing desirable conduct" (66). Because physical and social classifications in planning and land use terminology can't concretely account for cultural aspects that determine the very values that govern action, identifying values through discourse analysis uncovers different groups' conceptions of what *ought to be* and what is *desirable*—the underlying abstract elements. Therefore, I recommend placing the optative category along side the referential, appraisive, and prescriptive categories to create a simplified, one-dimensional classification of land-use and planning terms (see Table 1).

<u>Referential</u>	<u>Appraisive</u>	<u>Prescriptive</u>	<u>Optative</u>
What is	What worth or condition	What can be	What ought to be

Table 1: Modified-Guttenberg classification framework.

Introducing the *optative* category to textual analysis provides the means by which students can learn and identify societal values that are implicit in everyday behavior and rarely identified, examined, or critiqued by individuals. Furthermore, the additional category increases students' ability to make the discourse-ecology connections that are necessary for ecocomposition and sustainability-based curricula. Applied to planning language in documents such as environmental impact statements, the *optative* category makes clear the relationship, or lack of relationship, among the persistent values of modern society, which include the ideas of uninhibited progress

and resource conservation. Depending on the interpretation, in other words, individuals' language will ascribe to the "American Dream" by *imperatively* growing a business, a household, or an institution. Or, someone might tout a conservationist attitude by buying a hybrid vehicle or installing solar cells on a house. Each of these actions is thus rhetorical: each is underscored by an ideal value or value system, which, if analyzed as part of the planning process, forces people—in often emotional ways—to prioritize constructed values in the support or opposition to proposed land-use projects.

Therefore, the modification and application of Guttenberg's planning categories here address two of Owens's tenets for integrating sustainability and composition. First, analyzing language of land-use conflicts provides "sustainability-conscious curricula" (27) and second, the implications of the *values* element analyzed through the optative category "would call attention to 'social traps' of unsustainability" where short-term effects are not in line with long-term, optative interests of global society (29). Furthermore, this method of analysis meets Dobrin's and Weisser's test for ecocomposition pedagogy—favoring a "discursive ecology" over a nature-writing curriculum. The modified-Guttenberg analysis allows students to navigate rhetorical complexities in land use through investigating non-literary discourse situated within a specific geographic, social, and cultural environment. By so doing, students engage in critical examination of the powerful social constructs that pervade society and thus create interesting contradictions among knowledge, values, behavior, and the environment.

The *optative* category's combination with Guttenberg's referential, appraisal, and prescriptive categories also allows analysis of "value" terms such as *sustainability* and *progress*. Relevant here is Michael Redcliff's challenge of *sustainable development*, wherein he critiques the phrase's inherent assumption of continuous scientific progress:

By incorporating the concept of "sustainability" within the account of "development," the discourse surrounding the environment is often used to strengthen, rather than weaken, the basic supposition about progress. *Development is read as synonymous with progress, and made more palatable because it is linked with "natural" limits, expressed in the concept of sustainability.* (7, emphasis added)

The *progress* value, defined by Turner and Starnes, is present in efforts to "control the world and achieve material comfort" that "cumulatively . . . allow both the individual and society to progress to a higher level than previously possible" (70). As a "desirable" end, progress is firmly aligned with the American concept of *success*, which, as a factor for social mobility, can be as powerful and motivating as religion governing action (Lipset 529). For many, achievement and success are unabashedly pursued without ecological

consideration, supported by the *individualist, nationalist, and efficient/productive* American values (Sliwiak and Fissell 159). Thus, Redclift's recognition that sustainability's emergence is nonetheless attached to, even subverted by, progress illustrates the importance of educational exercises that further a "clarification of values" (see Clark, Heinberg).

Relevant to the Snowbowl case study would be an analysis of the value systems of the Native Americans in contrast to the prevailing values of Americans of European descent. Such an initial clarification is not actually necessary because the analysis of language and rhetoric with the modified-Guttenberg framework, as I show later, explicitly illustrates the differences in values. But for students, allowing them to speculate values before analyzing the language of the stakeholders, even if stereotypical, would compound the impact that the analysis later reveals. In my own case, I find that Native American values are often idealized by writers, and as a collective group, their cultural values are portrayed as starkly different from Western mainstream society in terms of progress and humans' relationship to the land. Writers such as Wendell Berry have made distinctions between the European/American inclination to exploit land and the Native American proclivity for nurturing land (7). Annie Booth and Harvey Jacobs note that Native Americans do not view any "emptiness in the world" because nature was full of life already (32) and thus any "progress" for humanity is always achieved at the cost of life. Rather than ascribing to scientific methodology or categorization, "Native Americans imagine themselves specifically in terms of relationships with the physical world, among *other things*" (Booth and Jacobs 39, emphasis added). The veneration of Native American values can be inspiring, but like any idealized notion about specific cultures, acquaintance with individuals from those cultures can raise doubts about the extent such values permeate. For example, setting up cultures as examples for appropriate environmental behavior, as has happened with Native Americans, ignores the inconsistencies in members of those cultures consciously buying and using "progressing" American products that exist from "exploitation" of natural resources.

For a time, I wondered if Native Americans and their idealized views were being exploited by people opposed to the Snowbowl expansion, as many of the Native Americans (mostly students) I knew didn't have strong opinions initially. Furthermore, because of the legal precedents in the lease agreement, it seemed as if the Snowbowl were not obligated to argue the issue of "sacredness" again. And the unappealing imagery of the rhetoric used in opposition to the reclaimed water—evoking large amounts of "poop" and "pee" pumped onto the mountain—seemed to misrepresent the scientific analysis of the quality of the treated water for non-potable use, which degraded the debate. But the discourse analysis employed here quickly clarified the underlying value structures of the stakeholders and illustrates that one's position on the conflict can be clarified by dissecting and classifying language.

Conflict-Language Analysis

In addition to his two-dimensional standard planning language proposal, Guttenberg also produced a rhetorical model that typifies the land-use conflicts that result from planning language ambiguity. First, Guttenberg posits, involved parties (planners, developers, opponents) devise communication in order to arouse and organize public sentiment on their behalf. Since the initial stakeholders constitute only a portion of the total population, this communication will attempt to secure general agreement that a central resource or planning term is good or bad. This means placing the term in a context in which it appears to support or contradict specific, constructed values of society. Second, the stakeholders characterize the term mundanely so as to appeal to the real as well as the ideal motives of the general community. The third part of Guttenberg's model suggests that parties communicate to the public how the term might also threaten one personally (9). Guttenberg's model of the manipulation of planning language illustrates his recognition of how intentional, persuasive use of context and terminology can and will influence malleable audiences.

Consequently, an important step in the more involved *conflict-language analysis* is a basic *term analysis*. For any land-use conflict, students can be directed to identify the central planning or resource term that is manipulated by different sides. For example, Table 2 illustrates the application of Guttenberg's model to the Snowbowl conflict, showing how stakeholding proponents and opponents of the snowmaking plan utilized language to appeal to the public and courts. Interestingly, *reclaimed water*, not *effluent*, was how the planners chose to refer to it generally, and that became the common term in the media perhaps because of its mundane qualities.

While there are several valuable exercises and arguments that instructors and students can devise from *term analysis*, further close analysis using the modified-Guttenberg classification system clarifies the way that manipulated language both informs and is informed by a language, rhetoric, and terminology of values. Conflict-language analysis of collected documents adds a more thorough taxonomy of the various stakeholders' language. For the most part, the Executive Summary of environmental impact statements will provide sufficient language to classify the terms, but additional sections and documents might be necessary to more fully understand the values of the planning/developing entities. Other necessary sources include community newspapers, university research, and websites of opposition groups, businesses, planning consultants, and government institutions.

In the classroom, both term analysis and conflict-language analysis can be conducted at any point in the development of a land-use conflict. While there are obvious advantages, especially for *situated practice*, for students becoming involved early, these cases last much longer than a semester,

which would have to be considered. For my example, I began this analysis following early court decisions, using material covering the entire six-year process—from the draft EIS to the 9th Circuit Court’s opinion. The remainder of this section consists of selected quotes from the various stakeholders involved in the San Francisco Peaks conflict, followed by a classification of the language into categories: 1) referential; 2) appraisive; 3) prescriptive; and 4) optative. Each classification is accompanied by brief comments analyzing how the classification indicates values of the stakeholders.

Guttenberg's model	Proponents	Opponents
1. Make term (<i>effluent</i>) bad/good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used <i>Reclaimed water</i>; not • <i>Treated sewage, Treated wastewater, or Effluent</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used <i>Pee, Poop, or Sewage</i>; chose not to use <i>Reclaimed water</i> as often as proponents.
2. Characterize <i>effluent</i> as mundane and real	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reclaimed water for snowmaking puts water back into the aquifer and saves regular water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reclaimed water is a waste of water and is expensive
3. Show how <i>effluent</i> hurts/helps you or specific people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reclaimed water allows Snowbowl to stay open, keeping tourist dollars in Flagstaff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reclaimed water does not respect the sacredness of the Peaks to Native Americans and has hidden toxins that would harm people.

Table 2: Term analysis of opponents' and proponents' use of effluent.

Stakeholder: U.S. Forest Service

From the executive summary of *Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)*:

The Forest Service and Snowbowl cooperatively determined general categories important for improving the Snowbowl's facilities. From these categories, a list of proposed projects was created, and the Proposed Action ultimately emerged. The overall Purpose and Need for these projects responds to two broad categories: 1) to provide a consistent/reliable operating season, and 2) to improve safety, skiing conditions, and recreational opportunities by bringing terrain and infrastructure into balance with existing demand. . . .

The two issues that emerged from the scoping process were related to heritage resources. These issues warranted the creation of an additional alternative." . . . [Those issues were that] 1) "the use of reclaimed wastewater

as a water source may impact cultural and spiritual values associated with the San Francisco Peaks;" . . . and 2) "proposed ground disturbances and vegetation removal may result in permanently evident, visible alterations (e.g. "scarring") of the San Francisco Peaks.

Referential	Appraisive	Prescriptive	Optative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snowbowl's facilities • "Heritage resources" • Cooperative project between USFS and Snowbowl 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs improving • Inconsistent/ Unreliable operating season • Terrain and infrastructure are not in balance with demand • "Heritage" must be considered but does not trump economic concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make snow with reclaimed water • Upgrade lifts • Add terrain • Build parking lot, access road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety • Recreational opportunities • Consistency • Economic gain • "Scarring" may occur

Table 3: Classification of Forest Service statement.

The U.S.F.S. is the governing organization of the land in question, both as a government institution charged with its care, and also as the "owner" of the land with the ability to lease the land for the use of the Arizona Snowbowl. The U.S.F.S. was also the primary planning entity, assisted by the SE Group, a planning firm specializing in ski resort development. The language of the EIS quoted above clearly reflects the values and interests of the leasee of the land, with the Purpose and Need aimed directly at the highly-prized values of safety, progress, efficiency/productivity, and leisure tourism. Yet significantly, the "scoping process" mentioned took place only two months before the draft EIS was released to the public, and the "alternative option" based on the issues raised by that scoping did not appear until the Final EIS. The lateness of the scoping of tribal concerns, along with the diversion of their concerns to alternative status in the EIS, indicate further that the underlying values of the Native Americans were, understandably, less important than the initial optative language put forward by the planners.

Stakeholder: Arizona Snowbowl

From Snowbowl personnel (quotes from local newspaper and website):

The resort, one of two in the state, might go out of business because of a lack of consistent snowfall. The plans won't expand the footprint of the ski area, which occupies less than 1 percent of the Peaks. (Kravets)

Snowbowl is located on already-disturbed public land, that reclaimed water has been deemed environmentally safe for snowmaking and the Supreme Court has previously held that a group's religious or spiritual beliefs can't prohibit mixed uses of public lands as long as the beliefs can be accommodated. (Kravets)

Referential	Appraisive	Prescriptive	Optative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snowbowl • The Peaks • The resort • Public land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public land is already disturbed • Reclaimed water is environmentally safe • The resort is financially teetering • Resort and expansion is less than 1% of Peaks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beliefs can be accommodated under Proposed Action because footprint is the same and water is safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business interests are important • Supreme Court decision is unquestionable

Table 5: Classification of Snowbowl personnel language.

The Arizona Snowbowl prioritizes the economic “need” and importance of the ski resort, raising the possibility of “going out of business,” which appeals to distinct recessionary fears that contradict the inevitability of progress. The majority of the language quoted above nominally acknowledging the concerns of the opponents, and treats lightly those concerns by the using “accommodate beliefs” in the same sentence as “already-disturbed land.” The additional appeal to the authority of Supreme Court, along with the mention of the small footprint of the proposed action, appeal to typical American values, but these can contrast with Native American ideas of fairness and a holistic land ethic.

Stakeholder: Save the Peaks Coalition

From Save the Peaks website:

- To protect spiritual and cultural rights
- To foster mutual respect among all people and ensure a high quality of life for all peoples potentially affected.
- To conserve water for the future, when true needs will be greater, and the drought perhaps more severe.
- To prevent habitat disruption and fragmentation, and other threats to endangered plants and animals.
- To defend Flagstaff from Ski Town Syndrome. We may not become Vail or Aspen, but what will we become if we value things like increased

skiing more highly than the Peaks' exceptional beauty, habitat and cultural importance? ("About Us")

Referential	Appraisive	Prescriptive	Optative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flagstaff • Peaks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for water not great • Plants and animals in danger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect spiritual and cultural rights • Conserve water • Prevent habitat disruption • Defend against Ski Town Syndrome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious freedom and cultural awareness • Quality of life for everyone • Beauty, culture valued above skiing

Table 6: Classification of Save the Peaks Coalition goals.

The Save the Peaks Coalition, describing itself as "a group of concerned citizens, agencies, business people, religious and spiritual leaders, skiers, snowboarders, conservationists, students, teachers and taxpayers" ("About Us"), opposed the initial Proposed Action and continue to advocate for continued care for cultural and land preservation. Analyzing a sample of the Coalition's objectives, the group clearly takes a broad view of the situation. Their opposition to snowmaking is portrayed as a part of their wider platform: to promote the respect of religion, cultures, and all forms of life. Expanding the issue in this way frames the conflict around optative values, as indicated by Table 6 above. The mountain and its inhabitants and "clients" represent more, in this rhetoric, than economic partners in the growth and viability of a business interest. Comparing the values in the optative language of the Coalition with the values represented by the Snowbowl in their optative column, the Coalition's values are universally appealing but not necessarily more prized than the job-creation, tourism-dollar, economic justifications for keeping the Snowbowl consistent.

Stakeholders: Native American Tribe Members

Tribal member perspectives:

It is up to the deities, not man, to make snow. To usurp their authority is a crime, an insult. It desecrates the entire mountain that the Hopi believe is a living entity. (Kravets)

Allowing snow made with reclaimed wastewater and spread on the San Francisco Peaks [is like] a child watching his or her mother being raped. (Cole, "Shirley")

Spraying snow made from treated sewage on the Peaks is like putting a contaminated needle in your body containing poison. (Kravets)

Referential	Appraisive	Prescriptive	Optative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • San Francisco Peaks • Entire mountain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treated sewage • Reclaimed wastewater • Desecration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave mountain alone • Let nature/gods make snow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mountain is a living entity • Usurping authority of deities is wrong • Snowmaking = Rape = Poisoning

Table 7: Classification of Tribal member quotes.

The statements from tribal members above reflect a deeper feeling about the use of land than most European-descended whites understand, which perhaps led to many non-Native Americans scoffing at such strong comparisons of “rape” or “poisoning” to snowmaking. The local newspaper in Flagstaff stated that according to court testimony, tribal members additionally blamed misuse of the Peaks for the World Trade Center attacks, the Columbia space shuttle crash, and natural disasters (Cole, “Culture Clash”). For people who believe in a generational and ecological connection to a divine, living landscape, such connections make sense, while those holding more empirical, scientific traditions have difficulty linking seemingly unrelated events. This cultural gap emerges from a relationship with the land for generations:

Native Americans have been determining themselves in their imagination for many generations, and in the process, the landscape has become part of the particular reality. In a sense, for the Native American, the process is more intuitive and evolutionary than is the white Western rational linear process. (Booth and Jacobs 39)

Such descriptions of Native American perspectives, along with the extraordinary connections made by members of that culture, confirm the “wicked” nature of this conflict. A planning entity within an American society that values science, efficiency and professionalism will struggle to resolve values-laden situations when interested parties paradoxically value generational and mystical connections between humans and the landscape, which do not require expertise or machinery to understand.

The Court Decisions

From the sustainability perspective, the Snowbowl’s snowmaking proposal does indeed spare aquifer water in order to sustain a more consistent

ski season, benefiting the owners, employees, skiers, and the businesses of Flagstaff. The plan's sustainability was a means to adhere to the progress value, especially the inevitability of it, while fitting within the prevailing water issues of the area. Progress was prioritized for reasons of viability—the owners were likely sincere in having to close Snowbowl without snowmaking—yet that overshadowed an earnest assessment of other cultural effects. With water as the catalyst for economic sustainability for the Snowbowl owners, the opponents of the snowmaking proposal used water to protest and battle within the constraints of environmental and religious legal precedent. The larger issue, evident in their formal and informal discourse sampled above, was their holistic view of the relationship between humans and land, but the narrow legal definitions of religious practice—one can offend but cannot impede—precluded the focus on the non-purity of the effluent.

Therefore, while the U.S. District judge, who first heard the case, found that the opponents of the Snowbowl “failed to present any objective evidence that their exercise of religion will be impacted by the Snowbowl upgrades” (Kravets), the pure-water aspect apparently was convincing to the preliminary panel of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. Since water from the Peaks is used in religious ceremonies, the panel wrote that any purposeful tainting of the water would infringe on religious practice. Furthermore, using a strong metaphor, the panel compares using snowmelt that contains reclaimed water to requiring baptisms to be done in reclaimed water. Interestingly, while the decision of the judges reflects sympathy for the beliefs of the Native Americans, the choice of metaphor repeats the situated vocabulary of the District Court by couching Native American religious philosophy within a Western traditional religious practice or exercise. Historically, people have been baptized in less appealing water than purified wastewater, and the religious practices of the Native Americans are actually not impeded by a touch of chemical in snowmelt. The pure water aspect of the conflict was successful in court only because the Native American belief in everything as a living part of a whole would not be, for that belief is inarticulate with the pervasive persistence of economic progression in our society. But infringement on water-based religious activities can be measured and thus became the central tactic for the opponents. The recognition of these uses of language is at the heart of this method of analysis, confirming Abbey's intimation that changes in vocabularies of values create actual results.

However, the panel's interpretation in regard to the water differed from the full Circuit Court majority opinion reversal. The reversed ruling states that “snowmaking with water containing 0.0001 percent human waste does not run afoul of the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act because it doesn't go far enough to meet the legal test of violating religious freedom,” which is tested by “whether a government action forces a person to violate

their own religious beliefs" ("Court"). The dissenting minority of the court stated that the ruling "misunderstands the very nature of religion" ("Court"), recognizing the difference in religious philosophy and practice. The majority decision, however, draws the line between "personalized oversight" and established means of public deliberation and comment:

[If this case met the test for violating religious freedom], any action the federal government were to take, including action on its own land, would be subject to the personalized oversight of millions of citizens. Each citizen would hold an individual veto to prohibit the government action solely because it offends his religious beliefs, sensibilities, or tastes, or fails to satisfy his religious desires. Further, giving one religious sect a veto over the use of public park land would deprive others of the right to use what is, by definition, land that belongs to everyone. ("Court")

The 9th Circuit Court effectively endorses the established means for conducting government planning and resolving conflicts. By emphasizing the singular individual, which, it should be noted, was not the tribes' situation, the Court seemed to balance the majority rights of public land with the ideals of numerous potential cultural minorities. The "government" here represents the citizens of the nation, and thus institutional and professional methods and procedures are, according to the Court, the best method for making decision for "its own land" that "belongs to everyone."

Yet such a position can be frustrating to individuals representing the "growing pluralism of contemporary publics, whose valuation of proposals are judged against an array of different and contradicting scales" (Rittel and Webber 167). Further, "the classical paradigm of science and engineering—the paradigm that has underlain modern professionalism—is not applicable to the problems of open societal systems" (160). In our deference to organizational oversight, as Craig Waddell notes, "the public is still obliged to endure the effects of economic and environmental decisions upon which it has little or no influence—decisions that are left, instead, to experts in science, industry and government" (202). Decades of industrialization and mainstream progress affect the public's acceptance of certain vocabulary of values emanating from professionals and experts, meaning that job *creation*, economic *health*, and *thriving* local businesses, for example, outweigh vocabularies that are less in line with supercultural values of economic growth and progress. A Hopi medicine man, a plaintiff in the lawsuit, had his cynical theory: "It's never going to go our way, no matter what kind of government it is, when there's money involved" ("Court").

Conclusion

The *term analysis* and *conflict-language analysis* conducted in this article are examples of how a sustainability-conscious curriculum can utilize values

clarification to understand ecological discourse. The modified-Guttenberg framework deconstructs the language and rhetoric to accentuate the differences among the values of the stakeholders, not to mention the values of the students analyzing the conflict. As Guttenberg suggests, in traditional, referential planning language, many cultural and landscape factors are ignored. Values analysis of the language can lead to a better understanding of what those factors are and why they are not considered. The statements made by the Native Americans in this case study are grounded in a local but deep cultural affinity, and thus explicitly use optative-value language to refer to localized land quality and prescriptive use of what is familiar. The U.S.F.S. language and the Snowbowl's messages, by contrast, comprise a larger cultural affinity to progress, and thus reflect traditional, land-management referential and appraisive language that encourages imperative or indicative prescriptions for land-use situations. The breaking down of the language above illustrates that each of the optative classifications is in some sense valued by most members of society. The conflict analysis exposes the difficulty of concrete decisions based on those easily manipulated abstract values.

Therefore, the modified-Guttenberg framework used here can show how vocabularies of values can reflect or not reflect an attitude of inclusion, where non-economic factors such as belief systems are given equal consideration to progressive factors when evaluating environmental impact (see Peterson and Peterson). According to Redclift, moving beyond a strictly progressive paradigm requires us to "explore the need to change our underlying social commitments" (19). The analysis employed here reveals cultural nuances that clarify the values that in many cases determine those commitments. By highlighting specific, competing social values in complex land-use conflicts, conducting a "discursive ecology" analysis in a composition course illustrates that values and their vocabulary can be examined, critiqued, and utilized for long-term foresight. Doing so would provide a fuller understanding of "wicked problems" so that cultural and other variables are as equally considered in resolutions as economic and narrowly defined environmental effects. By facilitating the recognition of values through the examination of how vocabulary carries those values, our field can broaden the optative sensibilities of our students and meaningfully contribute to the critical issues of planning and sustainability.

Notes

1. Guttenberg's sense of land use planning's influence on social reality and living patterns reflects what Harvey calls the "immobility" of "fixed capital in the built environment," causing people to commit "to certain patterns of use for an extended time within the particularity of spatial location" (83).

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